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

Trabajo de Titulación

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AUTHORSHIP

The thoughts, ideas, opinions, and the information obtained through this research are the only responsibility of the author.

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DEDICATION

This thesis project is completely dedicated to all the members of my family, who have always been next to me supporting my decisions and guiding my way. Thanks to God for my family and friends; and thanks to them for giving me the strength I need whenever I feel like giving up.

To my mother and brothers Guisela, Mario and Diego who are my cornerstone.

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CONTENTS

Abstract

The thesis theme chosen "Factors that affect the English language teaching-learning process in Ecuadorian public high schools" is based on what the real situation of education is going through in public high schools, and how it affects students from high schools whenever they need to enter the university; so this research will help us to understand and analyze all the factors that affect this English teaching-learning process.

This study was carried out in six different high schools in Guayaquil and one high school in Molleturo, Azuay. The participants included 15 teachers and 15 students between ages of 12 and 18 years. This study was conducted using a mixed-method quantitative and qualitative approach. The instruments to collect information were direct class observations, interviews and surveys.

This study demonstrates that in spite of most of the teachers have title in the major and work with lesson plans, the student´s learning is indeed affected by several factors such as the teachers do not consider student´s needs, they do not speak English regularly, a lot of translation, resources are not appropriate, large classes, and seating arrangement.

Key words: Factors, teaching-learning process, public high schools.

Resumen

El tema de tesis elegido "Factores que afectan el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje del idioma Inglés en los colegios públicos del Ecuador" se basa en la situación real que la educación está atravesando en los colegios públicos, y cómo ésta afecta a los estudiantes de los colegios cuando necesitan ingresar a la universidad; por lo que esta investigación nos ayudará a comprender y analizar todos los factores que afectan el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje del Inglés.

Este estudio se llevó a cabo en seis colegios diferentes en la ciudad de Guayaquil y un colegio en Molleturo, Azuay. Los participantes incluyen 15 profesores y 15 estudiantes entre las edades de 12 y 18 años. Este estudio se llevó a cabo utilizando una combinación de métodos con enfoques cuantitativo y cualitativo. Los instrumentos para recoger información fueron observaciones de las clases, entrevistas y encuestas directas.

Este estudio demuestra que pese a que la mayoría de los profesores tienen títulos especializados en estudios y trabajan con planificaciones de las clases, el aprendizaje del alumno se ve de hecho afectado por varios factores tales como que los maestros no tienen en cuenta las necesidades del alumno, que no hablan Inglés con regularidad, una gran cantidad de traducción, los recursos no son los apropiados, clases grandes y disposición de los asientos.

Palabras clave: Factores, procesos de enseñanza-aprendizaje, colegios públicos.

Introduction

Talking about English education is really complex, not only because it has less importance than it should, but also because of the consequences that can be easily noticed. It is not a secret the fact that many students are considered unqualified to apply for scholarships offered internationally, just because of the English knowledge limitations they have. But that "just" is exactly what is needed to change; if it were given the real importance English requires nowadays, it would be shown the change that is needed. And that is the idea of this research.

There are many factors that can affect the English language teaching-learning process, such as: class size, number of students per class, seating arrangement, students' needs, teaching resources, and teachers. That is the purpose of this investigation: determine the classroom conditions in which English lessons take place; identify the characteristics of in-service English teachers; and determine teachers' instructional competence. In that way it can be found out what aspects could be changed in order to have a more effective English teaching-learning process.

There have been many studies of similar cases around the world. One of them is by Sariçoban and Sakizli (2006), it was conducted to realize if a pre-service teacher training program that teachers attend at the beginning of the employment enables them to become effective in classroom management skills, considering that there are many factors that affect successful classroom management, which can be categorized as factors concerning students, factors concerning school environment and factors concerning teachers. All these factors are the ones related to the students' needs, and which teachers need to be aware of when teaching.

In another study conducted by Sharma (2007), it was directed to analyze the condition of different types of government schools; it includes the common classroom settings, the condition of classroom movement of the teachers, and the condition of classroom interaction. After conducting this study, it was noticed that the classroom setting was not suitable for the beginners, they were small and crowded, and that is the reason why most of the teachers do not try to carry out different activities to develop communicative competence.

The third and last study to be mentioned by Phyak (2006), finds out the discourse strategies mainly politeness and indirect speech acts used by teachers in the English language classroom at secondary level of government-aided schools. According to the methodology applied, the results showed that there was only one-way interaction in the classroom. Teachers entered the class, started their lesson with short revision of the previous lesson, and spent almost all time with their lecture with the help of mother tongue. The classroom language used by both teachers and students was not polite, which created a lack of interaction strategies from the same both sides.

Something similar to these cases is what it is been trying to be done with this investigation, to analyze the factors that affect the English teaching-learning process in Ecuadorian public high schools. As it was expected, some limitations were found during the process of this investigation, especially when the interviews and surveys were taken, teachers and students showed some obvious differences between the answers given and the observations done. In some cases, the answers given by both, teachers and students were directly based on how the "correct education" was expected to be and not on what the real situation is. Despite of these limitations, so many benefits will be gotten with this research: educational institutions will know

how to improve the English language teaching by tracking its process; teachers will know what changes need to be done in order to enhance the learning process of the students; and at the same time, students will feel more comfortable with all this teaching-learning process, what will let them more and better options after getting the Bachelor's Degree.

But that is not enough, not only because this investigation has been done, it means that everything is going to change that easily. Teachers, students and parents, need to believe in what it is deserved: a better education in every single aspect. Feeling comfortable with the technology, with the monitoring, with the use of the teaching resources, being honest with what is been teaching or learning, doing it as best as possible; that will be very helpful with the learning of a second language such as English.

Literature Review

Learning a new language opens the door to many different opportunities, not only professional but academic and personal ones. In the present times, the most spoken language around the world is English; it is the greatest world power official language, which is the reason why nowadays, the importance of English is being considered a training requirement instead of a simple alternative or a supplementary tool in the education field.

One of the most important reasons our students have to learn English is studying in another country, but actually, many Ecuadorian universities demand the students to know this language and to approve a certain number of levels before getting the degree. This is probably the major reason parents and students have when choosing a high school that offers an excellent and effective teaching of the language. Unfortunately, the English teaching-learning level in Ecuador is still really low as it was published by Gordon (2015), from the Ecuadorian newspaper Diario El Comercio.

In this section, you will find some information related to this important topic that is the English teaching, for example, you will find the approaches and the methods it involves, the techniques that are used, the way the learning is managed, the lesson designs and what should be included on them, the class sizes, the classroom space and seating arrangement, the resources that can be used inside of a classroom, the classroom observation or monitoring and its importance, the motivation and learning styles the students have, and the intelligence or aptitudes they have to learn English as a second language.

It has also been included five previous studies that will help us to compare the situation we are going to study with some different cases that have taken place in

other countries around the world, such as: Turkey, Nepal, and Sri Lanka. These studies, as we will see, are related to the English teaching-learning process the teachers and students go through during the second language acquisition.

Teaching Approaches and Methods

First of all, let us start by stating the differences between approaches and methods. An approach is a set of theories and principles, while a method is the way you apply these theories and principles. As students do not learn in the same way, teachers need to use or put in practice different teaching methods and approaches in order to reach all students in an effectively way.

According to an online resource published by Oderay Quijada, from the Center for Applied Linguistics (2012), the Grammar-Translation Method, which is one of the most common ones, focuses on the development of the appreciation the students have from the literature of the target language. In other words, this method provides knowledge in grammar, as well as vocabulary, to the students. This instruction is done with direct translations to memorize.

Total Physical Response is another common approach that has primary importance on listening comprehension, as Oderay Quijada (2012) states. Students show their comprehension by acting out commands given by the teacher, but to do it, they need to use whole-body responses.

Richards and Rodgers (2001); and Harris (2003) agree that the Cooperative Language Learning is related to the use of activities involving pairs and small groups of students that work together in classrooms in order to maximize their own, and the learning of each other. Richards and Rodgers (2001) also states that the Communicative Language Teaching, considered an approach rather than a method, refers to a diverse set of principles such as: the learning of the language through

using it to communicate; having authentic and meaningful communication as the main goal of classroom activities; considering fluency as an important dimension of communication; and the integration of different language skills that communication involves. These principles reflect a communicative view of language and language learning that can be used to support a wide variety of classroom procedures.

The Natural Approach is defined by the two authors mention above as a method based on observation and interpretation of how learners acquire the first and second languages in settings that are not formal. Necessary conditions are provided by a focus on comprehension and meaningful communication.

Finally, the Content-Based Instruction is another common approach, which "is organized around the content or information that students will acquire, rather than around a linguistic or other type of syllabus", as Richards and Rodgers (2001) mention in their book.

Teaching Techniques

According to Raimes (1983), a technique can be defined as a way of carrying out a particular task; it is the procedure by which a task is accomplished. According to this definition, we can say that there are some different activities that can be used to make easier the student-centered learning and teaching; these techniques give the students the opportunity to use their linguistic skills in order to explore and get started with all their ideas on a specific or given topic.

The first technique we will talk about is brainstorming, which is based on the free flow of ideas students can get from focusing on a specific topic. In different words, with this technique the teacher expect the students to focus their attention on a particular topic and generate or get as many ideas as they can from it. This activity can be used with large or small groups of students.

Another technique is Case Studies, which are created stories or scenarios that can be used as a tool for analysis and discussion. They are often based on actual events, for that reason students can apply their understanding of learned facts and their skills to a real-world situation.

Debating is a technique that consists of a structured contest of argumentation between two opposing individuals or teams that defend and attack the proposition they were given. It encourages the participants to think critically about their position and the position of the opponent.

Pictures are also an excellent technique that can be applied in a variety of language activities, such as Raimes (1983) states. For example, one simple sketch can lead to description, paragraph completion, role-play, and some others. The use of diagrams, tables, charts or maps make the students deal with given information that is presented visually, they could also provide real information and practice in giving directions.

Managing Learning

According to the article published by Charles Jennings (2013), learning can only be managed by the individual in whose head the learning is occurring. Of course external factors – such as other people (especially the teacher and classmates) , technology, prevailing culture, general 'environmental' factors, and a range of different elements – can support, facilitate, encourage, and help the students learning occur faster, better, with greater impact and so on. But they can't manage the learning process for them.

In order to manage learning, there are some aspects a teacher should keep always in mind: the instructions given to the students to do their class works and homework,

the feedback that ensures the understanding of the topics, and the time given to do each task.

Each classroom activity has rules for participation, and that is what students must understand, so the teacher must make sure everyone knows how to participate in a specific class activity. That is why instructions should be completely clear before starting any activity; otherwise, the misunderstandings and mistakes will show up, making the students feel uncomfortable and affecting the process of learning.

There is a significant relationship between time spent on content and the student learning. One important goal of classroom management could be to expand the total number of minutes available for learning, just as Woolfolk (2007) suggests, but this will not lead to achievement by itself. The idea is the teachers to avoid spending much of the teaching/learning time monitoring and correcting. According to Bremner (2010), if teachers are able to stop the teacher-talk-dependency, they will get the freedom to interact with individuals and groups on a more personal and targeted basis, ensuring in that way the regular feedback to learners that is needed.

Lesson Design

According to Woolfolk (2007), planning influences what the students will learn; it transforms the available time and the curriculum materials into activities, tasks, and homework for students. In order to plan, teachers should know about the students, their interests and abilities; about the subjects being taught; the expectations or limitations they will have; and how to apply materials or adapt them to get meaningful activities.

A lesson planning guide is what teachers need to help with time management, to keep the material organized and easy to understand. This guide is divided in four parts: the introduction, the presentation, the practice, and the production. In the

introduction part, it is better to have a warm-up type exercise before starting the lesson because that will help students to focus their attention, and get prepared for the lesson ahead. In the presentation part, as the name suggests, the new material is well presented. It is necessary to include clear explanations of the grammar and to show concise examples, so the students could have some understanding of the material they just learned, its meaning and proper use. The practice part is where students get involved. The main goal or objective of this stage is that students use the material presented in the presentation part. Finally, the production part gives the students the chance to use the newly learned material in a free and open way. In other words, is during this stage where the students should be able to express an understanding of language by using the new material in context.

Class size

One of the factors to consider when evaluating the effectiveness of a school is the class size, but it does not really ensure a good education. According to what GreatSchools Staff (2008) mentions, gains in achievement generally occur when class size is reduced to less than 20 students. But according to them, so many variables in the average classroom, such as the quality of the teacher or the quality of the curriculum for example, can change the interpretation of the studies that led to this statement. And that is exactly what Peg Tyre, from Salon Media Group (2011) agrees. She remarks that effects of class size on learning are not 100 percent clear. Actually, she mentions that students in small classes do not necessarily learn more, such as it is thought. There are some different factors that can affect the learning quality.

Finn, Pannozzo and Achiles (2003) point out the need for systematic, preferably observational, research in this field. Overall, reviews of research suggest

that class size effects are likely to be not singular but multiple, and that it is difficult in one study to capture all the complexities involved. It is stated that large classes present more challenges for classroom management, pupil control, and marking, planning, and assessment.

Classroom Space

Casson (2002) suggests that each student inside a classroom should have enough space to work. It should be easy for them to get to and from their seats, they need to have space to keep the material they work with, and they should be able to see the front of the classroom where the board is located. That is exactly the same opinion Hadi- Tabassum (2006) shows when saying that the teacher "needs to observe how the space divides subjects and objects from one another, the gaps separating material object, the rifts between subjects". Based on the opinions showed before, we can include the opinion of Clayton and Forton (2001) who say that the behavior problems and the lack of attention the students struggled with many times, is a clear result of being in small or too crowded places. For that reason, they suggest estimating the range of sizes based on what is typical for the different ages of the students; and to make the necessary adjustments the classrooms, and everything that is in it, would require.

Seating Arrangement

The position and the way a teacher organizes the positions of students in a class is of great importance. As Gower, Phillips and Walters (1995) state, when the activity needs to be directed from the front and when the group is not bigger than 16 students, a horseshoe arrangement is a good option. If there are more than 16 students, the teacher can try to make a double horseshoe. A different option for a front direction is the "café style" in which the students can be grouped around tables,

so with minor adjustments, students are in a position to change to pair work or group work.

When the activity requires the interaction of the whole class, for example when students need to talk individually with a number of other members of the class, arranging the furniture to the edges of the room and creating a space in the center of the room will work perfectly, so the students would be able to move around in. But if it is a pair work activity, moving the chairs slightly towards each other will fit.

Partin (2009) discusses that traditional seating in rows is very functional for many classroom purposes, it enables the teachers to observe behavior more easily and minimizes distractions. He also says that seating students clusters or around a table facilitates group interaction. A whole-class discussion is facilitated with a circular, semicircular, or an open-ended rectangular seating arrangement.

The four authors mentioned above, have the same point of view that Woodward (2001) has. The five of them suggest that an only arrangement cannot be taken for granted, it is necessary to improve the seating arrangement according to the type of activity and type of class a teacher is working with. They also agree that it is not a good idea to have a seating arrangement in which a student or some students have their backs to the whiteboard, because in that case the attention of the students would be harder to get.

Classroom and/or Teaching Resources

Teaching resources can be defined as teaching aids used to enhance teaching and learning. As Bolick, Berson, Coutts and Heinecke (2008) affirm, teaching resources are integral component of teaching and learning situation, it is not just to supplement learning but to complement its process.

There are different resources teachers can use to make lessons more interesting and effective. Some of these resources are: the Board, which can be made from different materials and is used to add visual impact to a lesson, provide a model for writing, explain a word, and write up homework or what is needed in a lesson before starting it. These ideas from Woodward (2011) can be complemented with the suggestions of Gower, Phillips and Walters (1995) for the use of it. They explain four prerequisites: start with a clean board; write neatly and legibly avoiding the writing in capitals, unless it is necessary, so students can know when to use or not to use them; use the right implement; and try to keep the board as clear and as easy to read as possible.

Visual resources are the second ones in this list. Gower, Phillips and Walters (1995) quote that this type of resource can take many forms such as: real objects or realia, pictures or photographs. These authors already mentioned, and Woodward (2011), refer to some uses for the visuals: concentrate attention at the beginning of a lesson, play guessing games, generate dialogues between the characters in the pictures, create stories, illustrate a new language item, or elicit already known language.

There is a different resource mentioned by Wajnryb (1992), the learner. The author explains that if a learner is not actively engaged, a negative outcome will be gotten, but if a learner is completely involved, then a positive outcome is assured.

Another resource teachers incorporate into their classroom instruction very often is music; and as Woodward (2011) explains, teachers can do language practice in song lyrics, or they can use instrumental music to relax students.

Videos are very popular resources because they can add a change of focus in a lesson. Actually, with the videos, students can see and hear a recording that is

much closer to real life. It is easier to understand a video, facial expressions, gestures and physical background give additional information in order to do it.

Classroom Observation

School inspection, external school review or external evaluation, are the different ways Kennedy and Chi-kin Lee (2008) use to refer to this topic. They mainly talk about the importance of this topic in different societies, stating that classroom observation is done by supervisors, principles, other teachers, and even parents.

Henard (2010) suggests that after doing a classroom observation, and depending on the results, some decisions to improve teaching can be taken. But, on the other hand, De Vries (2005) mentions that there is usually a general feeling that, over time, external monitoring should become less frequent, less intrusive, give more trust to institutions and work more collaboratively

Students´ Motivation

Romando (2007) defines this topic as the motivation a student has, as well as the interest, desire, the need to participate in, or the compulsion the student feels or has in order to be successful in the learning process. He differences the highly motivated students from the less motivated ones in this way: the first kind of students are actively engage in the learning process, they have a positive impact on learning, and they also reveal positive emotions such as excitement, enthusiasm, interest and optimism during the learning. The second kind that was mentioned is related to the students that are physically present in the classroom but mentally absent, they are more likely to stop learning.

The same author also says that there are two types of student motivation: extrinsic ad intrinsic motivation. In the extrinsic motivation, students try to obtain

rewards or to avoid punishments from an external source. It is divided into two: social and material motivation; social motivation includes approval of teachers, parents and friends; while material motivation includes good grades, future education, or job security. In contrast, the intrinsic motivation refers to engaging in an activity for its own sake, for the pleasure and enjoyment it can provide.

On the other hand, Saville-Troike (2006) notices two types of motivation: integrative and instrumental motivation. Integrative motivation is based on interest in learning a second language because of a desire to learn or to associate with the people who use it; in this case, emotional or affective factors are dominant. The instrumental motivation involves perception of purely practical value in learning a second language, such an increasing occupational or business opportunities, enhancing prestige and power, or just passing a course in school.

Finally, Woolfolk (2007) includes three major goals teachers have: to get students involved with the work of the class; to develop in the students the trait of being motivated to learn, so they will be able to educate themselves throughout their lifetimes; and the last goal, the students to think deeply about what they study.

Learning Styles

Learning styles, according to Saville-Troike (2006), are considered the characteristics that second language learners have; it includes a combination of personality traits and cognitive style. The cognitive style refers to the way of processing that is preferred by individuals. Little study has been carried out on other personality factors in relation to differences in second language outcomes, but there is some evidence that being imaginative or creative, empathetic and tolerant represents a great advantage.

The resource gotten from Big Dog & Knowledge Jump (2000) explains the three modalities, also known as channels, by which students can learn new information and experience: auditory learners, visual learners, and kinesthetic learners. The first kind of learners mentioned before, often talks to themselves and may have some difficulty with reading and writing tasks. Visual learners can be visual-linguistic, who like to learn through written language like reading and writing tasks; or can also be visual-spatial, and who do better with charts, demonstrations, videos or any other visual material. Kinesthetic learners do best while touching and moving, they tend to lose concentration if there is no external stimulation or movement.

According to Woolfolk (2007), the differences between deep and surface approaches to process information in learning situation is one of the theme that unites most of the variety of styles that have been described so far. The Deep-processing approach sees the learning activities as a means for understanding some underlying concepts or meanings. The Surface-processing approach focuses on memorizing the learning materials; it is not really related to the understanding of them.

Students Intelligence or Aptitude to Learn English

Woolfolk (2007) mentions that early theories involved one or more of the following three themes: the capacity to learn, the total knowledge a person has acquired, and the ability to adapt to new situations and to environment in general.

The same author suggests that there are at least eight separate intelligences, which is known as the multiple intelligences. This theory, proposed by Howard Gardner in 1983, differentiates intelligence into various specific modalities: logical-mathematical, which has to do with logic; spatial, which deals with spatial judgment and the ability to visualize with the eyes of the mind; linguistic, which has to do with

spoken or written words; bodily-kinesthetic, which refers to the control of bodily motions of an individual; musical, which has to do with sensitivity to sounds, rhythms, tones and music; interpersonal, which has to do with interaction with others; intrapersonal, which has to do with introspective and self-reflective capacities; and naturalistic, which has to do with nurturing and relating information to the natural surroundings of a person.

Once all the information that was required from the theoretical support has been stated and well presented, the following data from the different previous studies that was researched and mentioned at the beginning of this work, will help us to support the theme of this project.

The first study by Sariçoban and Sakizli (2006) was conducted to find out if a pre-service teacher training program that teachers attend at the beginning of the employment enables them to become effective in classroom management skills. In order to do it, questionnaires about the subject areas the teachers were taught during the training program and about their experience was given to 30 randomly chosen teachers. The results showed that most of the teachers were aware of the skills taught and they usually have good management skills in their classrooms. There are many factors that affect successful classroom management, which can be categorized as factors concerning students, factors concerning school environment and factors concerning teachers. All of these factors are related to the needs of the students, their personal, developmental and cultural backgrounds; to the physical and social factors that a school can involve; and to the lesson design and the motivation a teacher can give to the students. But based on the information above, teacher training programs can be considered useful and effective to provide them good management skills for their classrooms.

The second study conducted by Sharma (2007) was directed to study the condition of different types of government schools; it includes the common classroom settings, the condition of classroom movement of the teachers, and the condition of classroom interaction. In order to prove it, three different observation forms were made: one to get the information about the classroom setting, one for the movement of the teachers, and one for the classroom interaction. The results of these observations were interpreted statistically and descriptively. The conclusions of this study are the following: the classroom setting of most of the government aided schools at primary level of the district is not suitable for the beginners. The small crowded classroom with polished cemented chalkboard attached on the front wall, is the principal teaching material. Teachers do not seem to be prepared for the lesson. There is a narrow space left between blackboard and the first row benches which brings problem for the movements of the teacher. Similarly space between two columns is found very narrow, that is the reason why most of the teachers do not try to conduct different activities to develop communicative competence.

The third study carried out by Abeywickrama (2008), tried to identify the attitudes of students to the GCE AL General English Course in schools of Balangoda Educational Zone. In order to conduct the study, some surveys and a questionnaire, which included both open ended questions and questions with fixed alternatives, were generated for the answers of the students. Based on this methodology, it was showed that the experimental sample resisted accepting the idea that the only reason for learning General English is to pass the subject at this examination.

The fourth study directed by Adhikari (2007) demonstrates what Nepalese secondary school English teachers understand by CLT and what they think they are doing in order to teach the target language effective employing the CLT

methodology. In order to do it, qualitative and quantitative data sources from the perspective of secondary school English teachers: a questionnaire survey; semi-structure follow up interviews; and the researcher as a participant observer. It is important to mention that thirty-five out of the forty-four survey participants volunteered for semi-structure internet interviews. As a result, the Nepalese secondary school English teachers involved saw themselves as well informed and competent when conduction the CLT classes. However, it also revealed that there are a number of factors which restrict these teachers from pursuing the CLT approach effectively in their classroom. These are: very little in-service training; large class sizes, restrictive teaching materials; and long teaching hours. It was found that the learner-centered approach to language teaching was perceived as important by most of the teachers, even those who had not had any training in the CLT approach.

The fifth study by Phyak (2006) was directed to find out the discourse strategies mainly politeness and indirect speech acts used by teachers in the English language classroom at secondary level of government-aided schools. The major technique of data collection in this study was diary keeping through classes observations for one week. On the basis of collected data, informal post-class-discussion with teachers was applied. According to the methodology applied, the results showed that there was only one-way interaction in the classroom. The first day of observation there was no interaction at all. Teachers entered the class, started their lesson with short revision of the previous lesson, and spent almost all time with their lecture with the help of mother tongue. All types of strategies had been shifted to commands. The classroom language used by both teachers and students was not polite. It can be told that the ground reality of the present condition of English language teaching in government-aided schools is very miserable. English is taken as

the most difficult subject, and one of the real problems is lack of interaction

strategies from both sides: the teachers and the students.

Method

Setting and Participants

A really important part of this research is the place where it was made, and the most important characteristics of the selected sample for this study. The information collected was gotten from 6 different public high schools located between the downtown and the south part of the city of Guayaquil, Guayas. There was only one class observed at the only public high school located in Molleturo, Azuay. All of these public high schools were chosen randomly, what means that there are no preferences on any of the participants involved in this research; it was all made in an objective way.

It is important to mention that as the research was limited to public high schools, the observed students are teenagers between ages of 12 and 18, with very different personalities and attitudes.

Procedures

This research is done based on the necessity English education has in order to improve the level of public high school students, but first than all, it is important to know what the real situation of the teaching-learning process inside the classrooms is and what factors are affecting this process; that is the reason why the quantitative and qualitative methods were used in this study. The qualitative research was used for the description of the information in all of the process. The quantitative research was used for numerical data concerning to teacher and students' perceptions about factors that affect in the process of instruction. By using these methods, we could get the needed data in an objective way, directly from the source, before it can be explained, described and analyzed.

The instruments used in this research are surveys, teacher´s interviews and note-taking. Class observation sheets and questionnaires on the teaching process were applied to both teachers and students, and also teacher´s interviews are the instruments used in order to get the information needed for the research. The mentioned instruments were applied to 15 different teachers, 15 randomly students from eighth course to third course of high school, and 15 English classes. The students' and teachers 'questionnaires consisted of 20 short answer and open-ended questions.

The participants were chosen from different public high schools, no more than 3 classes were observed in the same institution, what give us better results because the sample was wider.

As it was already mentioned, the 15 class observations were done in 6 different public high schools from Guayas and Azuay. These observations helped us with the detailed understanding of what factors affect or benefit the teaching-learning process. The questionnaires gave us a better idea of what the feelings and perception of the teachers and students are about the factors involved in the education process. And the interviews let us know the language proficiency of the teachers.

The data gotten from these instruments were analyzed, tabulated, described and presented in graphs.

Discussion

Description, Analysis, and Interpretation of Results

Quantitative Analysis

Factors Concerning Teachers

Which level of education do teachers have?

Graph 1
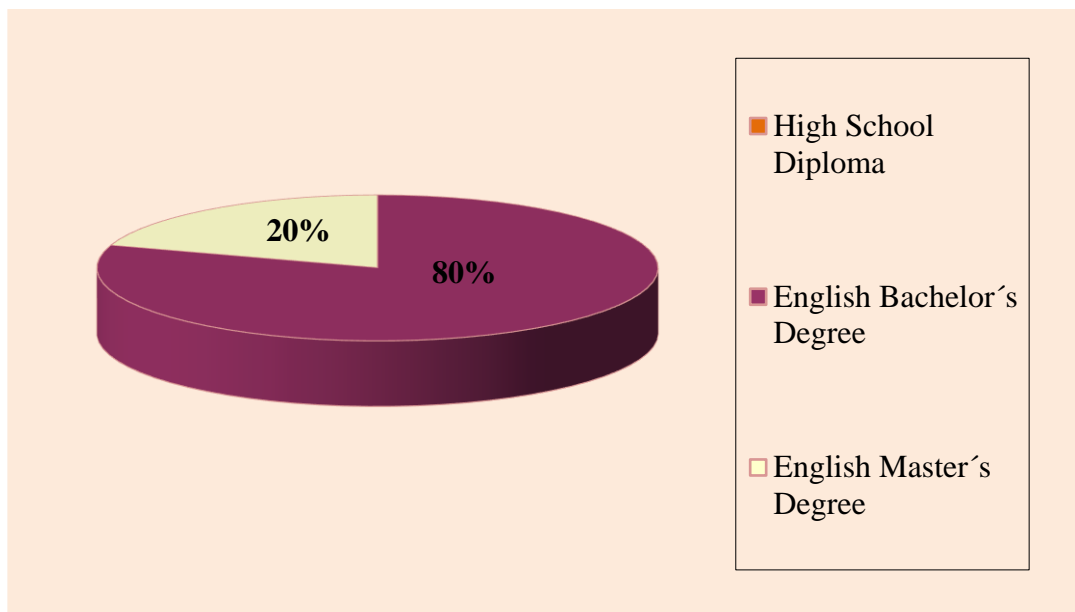
Author: Cruz Palacios Silvia María

Source: Teachers´ questionnaires and class observation sheets

As it can be noticed in the graph above, most of the interviewed teachers, 80% of the teachers to be exact, have an English Bachelor´s Degree. Meanwhile, 20% of the teachers have an English Master´s Degree. These results show that all of the teachers are well-prepared to use teaching skills and resources inside the classrooms, and to deal with all the different student´s needs.

But despite of this fact, in most of the cases the observed teachers do not know how to deal with the students, it is given the idea that they do not really care if the students understand something or not, which is really regrettable.

Do teachers consider Students´ needs to teach English successfully?

Graph 2
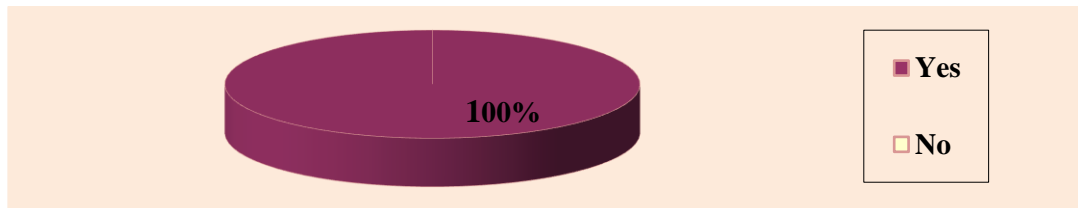
Author: Cruz Palacios Silvia María

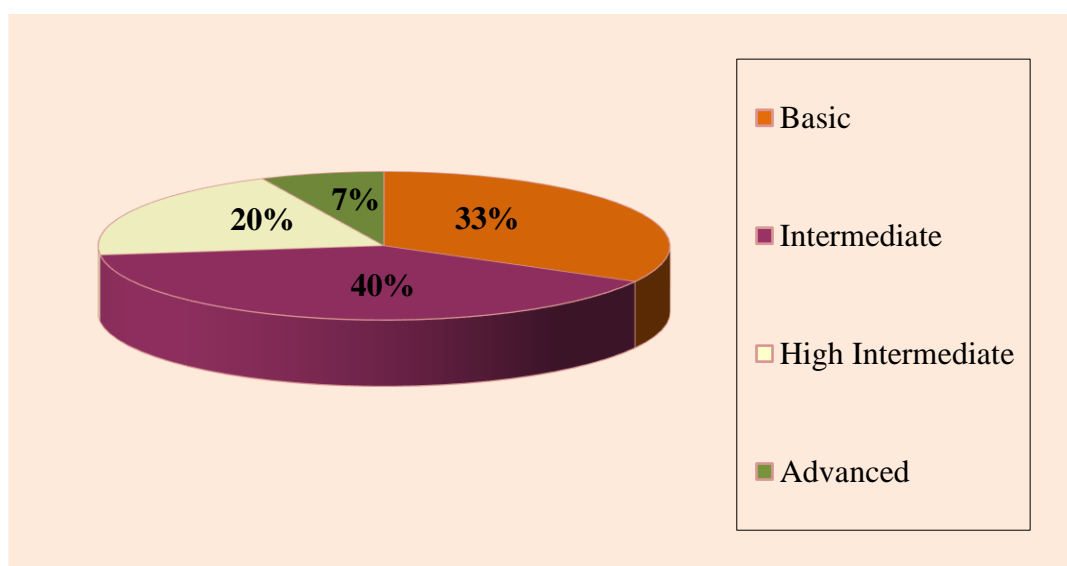Source: Teachers´ questionnaires and class observation sheets

Graph 2 shows that 100% of the observed teachers consider the student´s needs to teach English successfully. But according to the notes during the class observations, 47% of the teachers do not consider these needs at the moment of starting the classes. Even worse, they do not even notice that there were some students working on different subjects, or doing something else but working on what they were supposed to.

This situation takes place because the students do not feel motivated to work with the activities proposed by the teachers. Regarding this topic, Romando (2007) differentiates these kinds of students as the less motivated ones, those who are physically present in the classroom but mentally absent and who are more likely to stop learning.

Do teachers consider Students´ level to teach English successfully?

Graph 3
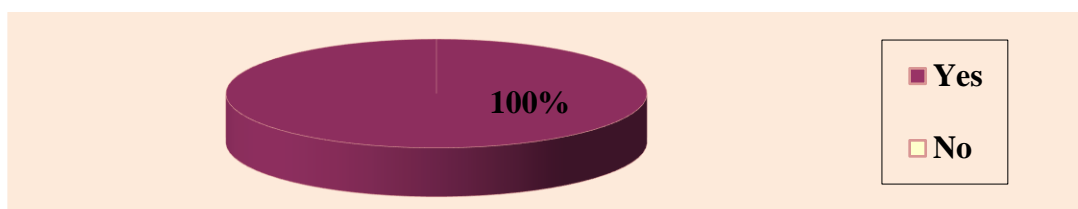
Author: Cruz Palacios Silvia María

Source: Teachers´ questionnaires and class observation sheets

Graph 3 reveals that 100% of the teachers consider the student´s level to teach English successfully. With the notes from the observations these results can be confirmed, the different activities performed by the teachers are chosen according to the level each group has.

It can be said that the teaching techniques chosen by the teachers were according to the student´s levels. Regarding teaching techniques, Raimes (1983) explains that it is a way of carrying out a particular task; it is the procedure by which a task is accomplished.

During direct classroom observations, it was demonstrated that teachers decided to do some whole group and group work activities according to the level of the students. Those activities were based on the vocabulary of a reading from the student´s books, in which the students were asked to find out the meaning of the vocabulary words with the teacher´s monitoring.

Which is the level of the students?

Graph 4

Author: Cruz Palacios Silvia María

Source: Teachers´ questionnaires and class observation sheets

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In graph 4, it is observed that 33% of the students' groups have a Basic level, 40% with an Intermediate level, 20% with a High Intermediate level, and only 7% with an Advanced level.

The results exposed before differ from the ones gotten from the class observations. In this case, and according to what was observed, none of the groups have an advanced level. Even though, there were two students with an advanced level in a second course of high school group; this does not mean the rest of the students from that class have the same level. There is also another similar situation in a tenth basic group, in which the students belong to an intermediate level, not a high intermediate one.

Which of the following methods was used in this class?

Graph 5
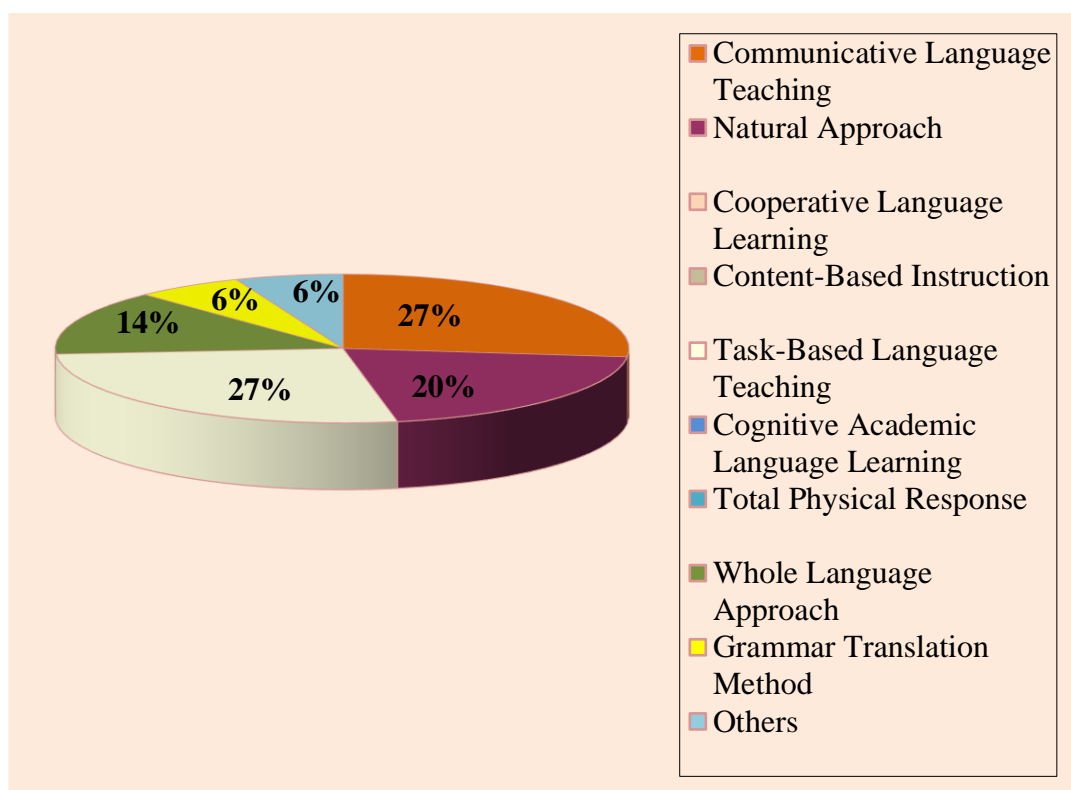
Author: Cruz Palacios Silvia María

Source: Teachers´ questionnaires and class observation sheets

As it is noticed, the results from the teacher´s questionnaire show that the Communicative Language Teaching (27%) and the Task-Based Language teaching (27%) are the most used methods inside the classrooms. According to Richards and Rodgers (2001), the Communicative Language Teaching Method refers to the learning of a language through using it to communicate; authentic and meaningful communication should be the goal of classroom activities, in which fluency plays an important role. According to the this definition, it can be said that this method could be used with a high intermediate or advanced level; but contrary to this, the teachers from the intermediate level groups are the ones who chose this method.

On the other hand, Richards and Rodgers (2014) describe that the Task-Based Language Teaching refers to the dependence on tasks as the primary source of pedagogical input in teaching and the absence of a systematic grammatical or other type of syllabus that characterizes current versions of this approach. In this situation the place of this method can be supported with the observation results.

The next option, with a 20%, is the Natural Approach which is considered for beginners and is designed to help them become intermediates. Richards and Rodgers (2001) explain that it belongs to a tradition of language teaching methods based on observations and interpretation of how learners acquire both first and second languages in informal settings. In this case, the teachers from beginner level groups were those who decided or chose this method.

The next two options included in the graph are: Whole Language Approach with a 14% and Grammar Translation Method with a 6%. The second method mentioned can actually be the most commonly used according to the notes gotten from the observations. More than 40% of the teachers used the first language in order to explain something or give a command inside the classrooms. Some of them even

used it to translate every word they say. As it was explained by Quijada (2012), this method involves direct translation to memorize.

The last 6% of the teachers who selected the option "Others" in this question did not mention what that other method could be.

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

Graph 6
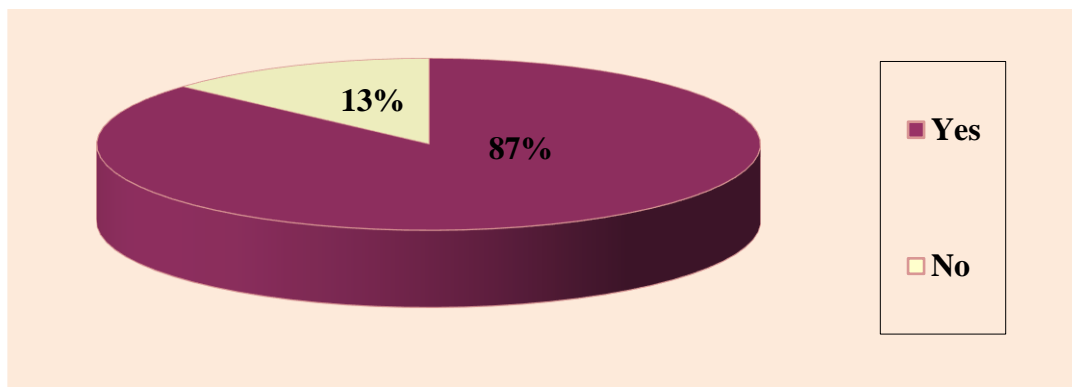
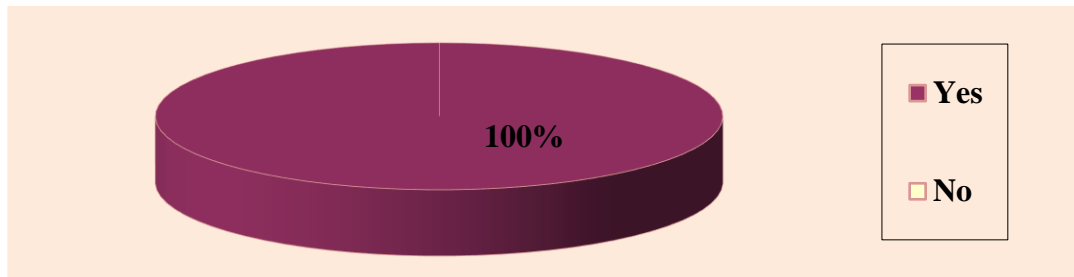
Author: Cruz Palacios Silvia María

Source: Teachers´ questionnaires and class observation sheets

The evidence from graph 6 shows that 87% of the observed teachers mentioned the use of whole-group activities in their classes. According to the observation sheets, these results are the same gotten from the researcher.

Based on what Woolfolk (2007) states, teachers should know about the students, their interests and abilities; about the subjects being taught; the expectations or limitations they will have; and how to apply materials or adapt them to get meaningful activities. In the same way, Woolfolk (2010) also explains that it does not matter how groups are formed and what activities are, the interaction between students could be affected. For instance, teachers know that students who are expected to learn more are regularly asked more and harder questions. Additionally, students are given more opportunities, and more time to respond.

Do teachers use individual activities to teach their lessons?

Graph 7

100%

Yes

No

Author: Cruz Palacios Silvia María

Source: Teachers´ questionnaires and class observation sheets

One hundred percent of the teachers confirm the use of individual activities to teach their lessons. Observation data present different evidence on individual activities designed to promote personal growth and bring up social interaction. It means that individual activities were carried out only by 27% of the students.

Regarding individual activities, Herran and Paredes (2008) explains that in traditional classes, most of the time of the class period is taken by the teacher to talk and normally students are asked to work individually. As a consequence, there is not much use of group techniques or other kind of interaction between students. These aspects can influence students' motivation and students´ learning.

Do teachers use group work activities to teach their lessons?

Graph 8
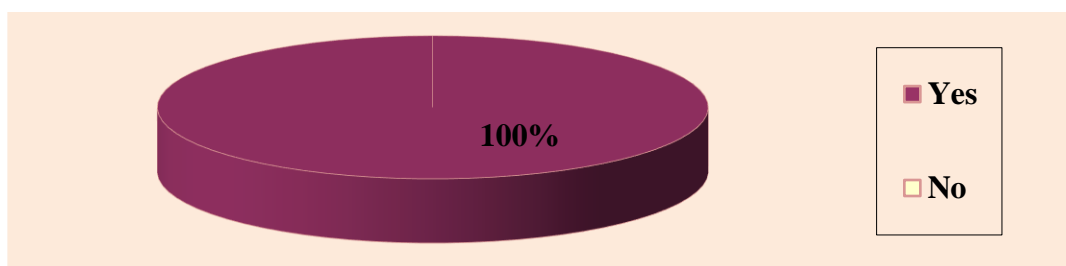
100%

Yes

No

Author: Cruz Palacios Silvia María

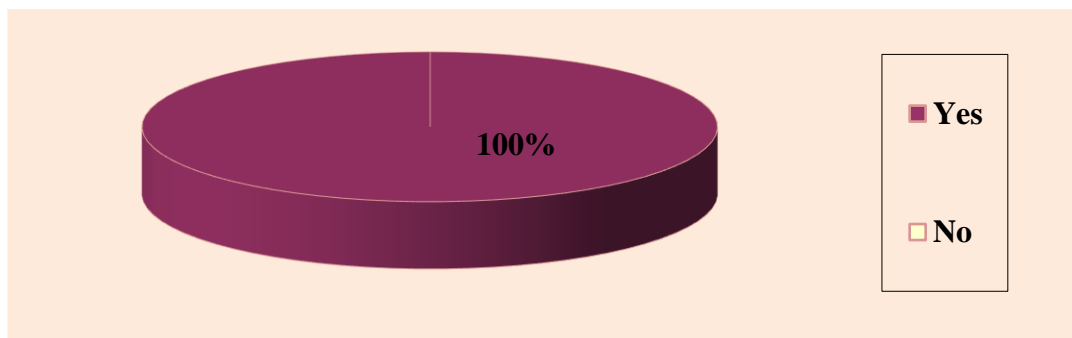Source: Teachers´ questionnaires and class observation sheets

Graph 8 shows that 100% of the teachers said they use group activities in class. The same situation from the last question is presented in this one. The difference is that in this case the 47% of the teachers do not work with this kind of activities according to the data from the class observations. Unfortunately, teachers did not use group work activities in order to avoid students to waste time and promote indiscipline.

Mukalel (2005) explains that group work gives students the opportunity to communicate each other, plan, research and interact. In the same way, the role of the teacher changes because he or she becomes a facilitator and the students are the center of the class. Despite of what Woolfolk (2007) says that when talking about lesson designs and the importance they have in the learning, teachers are not adapting the applied materials to get meaningful activities.

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

Graph 9
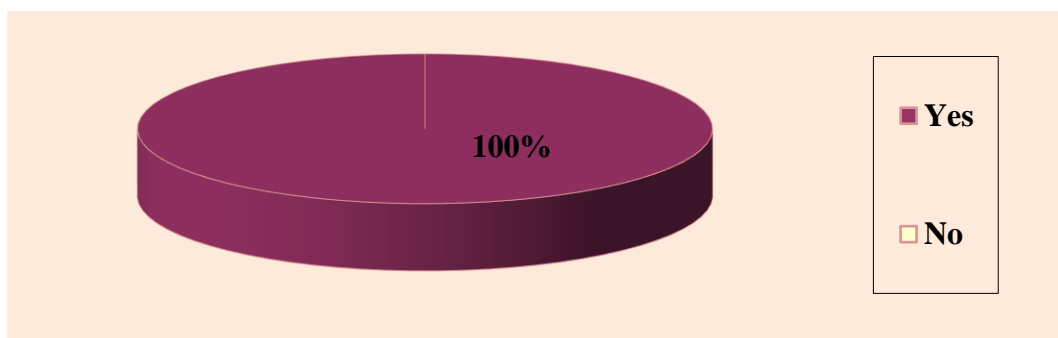
Author: Cruz Palacios Silvia María

Source: Teachers´ questionnaires and class observation sheets

Analysis of this graph shows that 100% of the teachers use English most of the time during their classes, but during the direct class observations, it was evidenced that the majority of teachers used Spanish language in their classrooms as

a medium of instruction, to give directions all the time, and make sure comprehension.

According to the information gotten from these interviews, it could be said that the Grammar-Translation Method predominates during the classes, almost half of the interviewed teachers used the first language inside the classrooms. Regarding Grammar-Translation Method, Quijada (2012) explains that this method involves direct translation to memorize.

Do teachers plan their lessons?

Graph 10

Author: Cruz Palacios Silvia María

Source: Teachers´ questionnaires and class observation sheets

Graph 10 shows that 100% of the teachers indicated that they plan their lessons, even though in the 27% of the cases no lesson plans were shown before starting the classes. In that percentage of the cases, the only thing mentioned by the teachers was the theme of the lesson.

According to Woolfolk (2007), planning influences what the students will learn; it transforms the available time and the curriculum materials into activities, tasks, and homework for students. A lesson planning guide is what teachers need to help with time management, to keep the material organized and easy to understand for the students.

Do teachers consider aspects such as discipline, timing, feedback, and instruction to teach their lessons?
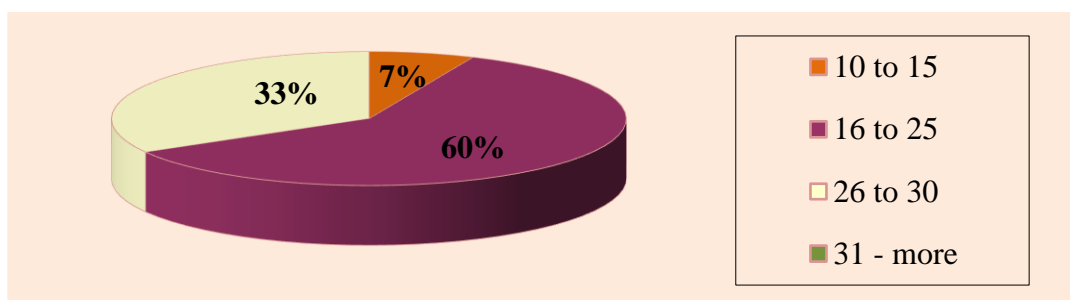
Graph 11
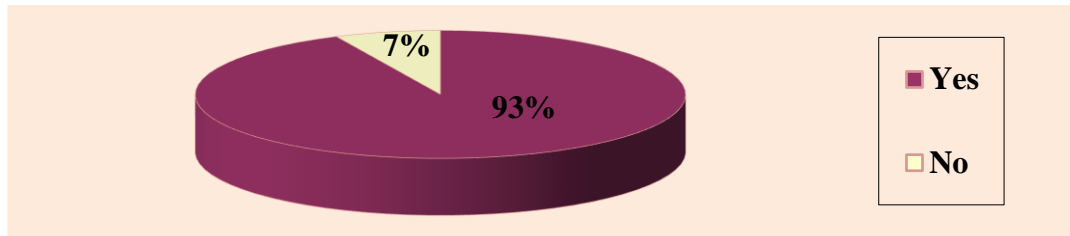
Author: Cruz Palacios Silvia María

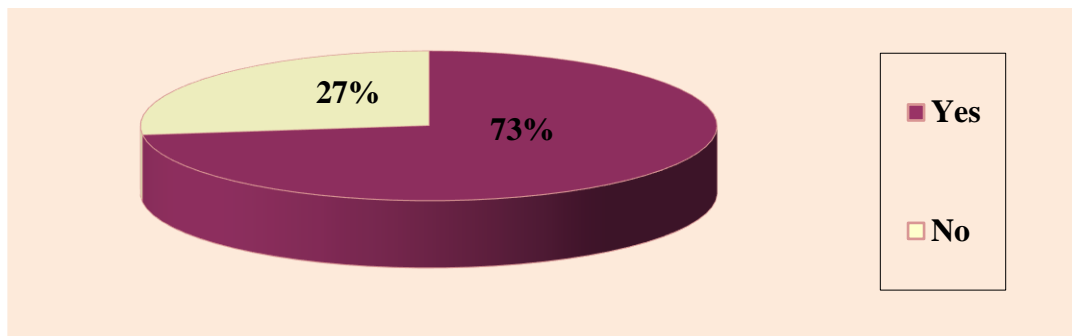Source: Teachers´ questionnaires and class observation sheets

According to the results shown in the graph, 7% of the teachers indicated not to consider some aspects to teach their lesson. However, it can be supported with the data from the observations that more than 40% of the teachers did not pay attention to the timing, feedback or the discipline when the class was observed.

Woolfolk (2007) explains that teachers should know about the students, their interests and abilities; about the subjects being taught; the expectations or limitations they will have; and how to apply materials or adapt them to get meaningful activities considering the available time.

How many students do teachers have in the class?

Graph 12

Author: Cruz Palacios Silvia María

Source: Teachers´ questionnaires and class observation sheets

Sixty percent of the observed classes are integrated by the range of students from 16 to 25. Thirty three percent of the classes are included in the range of students from 26 to 30. Finally, only the 7% of the classes have between 10 to 15 students. Regarding class size, Harmer (2007, p. 125) states that "large classes present challenges that smaller classes do not" this means that working with small groups benefits the teaching-learning process.

Regarding class size, Harmer (2007, p. 125) states that "large classes present challenges that smaller classes do not" this means that working with small groups benefits the teaching-learning process. In the same way, Peg Tyre, from Salon Media Group (2011) emphasizes that class size is one of the factors that should be considered when evaluating the effectiveness of a school, but it does not really ensure a good education.

Do teachers feel comfortable working with this number of students?

Graph 13

Author: Cruz Palacios Silvia María

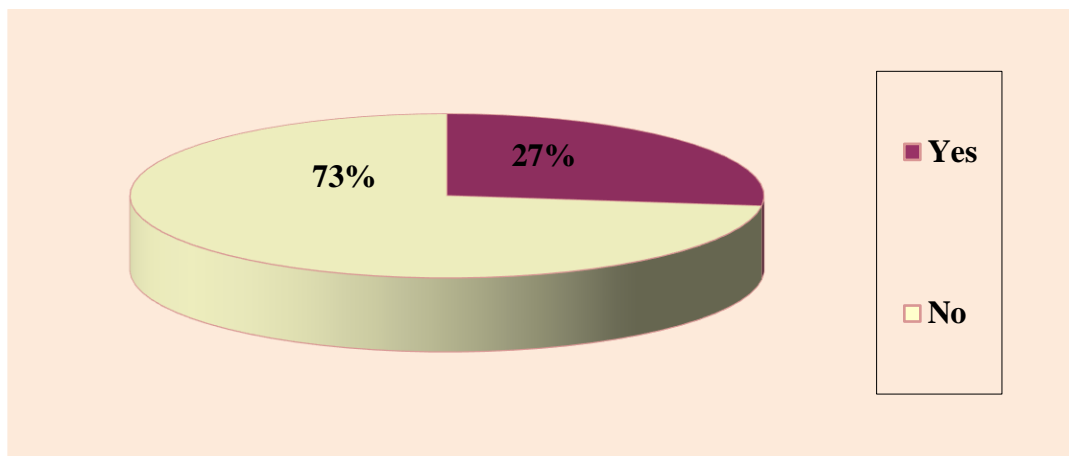Source: Teachers´ questionnaires and class observation sheets

Seventy three percent of the observed teachers indicated to feel comfortable working with the number of students they have in classes. But the 27% of them expressed the opposite.

According to Peg Tyre, from Salon Media Group (2011) students in small classes do not necessarily learn more, such as it is thought. There are some different factors that can affect the learning quality.

On the other hand; Finn, Pannozzo and Achiles (2003) stated that large classes present more challenges for classroom management, pupil control, and marking, planning, and assessment.

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

Graph 14

Author: Cruz Palacios Silvia María

Source: Teachers´ questionnaires and class observation sheets

Graph 14 shows that 27% of the teachers think that the space to work with their group of students is enough. The rest of them mentioned that the space inside the classrooms is not the one they need in order to work with some different activities.

Regarding classroom space, Casson (2002) suggests that each student inside a classroom should have enough space to work. It should be easy for them to get to and from their seats, they need to have space to keep the material they work with, and they should be able to see the front of the classroom where the board is located.

Hadi- Tabassum (2006) agrees when saying that the teacher needs to observe how the space divides subjects and objects from one another, the gaps separating material object, the rifts between subjects.

It can also be included the opinion of Clayton and Forton (2001) who say that the behavior problems and the lack of attention the students struggled with many times, is a clear result of being in small or too crowded places. For that reason, they suggest estimating the range of sizes based on what is typical for the different ages of the students; and to make the necessary adjustments the classrooms, and everything that is in it, would require.

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

Graph 15
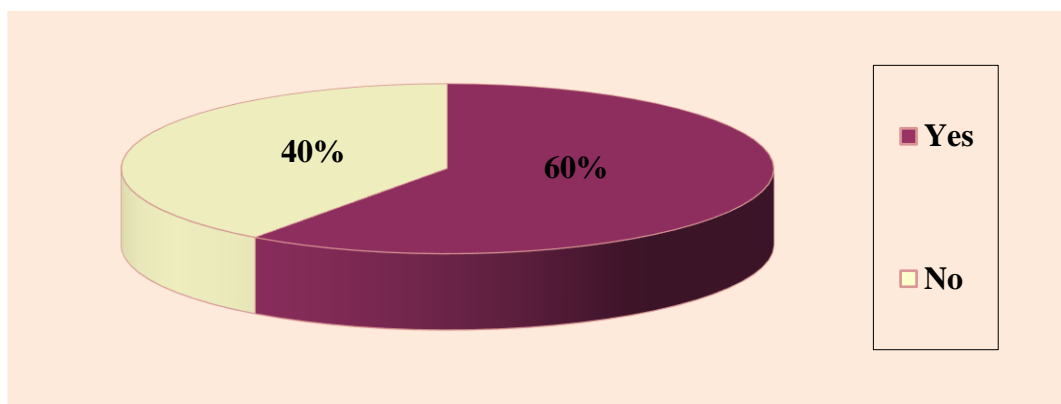
Author: Cruz Palacios Silvia María

Source: Teachers´ questionnaires and class observation sheets

Based on the information collected, 60% of the observed teachers mentioned that they arrange the seats in relation to the activities planned. However, these results contrast from the teachers´ opinions about the classroom space, the mentioned there is not enough space inside a classroom then it is not possible to arrange the student´s seats according to each activity planned.

Based on the notes taken during the class observations, it can be confirmed that only the 20% of the teachers used the seating arrangement according to the activity that was performed.

The position and the way a teacher organizes the positions of students in a class is of great importance. Partin (2009) states that traditional seating in rows is very functional for many classroom purposes, it enables the teachers to observe behavior more easily and minimizes distractions.

Regarding seating arrangement there are five different authors: Gower, Phillips and Walters (1995), Partin (2009), and Woodward (2001) who settle that an only arrangement cannot be taken for granted, it is necessary to improve the seating arrangement according to the type of activity and type of class a teacher is working with. They also agree that it is not a good idea to have a seating arrangement in which a student or some students have their backs to the whiteboard, because in that case the attention of the students would be harder to get.

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

Graph 16
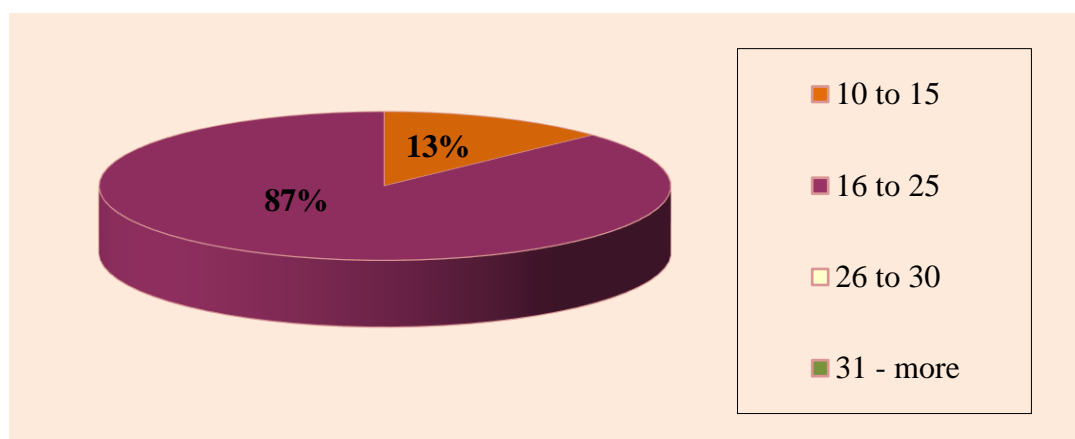
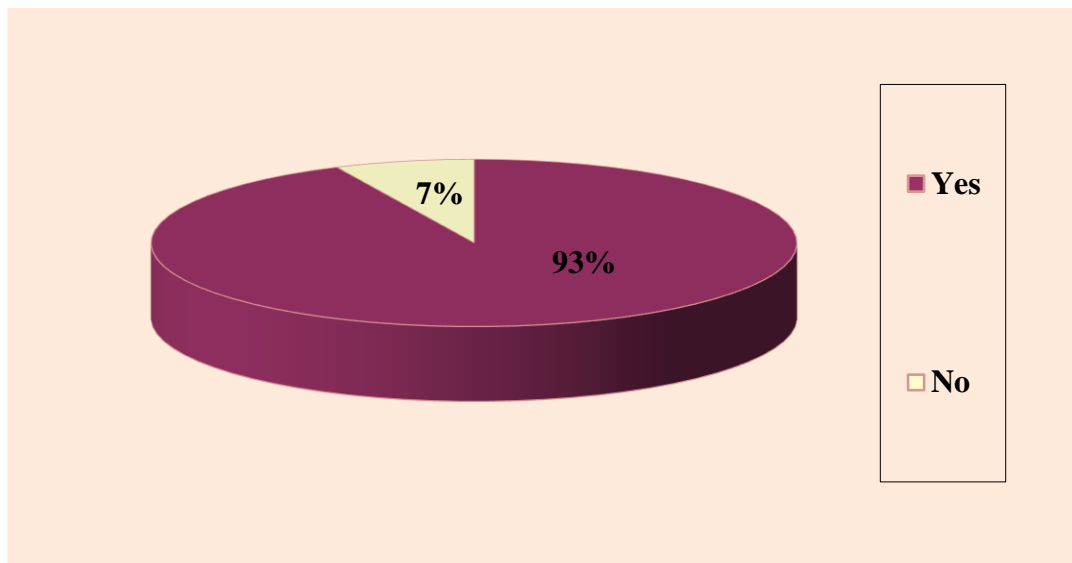Author: Cruz Palacios Silvia María

Source: Teachers´ questionnaires and class observation sheets

Eighty seven percent of the results indicate that the appropriate number of students in a class according to the teachers is from 16 to 25. Thirteen percent of the teachers mentioned that it will be better if a class had no more than 15 students.

Regarding class size GreatSchools Staff (2008) mentioned in a publication that gains in achievement generally occur when class size is reduced to less than 20 students. But according to them, so many variables in the average classroom, such as the quality of the teacher or the quality of the curriculum for example, can change the interpretation of the studies that led to this statement.

Do teachers use teaching resources?

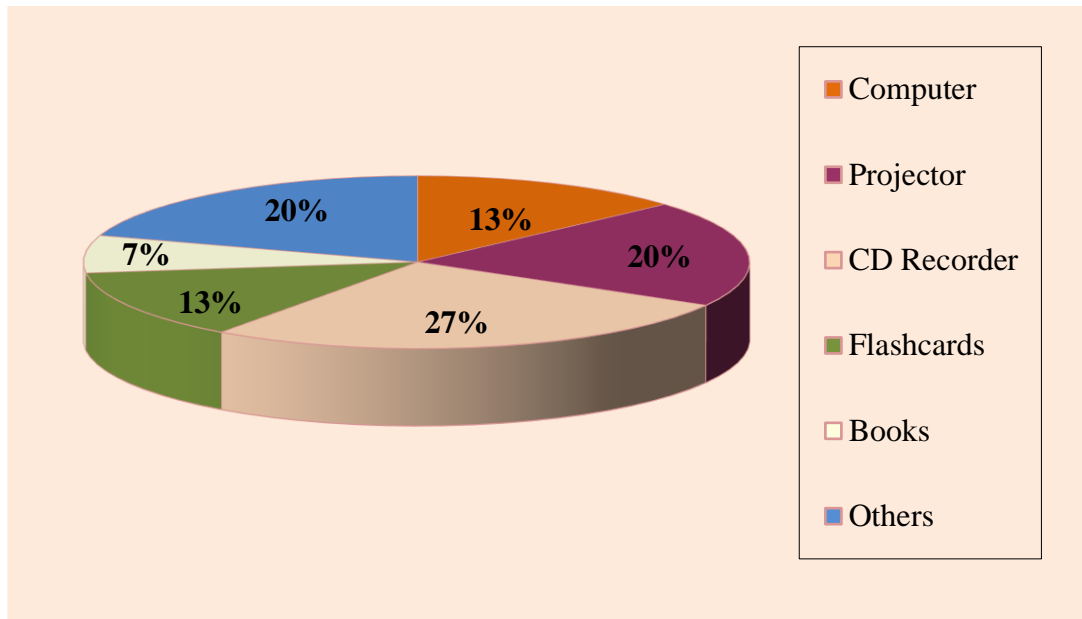**Graph 17**

Author: Cruz Palacios Silvia María

Source: Teachers´ questionnaires and class observation sheets

Graph 17 shows that 93% of the teachers use teaching resources. This calculation varies from the information gotten during the observations, not all of that percentage used teaching resources during the lessons.

Regarding teaching resources Woodward (2001) explains that there are different resources teachers can use to make lessons more interesting and effective.

What teaching resources do teachers use?

Graph 18

Author: Cruz Palacios Silvia María

Source: Teachers´ questionnaires and class observation sheets

Twenty seven percent of the teachers indicated CD Recorder to be the most common teaching resource used in their classes, 20% mentioned to use Projector and "Others" such as posters and extra papers. The 13% of the teachers pointed out the use of Computers and Flashcards; and 7% chose the Books as the resource used.

According to Woodward (2001) one of the teaching resources that can make lessons more interesting and effective is the Board, which is used to add visual impact to a lesson, provide a model for writing, explain a word, and write up homework or what is needed in a lesson before starting it.

Gower, Phillips and Walters (1995) state that visual resources can take many forms such as: real objects or realia, pictures or photographs.

Other resources teachers incorporate into their classroom instruction very often are music and videos; and as Woodward (2011) explains, teachers can do

language practice in song lyrics, or they can add a change of focus in a lesson with the videos.

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

Graph 19
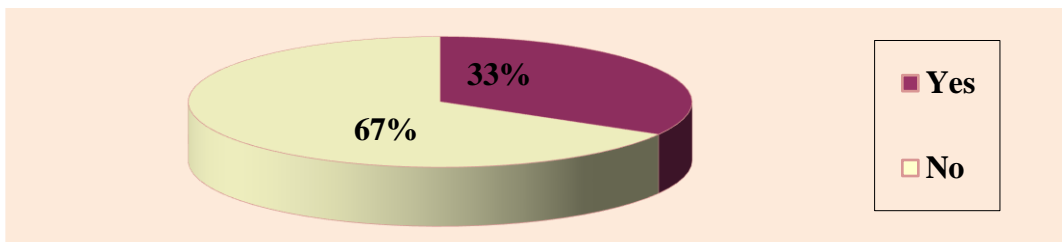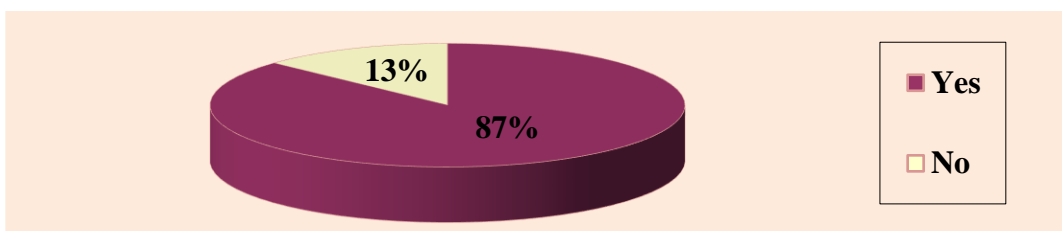

Author: Cruz Palacios Silvia María

Source: Teachers´ questionnaires and class observation sheets

Sixty seven percent of the teachers consider that the resources they have in class are not appropriate, these educators expressed that those resources are not enough and they need more resources in order to motivate the students. The other 33% of the teachers indicated the resources they have in class are very helpful at the moment of explaining any new topic.

Regarding teaching resources Bolick, Berson, Coutts and Heinecke (2008) affirm they are integral component of teaching and learning situation, it is not just to supplement learning but to complement its process.

Does the institution review the teachers´ lesson plans?
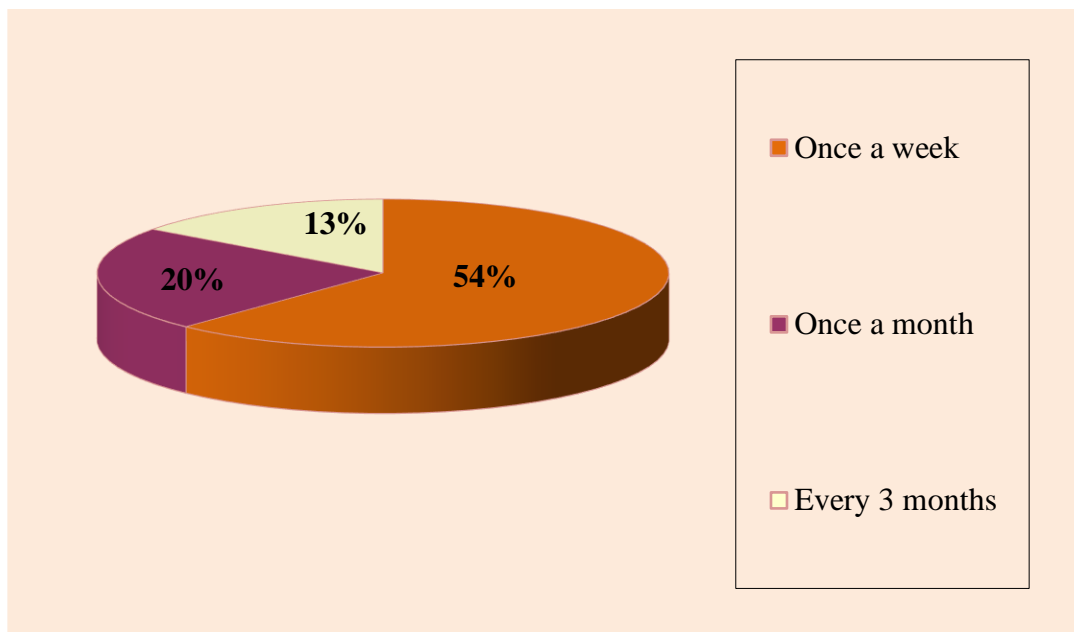
Graph 20

Author: Cruz Palacios Silvia María

Source: Teachers´ questionnaires and class observation sheets

Eighty seven percent of the teachers indicated that the institution do review their lesson plans. Besides what it was mentioned, there were more than 20% of the teachers that had no lesson plans at the moment they were observed.

According to Woolfolk (2007) a lesson planning guide is what teachers need to help with time management, to keep the material organized and easy to understand. This guide is divided in four parts: the introduction, the presentation, the practice, and the production

How frequently does the institution review the teachers´ lesson plans?

Graph 21

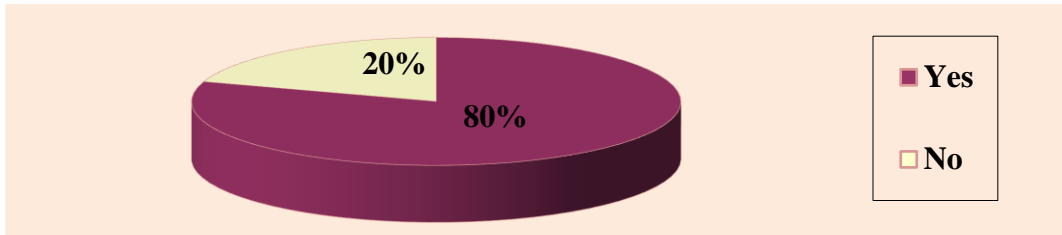Author: Cruz Palacios Silvia María

Source: Teachers´ questionnaires and class observation sheets

Graph 21 shows that most of the teachers are very strongly in agreement on this question. From the 87% of the teachers who indicated in the graph 20 that the institution review their lesson plans, the results reveal that 54% of the teachers present their lesson plans every week, 20% of them presents the lesson plans once a month, and the 13% of them presents the lesson plans every three months.

Does the institution monitor teachers´ teaching?

Graph 22

Author: Cruz Palacios Silvia María

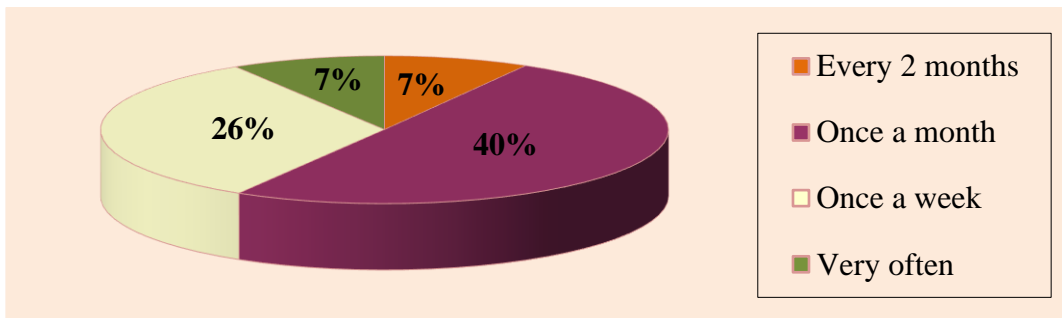Source: Teachers´ questionnaires and class observation sheets

Eighty percent of the teachers indicated their teaching is monitored by the institution; the 20% of them said the institution does not monitor the teaching process.

Regarding classroom observation or school inspection, as Kennedy and Chi-kin Lee (2008) refer to this topic, they state that it is done by supervisors, principles, other teachers, and even parents.

According to Henard (2010), the main goal of the institution monitoring is that some decisions to improve teaching can be taken after doing a classroom observation depending on the results.

How frequently does the institution monitor the teachers´ teaching?

Graph 23

Author: Cruz Palacios Silvia María

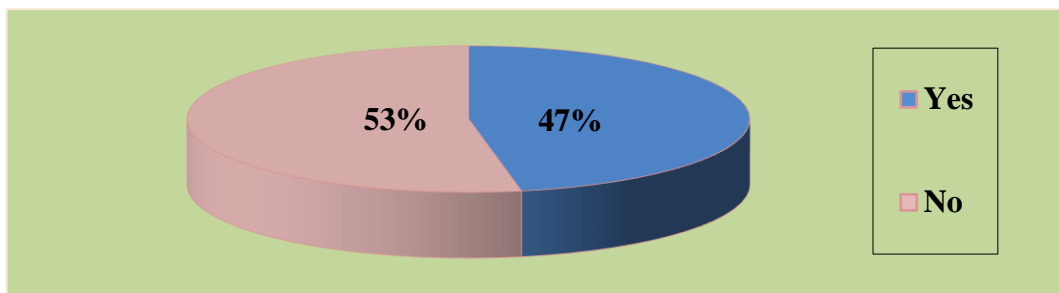Source: Teachers´ questionnaires and class observation sheets

From the 80% of the teachers whose classes are monitored by the institution, 40% said the institution monitors the teaching once a month; 26% of them indicated the institution monitors the teaching once a week; 7% mentioned to be monitored every 2 months; and the other 7% alleged to be monitored very often.

Concerning this topic De Vries (2005) mentions that there is usually a general feeling that, over time, external monitoring should become less frequent, less intrusive, give more trust to institutions and work more collaboratively

Factors Concerning Students

Do students like English?

Graph 1

Author: Cruz Palacios Silvia María

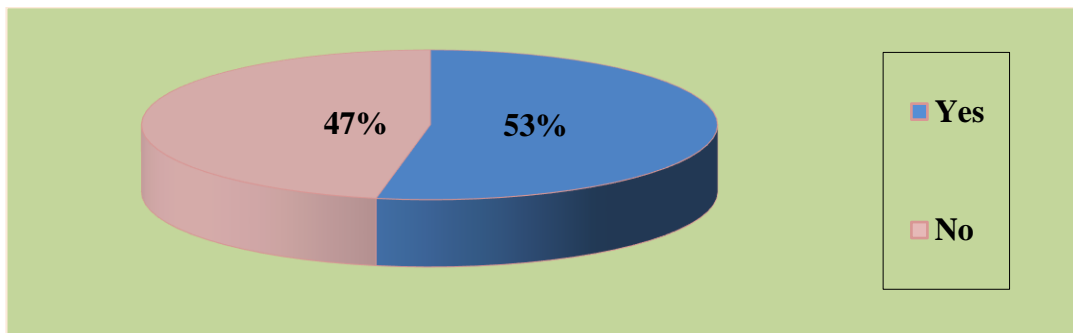Source: Students´ questionnaires and class observation sheets

Graph 1 shows that there are more students who do not like English than the ones who do. From the sample, exactly the 47% of the students like the English language; the other 53% alleged not to like it. This fact that students like or dislike the language could affect or benefit the learning process.

The fact that a student like or dislike a specific subject could be referred to the learning style or the students' aptitude. Concerning students' aptitude Woolfolk (2007) mentions that early theories involved one or more of the following three themes: the capacity to learn, the total knowledge a person has acquired, and the ability to adapt to new situations and to environment in general.

According to Saville-Troike (2006) learning styles are considered the characteristics that second language learners have; it includes a combination of personality traits and cognitive style. The cognitive style refers to the way of processing that is preferred by individuals. Little study has been carried out on other personality factors in relation to differences in second language outcomes, but there is some evidence that being imaginative or creative, empathetic and tolerant represents a great advantage.

Do the activities in class motivate students to learn English?

Graph 2

Author: Cruz Palacios Silvia María

Source: Students´ questionnaires and class observation sheets

Fifty three percent of the students´ answers show that the activities in class motivate them to learn English as a Second Language. The other 47% of them think it is necessary to improve more motivating activities in order to catch their attention.

Romando (2007) defines the students' motivation as the interest, desire, the need to participate in, or the compulsion the student feels or has in order to be successful in the learning process.

Regarding students' motivation Woolfolk (2007) includes three major goals teachers have: to get students involved with the work of the class; to develop in the students the trait of being motivated to learn, so they will be able to educate

themselves throughout their lifetimes; and the last goal, the students to think deeply about what they study.

How are the activities in class considered?

Graph 3
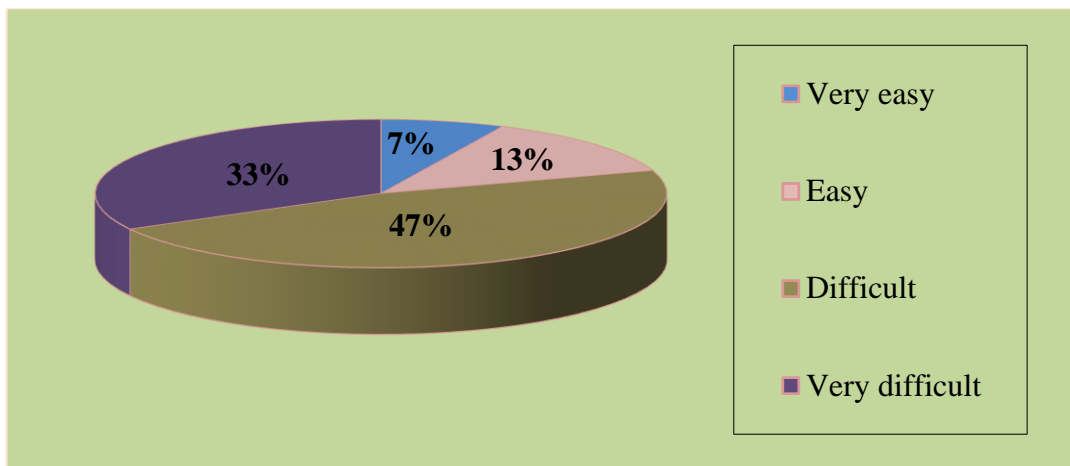
Author: Cruz Palacios Silvia María

Source: Students´ questionnaires and class observation sheets

As it is shown in the graph, 47% of the students consider the activities in class Difficult; 33% of them mentioned the activities to be Very difficult. 13% of the students consider these activities Easy, and only the 7% think that they are Very easy.

According to Charles Jennings (2013) the difficulty a task could have depends on the instructions given to the students to do their class works and homework, the feedback that ensures the understanding of the topics, and the time given to do each task.

This author states that each classroom activity has rules for participation, and that is what students must understand, so the teacher must make sure everyone knows how to participate in a specific class activity. That is why instructions should be completely clear before starting any activity; otherwise, the misunderstandings

and mistakes will show up, making the students feel uncomfortable and affecting the process of learning.

Do students like the teachers´ teaching used in class? Why?

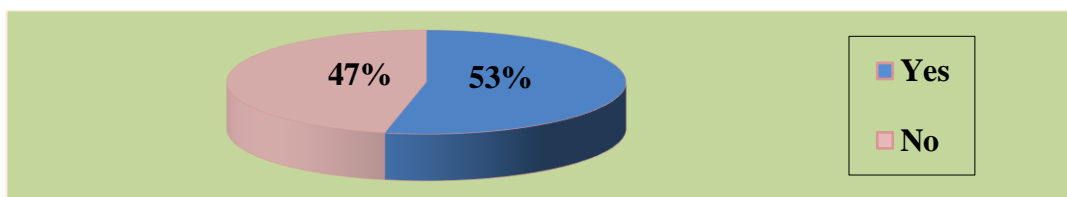**Graph 4**
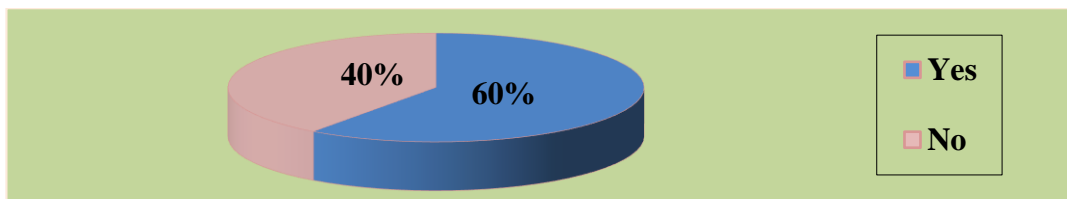
Author: Cruz Palacios Silvia María

Source: Students´ questionnaires and class observation sheets

As it can be noticed in the graph above, the 60% of the students like the teaching skills used by the teachers. The other 40% from the whole sample mentioned not to like the teaching methods used by their teachers.

Concerning the reasons why the students like or dislike the teaching methods, 27% of the students mentioned their teacher´s methods to be boring and incomprehensible; 40% of them said they like the methods because of the teacher´s personality: the teacher was cool, funny, explains very well, cares about the students, and explains in Spanish. The other 33% decided not to give any reason why they like or dislike the teachers' methods used in class.

Do teachers use different activities that let students interact with their classmates?

Graph 5

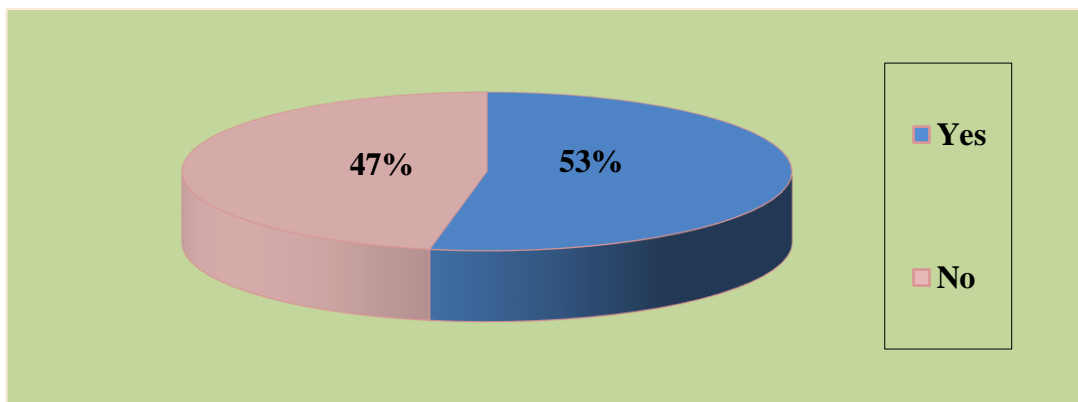Author: Cruz Palacios Silvia María

Source: Students´ questionnaires and class observation sheets

According to the perception of the students, 53% believe that teachers use some different activities that let them interact with the rest of their classmates, especially during the group work activities. The rest of them indicated that the interaction with their classmates is not possible.

Based on what Bremner (2010) states, if teachers are able to stop the teacher-talk-dependency, they will get the freedom to interact with individuals and groups on a more personal and targeted basis, ensuring in that way the regular feedback to learners that is needed.

Do teachers use English most of the time in the class?

Graph 6

Author: Cruz Palacios Silvia María

Source: Students´ questionnaires and class observation sheets

Fifty three percent of the students said their teachers use English most of the time in the class. Opposite to this percentage and according to the notes taken during the observations, it was perceived that 33% of the teachers use English most of the time during the classes.

Based on the results from the observations, the Grammar-Translation Method is the most common used inside the classes. Regarding this method, Quijada (2012) explains it involves direct translation to memorize.

Do teachers control the discipline in class?

Graph 7
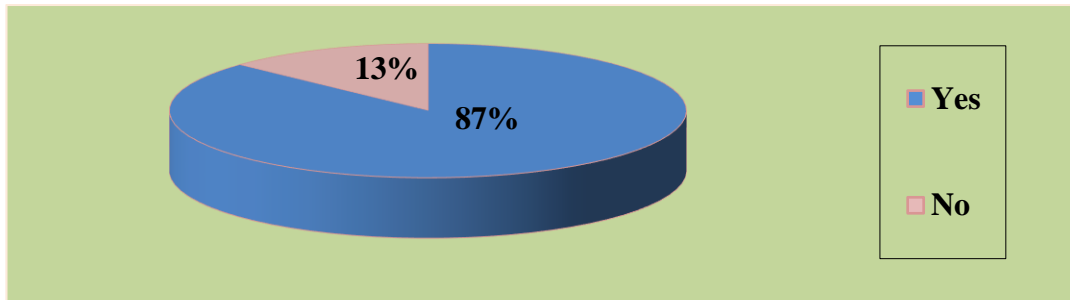
Author: Cruz Palacios Silvia María

Source: Students´ questionnaires and class observation sheets

Graph 7 shows that 87% of the students think their teachers control the discipline in class. According to Woolfolk (2007) the introduction part plays an important role when planning a lesson, it is better to have a warm-up type exercise before starting the lesson because that will help students to focus their attention, and get prepared for the lesson ahead. This is a helpful tool to control the discipline.

Do teachers assign a certain time for the development of each activity?

Graph 8

Author: Cruz Palacios Silvia María

Source: Students´ questionnaires and class observation sheets

Fifty three percent of the students indicated that the teacher does not assign a certain time for the development of each activity. These results can be supported with the information gotten from the observations.

There is a significant relationship between time spent on content and the student learning. One important goal of classroom management could be to expand the total number of minutes available for learning, just as Woolfolk (2007) suggests, but this will not lead to achievement by itself. The idea is the teachers to avoid spending much of the teaching/learning time monitoring and correcting.

Do teachers explain what are the students´ weaknesses and strengths after every activity done?
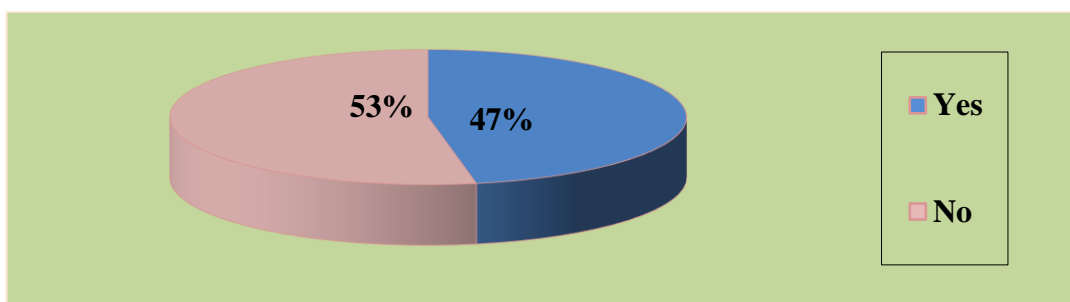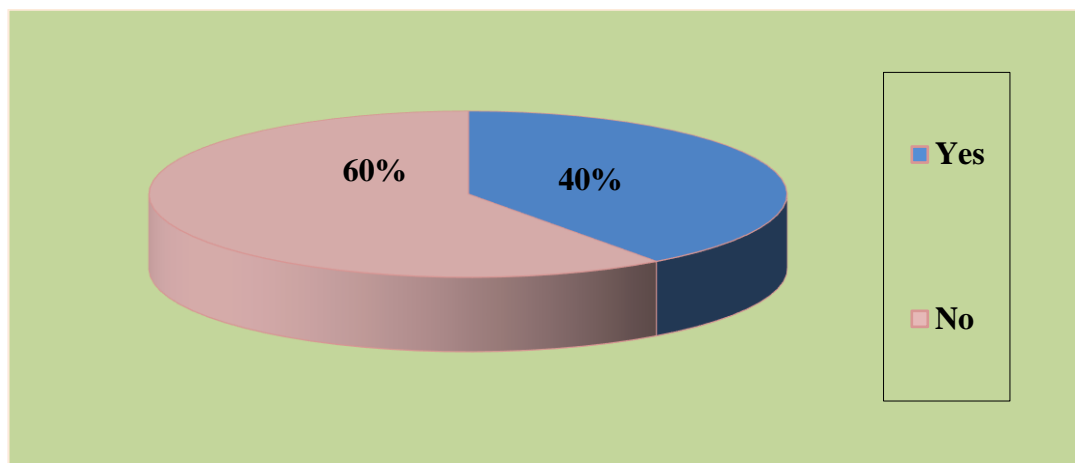
Graph 9

Author: Cruz Palacios Silvia María

Source: Students´ questionnaires and class observation sheets

Graph 9 shows that 40% of the students think the teachers explain the weaknesses and strength. Opposite to these opinions is the other 60%.

When a teacher explains what the strengths of students are, the social motivation is been improved. Romando (2007) explains this kind of motivation as the approval of teachers, parents and friends. This author also states that highly motivated students are actively engage in the learning process, they have a positive impact on learning, and they also reveal positive emotions such as excitement, enthusiasm, interest and optimism during the learning.

Are the instructions given by the teacher in order to do the activities in class clear?

Graph 10

Author: Cruz Palacios Silvia María

Source: Students´ questionnaires and class observation sheets

  Seventy three percent of the students confirmed that the instructions of the teachers are clear, while the other 27% indicated the opposite.

  According to what Jennings (2013) mentioned, in order to manage learning there are some aspects a teacher should keep always in mind: the instructions given to the students to do their class works and homework, the feedback that ensures the understanding of the topics, and the time given to do each task.

Do students consider that the class size let them work in a comfortable way?

Graph 11
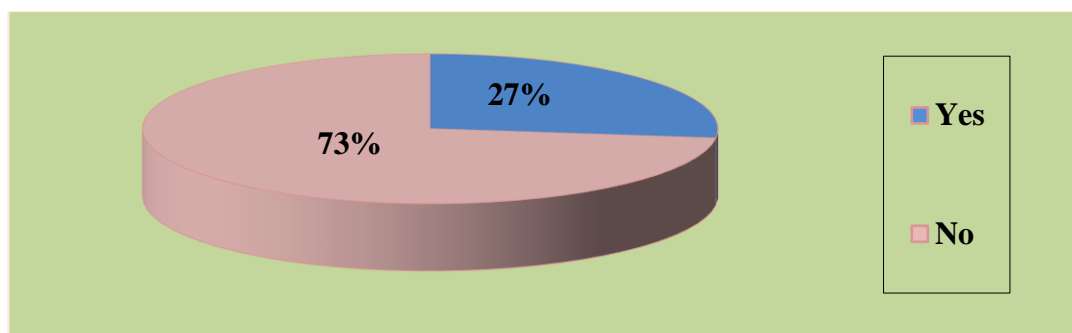
Author: Cruz Palacios Silvia María

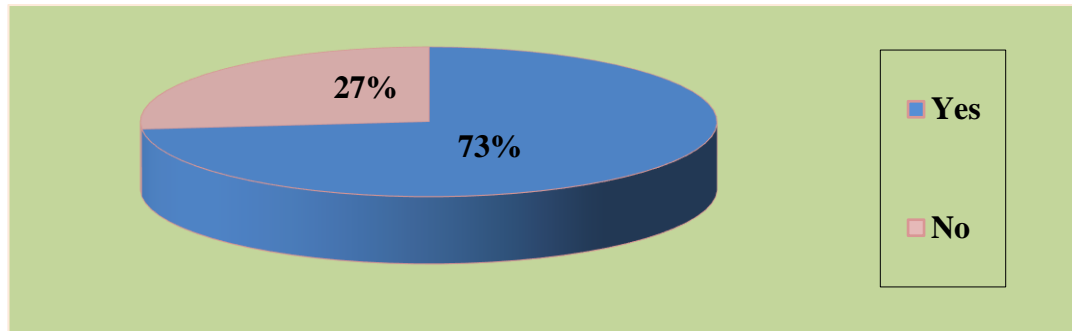Source: Students´ questionnaires and class observation sheets

Graph 11 shows that 73% of the students feel uncomfortable about the class size they have to work in, the rest of them feel happy with it.

According to what GreatSchools Staff (2008) mentions, "gains in achievement generally occur when class size is reduced to less than 20 students". But according to them, so many variables in the average classroom, such as the quality of the teacher or the quality of the curriculum for example, can change the interpretation of the studies that led to this statement.

Do students consider that the number of students in class benefit the English learning process?

Graph 12
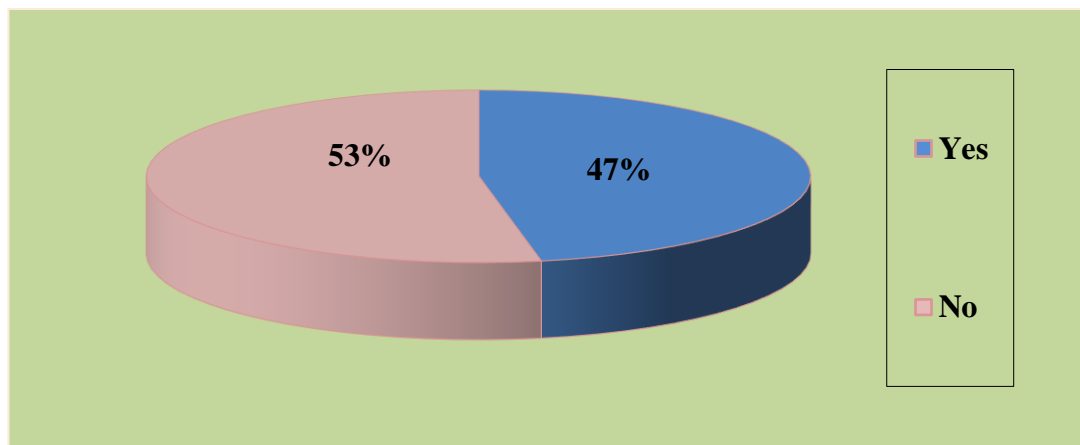
Author: Cruz Palacios Silvia María

Source: Students´ questionnaires and class observation sheets

Graph 12 demonstrates that 47% of the students think it benefits the English learning process, while 53% of them consider the number of students in a class affect this process.

Finn, Pannozzo and Achiles (2003) point out that class size effects are likely to be not singular but multiple, it is stated that large classes present more challenges for classroom management, pupil control, and marking, planning, and assessment.

Do students like the seating arrangement used by the teacher in the different activities in class?

Graph 13
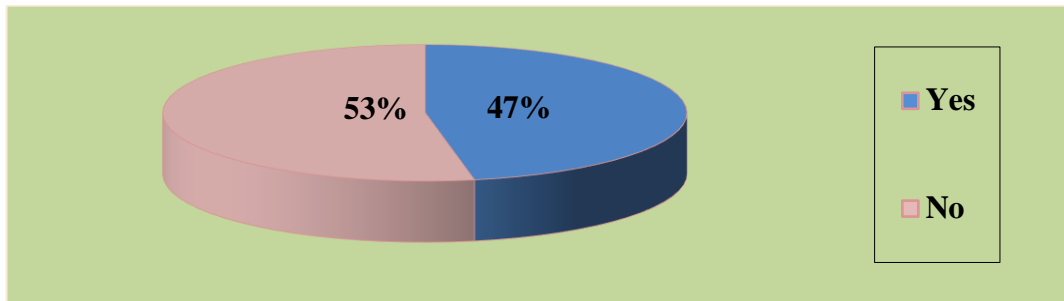
Author: Cruz Palacios Silvia María

Source: Students´ questionnaires and class observation sheets

Forty seven percent of the students indicated to like the seating arrangement used by the teachers in class. Contrary to this number, 53% of the students alleged not to like it.

Partin (2009) states that traditional seating in rows is very functional for many classroom purposes, it enables the teachers to observe behavior more easily and minimizes distractions.

Are teaching resources such as: television, computer, cd recorder, smartboards, etc., used in class?

Graph 14
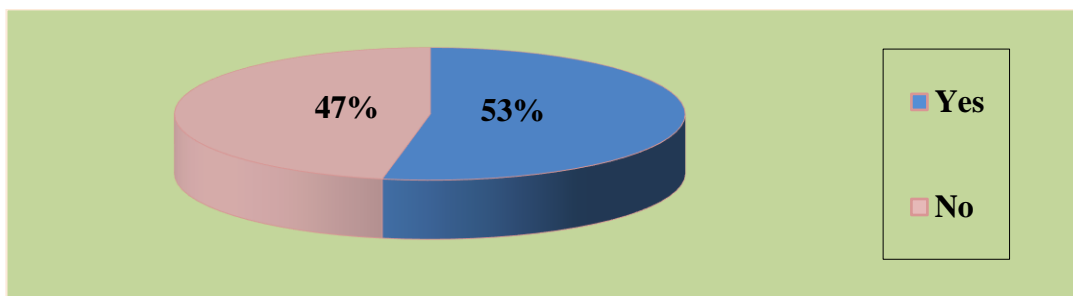
Author: Cruz Palacios Silvia María

Source: Students´ questionnaires and class observation sheets

Forty seven percent of the students considered that the teaching resources are not used in class; these opinions can be supported with the information collected from the observations. Despite of these results, 53% of the students confirmed the used of these resources in class.

Centered on the idea from Woodward (2011), there are different resources teachers can use to make lessons more interesting and effective. The board is probably the most useful resource, it can be made from different materials and is used to add visual impact to a lesson, provide a model for writing, explain a word, and write up homework or what is needed in a lesson before starting it.

Factors Concerning Classrooms

Does the teacher consider Students´ needs to teach English?

Graph 1
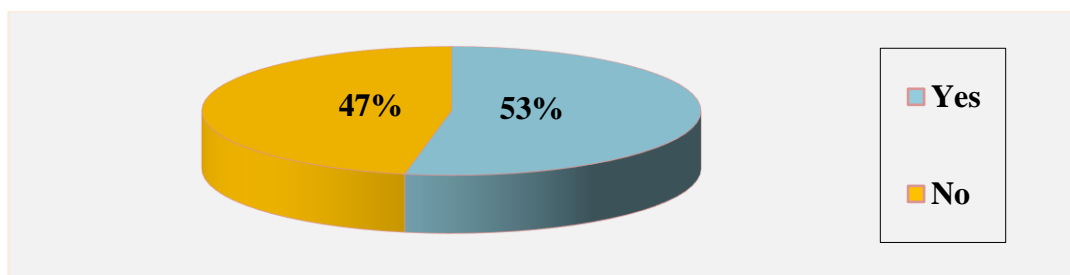
Author: Cruz Palacios Silvia María

Source: Class observation sheets

Graph 1 presents that 53% of the teachers considered students' needs to teach English; 47% of them did not.

According to Gross (1999) some students seem naturally enthusiastic about learning, but many need-or expect-their instructors to inspire, challenge, and stimulate them, effective learning in the classroom depends on the teacher's ability. Whatever level of motivation the students bring to the classroom will be transformed, for better or worse, by what happens in that classroom.

Which is the level of the students?

Graph 2
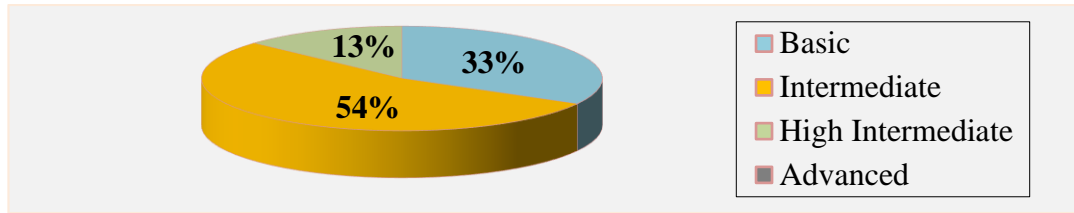
Author: Cruz Palacios Silvia María

Source: Class observation sheets

Graph 2 shows that 54% of the classes had Intermediate level students, 33% of the classes had Basic level students, and 13% of the classes had High Intermediate level students.

According to Saville-Troike (2006), the students' levels are directly related to the learning styles which are considered the characteristics that second language learners have; it includes a combination of personality traits and cognitive style.

Which of the following methods are used?

Graph 3
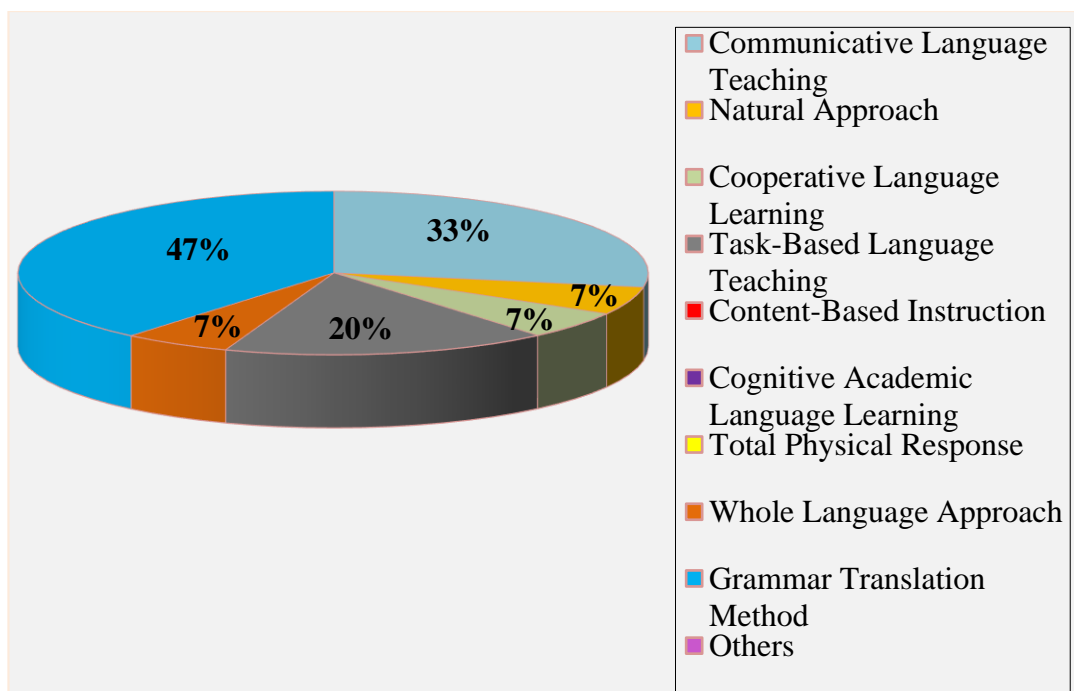
Author: Cruz Palacios Silvia María

Source: Class observation sheets

Graph 3 demonstrates that there was more than one method used in some of the classes. The most commonly method used during the observations was the Grammar Translation; 47% of the classes were ruled by this method, which shows that teachers used the first language as a tool inside the classrooms. Quijada, (2012) explains this method involves direct translation to memorize.

Thirty three percent of the observed classes used the Communicative Language Teaching. According to Richards and Rodgers (2001), the Communicative Language Teaching Method refers to the learning of a language through using it to communicate; authentic and meaningful communication should be the goal of classroom activities, in which fluency plays an important role.

The Task-Based Language Teaching was used by 20% of the observed groups. Richards and Rodgers (2014) describe that the Task-Based Language Teaching refers to the dependence on tasks as the primary source of pedagogical input in teaching and the absence of a systematic grammatical or other type of syllabus that characterizes current versions of this approach.

The following methods: Natural Approach which is considered for beginners and designed to help them become intermediates, Cooperative Language Learning, and Whole Language Approach were noticed in 7% of the classes each.

Richards and Rodgers (2001) explain the Natural Approach belongs to a tradition of language teaching methods based on observations and interpretation of how learners acquire both first and second languages in nonformal settings.

Concerning the Cooperative Language Learning, Richards and Rodgers (2001); and Harris (2003) agree that it is related to the use of activities involving

pairs and small groups of students that work together in classrooms in order to maximize their own, and the learning of each other.

Which of the following activities are used?

Graph 4
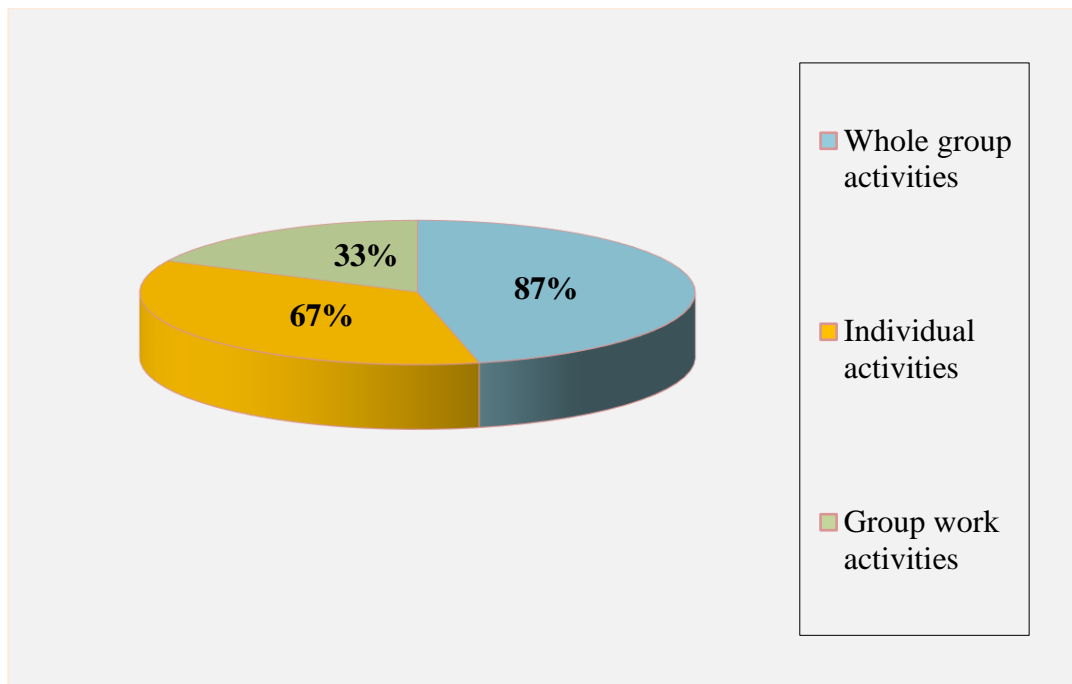
Author: Cruz Palacios Silvia María

Source: Class observation sheets

Depending on the teacher and the topic of the lesson, classes can have different activities as it is shown in this graph; 87% of the groups worked with whole-group activities, 67% of the groups worked with individual activities, and 33% of the observed classes had group work activities.

In order to know what kind of activities can be used during the classes, Woolfolk (2007) can be cited with his statement: teachers should know about the students, their interests and abilities; about the subjects being taught; the expectations or limitations they will have; and how to apply materials or adapt them to get meaningful activities.

Which of the following aspects of the lesson plan were applied in this class?

Graph 5
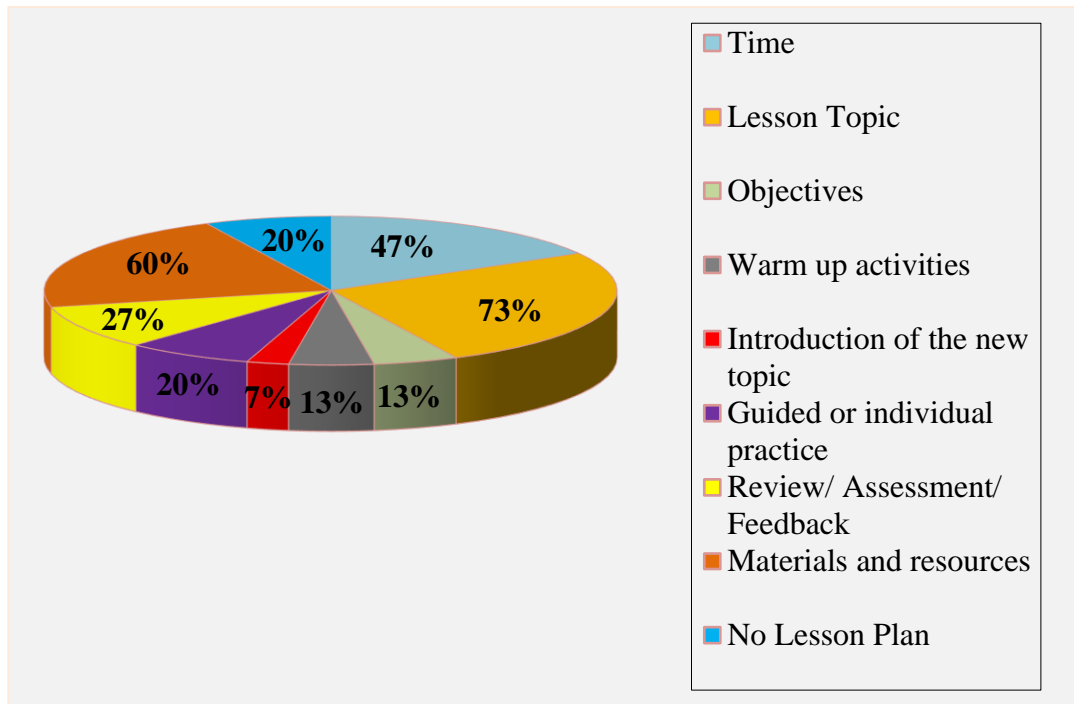
Author: Cruz Palacios Silvia María

Source: Class observation sheets

As it is shown in graph 5, the aspect of Time was applied in 47% of the observed classes, Lesson Topic was applied in 73% of the cases, Objectives and Warm-up Activities were applied in 13% of the groups. The Introduction of the new topic was applied in 7% of the cases; the Guided or Individual Practice was applied in 20% of the observed classes; the Review/ Assessment/ Feedback was applied in 27% of the groups; Materials and Resources were applied in 60% of the classes. However; there were 20% of the observed classes in which the teacher had no Lesson Plan before starting the lesson.

According to Woolfolk (2007) a lesson planning guide is divided in four parts: the introduction, the presentation, the practice, and the production. In the introduction part, it is better to have a warm-up type exercise before starting the

lesson because that will help students to focus their attention, and get prepared for the lesson ahead. In the presentation part, as the name suggests, the new material is well presented. It is necessary to include clear explanations of the grammar and to show concise examples, so the students could have some understanding of the material they just learned, its meaning and proper use. The practice part is where students get involved. The main goal or objective of this stage is that students use the material presented in the presentation part. Finally, the production part gives the students the chance to use the newly learned material in a free and open way. In other words, is during this stage where the students should be able to express an understanding of language by using the new material in context.

Which of the following aspects have been considered by the teacher?

Graph 6
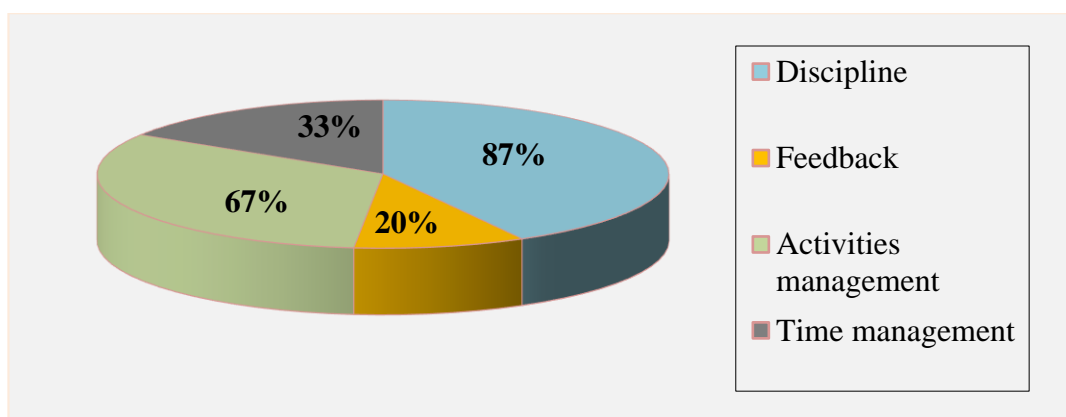
Author: Cruz Palacios Silvia María

Source: Class observation sheets

Graph 6 shows that teachers considered different aspects during the same observed class; this is how in 87% of the observed classes the aspect of Discipline was considered by the teachers, Feedback was considered in 20% of the cases, Activities Management was considered in 67% of the observed classes; and the Time Management was considered in 33% of all the observations done.

Woolfolk (2007) explains the importance of a lesson planning guide and states it is what teachers need to help with time management, to keep the material organized and easy to understand. It is better to start the class with a warm-up type exercise because that will help students to focus their attention avoiding problems with the discipline. Then, the new material needs to be well presented. It is necessary to include clear explanations of the grammar and to show concise examples. The next step should be the practice part, where students get involved. Finally, the students should be able to express an understanding of language by using the new material in context, which is also known as the feedback.

How many students are there in the classroom?

Graph 7
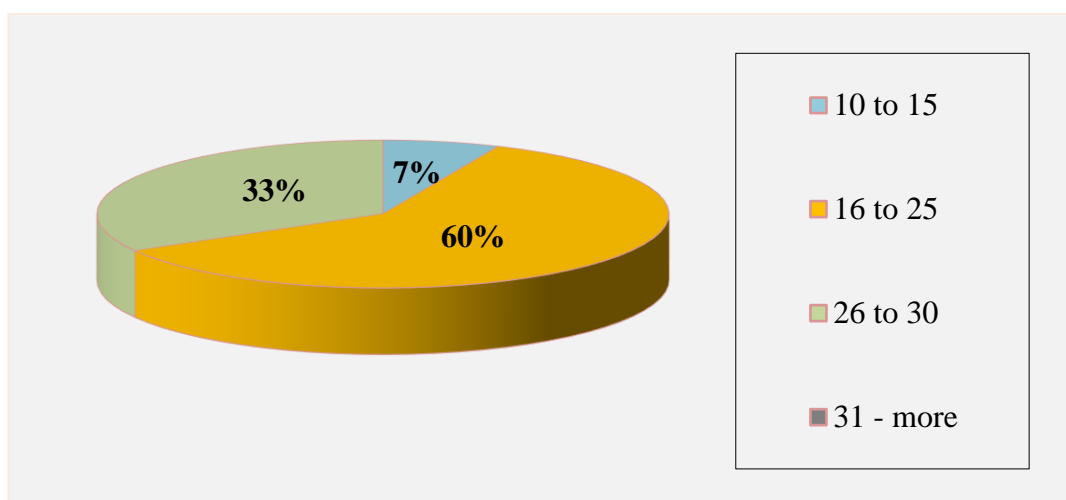
Author: Cruz Palacios Silvia María

Source: Class observation sheets

The results show there were 7% of the classes with 10 to 15 students, 60% of the classes with 16 to 25 students, and 33% of the classes with 26 to 30 students.

Regarding class size, Finn, Pannozzo and Achiles (2003) stated that large classes present more challenges for classroom management, pupil control, and marking, planning, and assessment.

Do students have enough space to move and participate in dynamic activities?

Graph 8
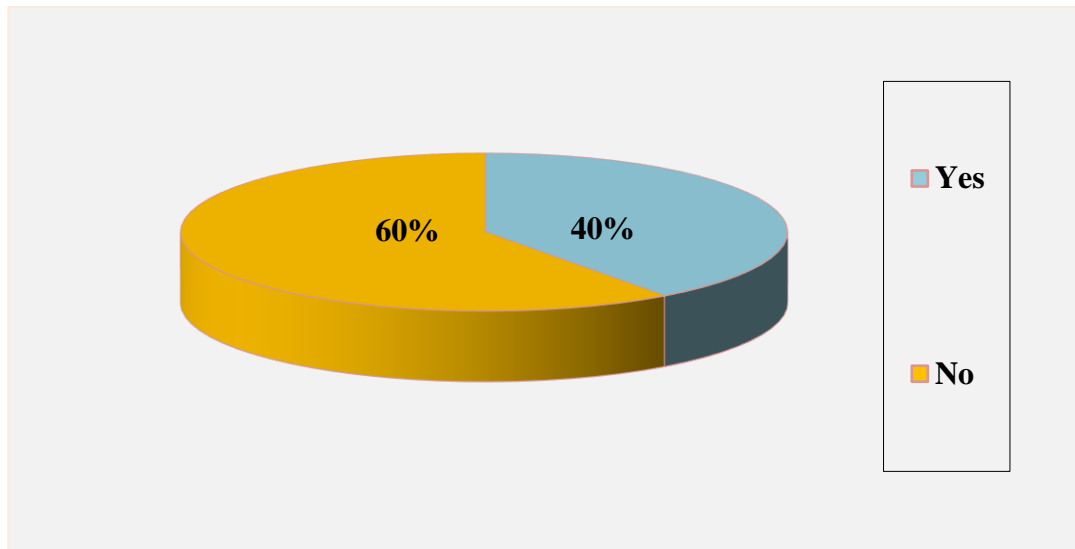
Author: Cruz Palacios Silvia María

Source: Class observation sheets

Sixty percent of the observed classes revealed that classroom space was not enough in order to move and participate in dynamic activities, which represents an affecting factor because students have the need to be in the same place all the time.

Regarding classroom space, Casson (2002) suggests that each student inside a classroom should have enough space to work. It should be easy for them to get to and from their seats, they need to have space to keep the material they work with, and they should be able to see the front of the classroom where the board is located.

It can also be included the opinion of Clayton and Forton (2001) who say that the behavior problems and the lack of attention the students struggled with many times, is a clear result of being in small or too crowded places. For that reason, they suggest estimating the range of sizes based on what is typical for the different ages of the students; and to make the necessary adjustments the classrooms, and everything that is in it, would require.

Is the seating arrangement appropriate for the teaching-learning process?

Graph 9
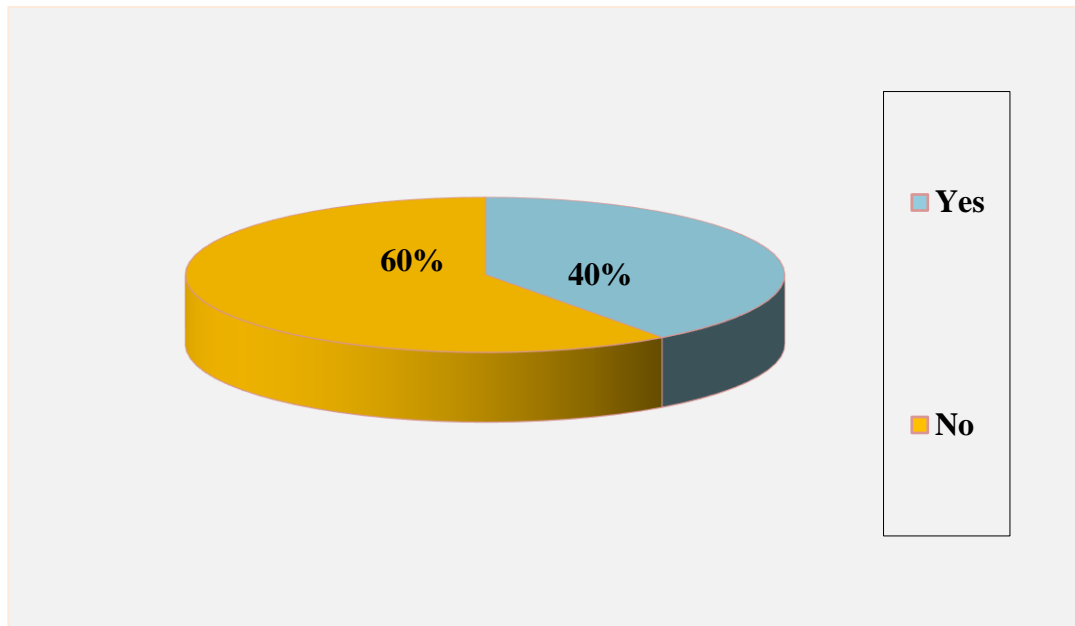
Author: Cruz Palacios Silvia María

Source: Class observation sheets

Graph 9 shows that in 60% of the cases, the seating arrangement is not appropriate, especially because there is not enough space in the classroom to move the seats according to the activities planned by the teacher.

On the other hand, from the 40% of the cases in which the seating arrangement was appropriate, it was noticed that only 20% of the teachers moved the seats in a café style. Gower, Phillips and Walters (1995) say this is a different option for a front direction in which the students can be grouped around tables, so with minor adjustments, students are in a position to change to pair work or group work.

The other 20% had the traditional seating in rows, so the teachers could keep walking around the whole classroom. Partin (2009) states that traditional seating in rows is very functional for many classroom purposes, it enables the teachers to observe behavior more easily and minimizes distractions.

Which of the following resources are there in the classroom to facilitate teaching?

Graph 10
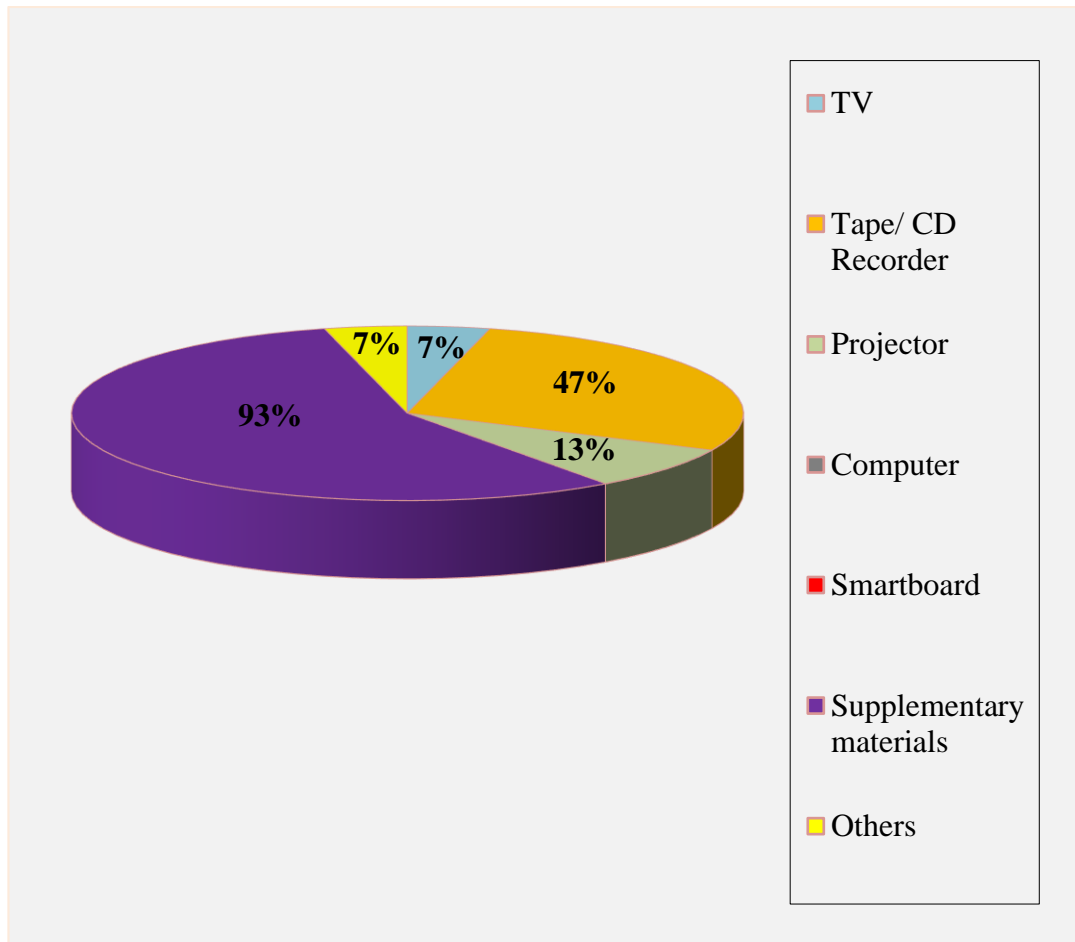
Author: Cruz Palacios Silvia María

Source: Class observation sheets

  The results show that it can be found more than one resource to facilitate teaching inside the same classroom: TV was observed in 7% of the classrooms, CD Recorder in 47% of the classrooms, Projector in 13% of the classrooms, Supplementary materials such as books and posters in 93% of the classrooms. In the last 7% of the classes, worksheets and work cards were brought by the teacher, which is why it is considered in the option "Others".

  By using teaching resources the lessons can be more interesting and effective for students, according to Woodward (2011).

In which percentage does the teacher use English in class?

Graph 11
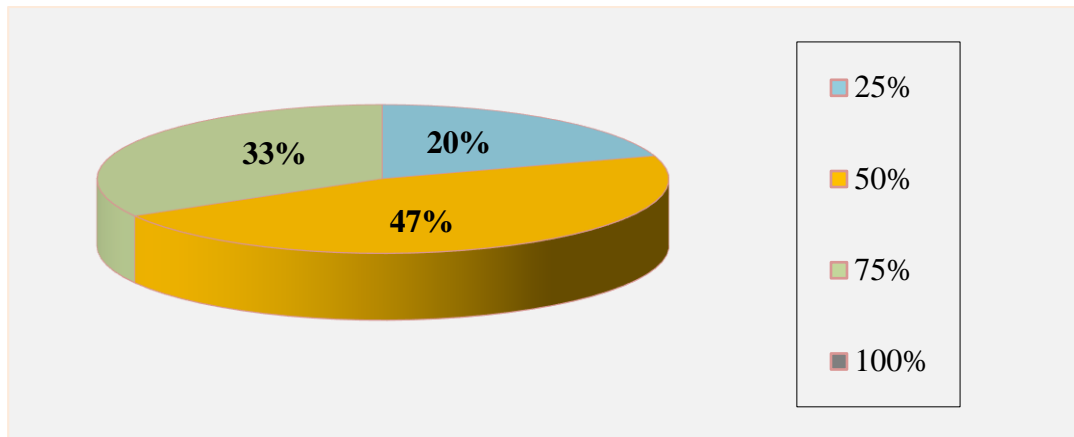
Author: Cruz Palacios Silvia María

Source: Class observation sheets

Graph 11 demonstrates that in none of the observed classes the teachers used 100% English. Opposite to this, in 20% of the classes was used 25% English by the teachers; in 33% of the observed classes teachers used 75% English; and in 47% from all the observations, teachers used 50% English.

According to this information it is clear that Grammar-Translation Method predominates during the classes, almost half of the interviewed teachers used the first language inside the classrooms. Regarding Grammar-Translation Method, Quijada (2012) explains that this method is one of the most common ones, focuses on the development of the appreciation the students have from the literature of the target language. In other words, this method provides knowledge in grammar, as well as vocabulary, to the students. It involves direct translation to memorize.

Conclusions

Based on the obtained and presented evidence, and after analyzing all the information included in this research, it is necessary to arrive to these conclusions:

Most of the participants in this study consider that teachers pay attention to students´ needs. On the other hand, half of the teachers did not consider these needs and they need to be aware of the factors that contribute to improve learning.

Teachers consider they use English most of the time in their classes; however, it was found that translation was the biggest problem noticed in the observed classes, in most of the cases, teachers preferred to translate the activities especially with beginner levels.

Based on these results obtained from the quantitative data and the observations, students showed less motivated and tended to have little or none interaction with teachers at all during the classes. This situation can be considered a result of the lack of attention they received from the teachers.

According to the questionnaires, teachers assumed that they use resources in class. However, it was surprising to see that the mentioned resources were not used in any of the observed classes; instead, the activities were mainly carried out using the book and the board.

According to the results a great quantity of the teachers complained about the classroom spaces, but the average of more than the half of the observed classes is between 16 to 25 students and the classroom space fits with that average. Furthermore, not all the teachers really showed an interest on the seating arrangement inside the classrooms.

Even teachers ensure the institution monitors them in continuous frequencies, it was discovered that not even half of the teachers were monitored regularly during

the classes. This situation let the teachers feel comfortable by working with limited resources but make the students feel uncomfortable with the learning process.

Lesson Plans are the last factor to be mentioned with a big impact on this research. Even though, all of the observed teachers indicated to work with a lesson plan, some of them did not have any before the classes. Based on the results from the investigation and the observations, teachers with an organized lesson plan showed a better performance during the classes with a bigger impact on students.

Recommendations

Finally, after all this investigation development, we can propose some recommendations in order to improve the English teaching-learning process:

As it was mentioned in the conclusion section, students need to be comfortable in order to concentrate in what they are learning. A correct seating arrangement according to the number of students and classroom size could represent a big difference in the motivation students receive when developing the teaching-learning process activities.

The teaching resources can be considered as motivating tools. By using these resources according to the students' level and their needs, teachers can get the required attention from the students having as a result more effective and dynamic classes.

The lesson plan represents an important factor in the teaching process. By following a lesson plan for every lesson, teachers can have the needed organization during the classes. Also the educational institutions should have constant meetings with the teachers in order to check the weekly lesson plans, so the organization would become part of their habits.

By monitoring the students' activities development during classes, teaching can be improved and the students' needs can be attended. Teachers should keep in mind that students have different learning styles, which directly depends on their age, personality, attitude, and motivation.

Translating should be completely avoided when teaching a second language. The motivation and interaction students have inside a class reduces when the teacher translates every word or every command given to the students. English language should be used most of the time inside the classrooms, the goal when teaching a subject

is the students to learn it correctly; and in order to accomplish this, teachers must be well-prepared before starting a teaching-learning process.

Motivation should be enriched so the students feel more comfortable with the language learning. Their interests and needs to participate in the classes must be improved; otherwise, the number of students who educate themselves throughout their lifetime will be even lower.

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ANNEXES

Annex 1

UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA PARTICULAR DE LOJA
La Universidad Católica de Loja
MODALIDA ABIERTA Y A DISTANCIA
CARRERA DE INGLES
TEACHER'S QUESTIONNAIRE

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION:	
DATE:	
YEAR:	

1. Which level of education do you have?

High school diploma ( )	English Bachelor's Degree ( )	English Master's degree ( )
Others: _____		

2. Do you consider Students' needs to teach English successfully?

Students' Needs *(age, personality, attitude, aptitude, motivation, and learning styles)*
YES   ( )   NO   ( )

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

Students' Level *(Basic, Intermediate, High Intermediate , and Advanced)*
YES   ( )   NO   ( )

4. Which is the level of your students?

*Students' Level			
Basic ( )	Intermediate ( )	High Intermediate ( )	Advanced ( )

5. Which of the following methods was used in this class? *(check only 1)*

Communicative Language Teaching	( )
The Natural Approach	( )
Cooperative Language Learning	( )
Content-Based Instruction	( )
Task-Based Language Teaching	( )
Cognitive Academic Language Learning	( )
Total Physical Response	( )
Whole Language Approach	( )
Grammar Translation Method	( )

Others _____	( )

6. Do you use whole- group activities to teach your lessons?

YES ( )	NO ( )	
Why?		
_____		

7. Do you use individual activities to teach your lessons?

YES ( )	NO ( )	
Why?		
_____		

8. Do you use group work activities to teach your lessons?

YES ( )	NO ( )	
Why?		
_____		

9. Do you use English most of the time in your classes?

YES ( )	NO ( )

10. Do you plan your lessons?

YES ( )	NO ( )

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

YES ( )	NO ( )

12. How many students do you have in this class?

10 - 15 ( )	16 - 25 ( )	26 - 30 ( )	31 - more ( )

13. Do you feel comfortable working with this number of students?

YES ( )	NO ( )

14. Do you have enough space to work with this group of students?

YES ( )	NO ( )

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

YES ( )	NO ( )	

16. How many students do you think is the appropriate number to teach English?
(check only 1)

10 - 15 ( )	16 - 25 ( )	26 - 30 ( )	31 - more ( )

17. Do you use teaching resources (TV, Tape/Cd recorder, Computer(s), Projector(s), Smartboard, and supplementary materials)?

YES ( )	NO ( )
Which ones? _____	

18. Do you consider appropriate the resources you have in class?

YES ( )	NO ( )
Why? _____	

19. Does the institution review your lesson plans?

YES ( )	NO ( )	
If yes, how frequently?		
Once a week	Once a month	Other_____

20. Does the institution monitor your teaching?

YES ( )	NO ( )	
If yes, how frequently?		
Once a week	Once a month	Other_____

Thanks for your cooperation!!!!!!

TEACHER'S INTERVIEW

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

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

UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA PARTICULAR DE LOJA
La Universidad Católica de Loja
MODALIDA ABIERTA Y A DISTANCIA
CARRERA DE INGLES
STUDENT'S QUESTIONNAIRE

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION:	
DATE:	
YEAR:	

21. ¿Te gusta aprender Inglés?

YES ( )	NO ( )

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

YES ( )	NO ( )

23. Consideras que las actividades realizadas en clase son:

Muy fáciles ( )	Fáciles ( )	Difíciles ( )	Muy difíciles ( )

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

YES ( )	NO ( )

¿Por qué?
_____
_____
_____

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

YES ( )	NO ( )

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

YES ( )	NO ( )

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

YES	( )	NO	( )

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

YES	( )	NO	( )

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

YES	( )	NO	( )

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

YES	( )	NO	( )

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

YES	( )	NO	( )

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

YES	( )	NO	( )

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

YES	( )	NO	( )

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

YES	( )	NO	( )

GRACIAS!!!!!

UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA PARTICULAR DE LOJA
La Universidad Católica de Loja
MODALIDA ABIERTA Y A DISTANCIA
CARRERA DE INGLES
OBSERVATION SHEET

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

1. Does the teacher consider Students' needs to teach English?

*Students' Needs *(age, personality, attitude, aptitude, motivation, and learning styles)*	
YES ( )	NO ( )

* It can be recognized based on the variety of activities (visual, audio, audiovisual, realia, and on-line) applied, and students' reaction to them.

2. Which is the level of the students? *(Check 1)*

*Students' Level			
Basic ( )	Intermediate ( )	High Intermediate ( )	Advanced ( )

* It can be recognized based on the material they are using or placement done by the institution.

3. Which of the following methods are used?

Communicative Language Teaching	( )
The Natural Approach	( )
Cooperative Language Learning	( )
Content-Based Instruction	( )
Task-Based Language Teaching	( )
Cognitive Academic Language Learning	( )
Total Physical Response	( )
Whole Language Approach	( )
Grammar Translation Method	( )
Others _____	( )

4. Which of the following activities are used?

Whole-group activities	( )

Individual activities	( )
Group work activities	( )

5. Which of the following aspects of the lesson plan were applied in the class?

Time	( )
Lesson topic	( )
Objectives	( )
Warm-up activities	( )
Introduction of the new topic	( )
Guided or individual practice	( )
Review/Assessment/Feedback	( )
Materials and resources	( )

6. Which of the following aspects have been considered by the teacher?

Discipline	( )
Feedback	( )
Activities management	( )
Time management	( )

7. How many students are there in the classroom?

10 - 15	( )	16 - 25	( )	26 - 30	( )	31 - more	( )

8. Do students have enough space to move and participate in dynamic activities?

YES	( )	NO	( )

9. Is the seating arrangement appropriate for the teaching-learning process?

YES	( )	NO	( )
NOTES: _____			

10. Which of the following resources are there in the classroom to facilitate teaching?

TV	( )
Tape/Cd recorder	( )
Computer(s)	( )
Projector(s)	( )
Smartboard	( )
Supplementary materials	( )
Others	( )

11. In which percentage does the teacher use English in class?

25 %	( )	50 %	( )	75 %	( )	100 %	( )

Annex 5

1 Common Reference Levels

1.1 Global scale

Proficient User	**C2**	Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarise information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations.
	C1	Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.
Independent User	**B2**	Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.
	B1	Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics, which are familiar, or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes & ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.
Basic User	**A2**	Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.
	A1	Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.

1.2 Self-assessment grid

	Reception		Interaction		Production	
	Listening	**Reading**	**Spoken Interaction**	**Written Interaction**	**Spoken Production**	**Written Production**
C2	I have no difficulty in understanding any kind of spoken language, whether live or broadcast, even when delivered at fast native speed, provided I have some time to get familiar with the accent.	I can read with ease virtually all forms of the written language, including abstract, structurally or linguistically complex texts such as manuals, specialised articles and literary works.	I can take part effortlessly in any conversation or discussion and have a good familiarity with idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms. I can express myself fluently and convey finer shades of meaning precisely. If I do have a problem I can backtrack and restructure around the difficulty so smoothly that other people are hardly aware of it.	I can express myself with clarity and precision, relating to the addressee flexibly and effectively in an assured, personal, style.	I can present a clear, smoothly-flowing description or argument in a style appropriate to the context and with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points.	I can write clear, smoothly flowing text in an appropriate style. I can write complex letters, reports or articles, which present a case with an effective logical structure, which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points. I can write summaries and reviews of professional or literary works.
C1	I can understand extended speech even when it is not clearly structured and when relationships are only implied and not signalled explicitly. I can understand television programmes and films without too much effort.	I can understand long and complex factual and literary texts, appreciating distinctions of style. I can understand specialised articles and longer technical instructions, even when they do not relate to my field.	I can express myself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. I can use language flexibly and effectively for social and professional purposes. I can formulate ideas and opinions with precision and relate my contribution skilfully to those of other speakers		I can present clear, detailed descriptions of complex subjects integrating sub-themes, developing particular points and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion	I can express myself in clear, well-structured text, expressing points of view at some length. I can write detailed expositions of complex subjects in an essay or a report, underlining what I consider to be the salient issues. I can write different kinds of texts in a style appropriate to the reader in mind.
B2	I can understand extended speech and lectures and follow even complex lines of argument provided the topic is reasonably familiar. I can understand most TV news and current affairs programmes. I can understand the	I can read articles and reports concerned with contemporary problems in which the writers adopt particular stances or viewpoints. I can understand contemporary literary prose.	I can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible. I can take an active part in discussion in familiar contexts, accounting for and sustaining my views.	I can write letters highlighting the personal significance of events and experiences.	I can present clear, detailed descriptions on a wide range of subjects related to my field of interest. I can explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.	I can write clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects related to my interests. I can write an essay or report, passing on information or giving reasons in support of or against a particular point of view.

	majority of films in standard dialect.					
B1	I can understand the main points of clear standard speech on familiar matters regularly encountered in work school, leisure, etc. I can understand the main point of many radio or TV programmes on current affairs or topics of personal or professional interest when the delivery is relatively slow and clear.	I can understand texts that consist mainly of high frequency everyday or job-related language. I can understand the description of events, feelings and wishes in personal letters	I can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. I can enter unprepared into conversation on topics that are familiar, of personal interest or pertinent to everyday life (e.g. family, hobbies, work, travel and current events).	I can write personal letters describing experiences and impressions.	I can connect phrases in a simple way in order to describe experiences and events, my dreams, hopes & ambitions. I can briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans. I can narrate a story or relate the plot of a book or film and describe my reactions.	I can write straightforward connected text on topics, which are familiar, or of personal interest.
A2	I can understand phrases and the highest frequency vocabulary related to areas of most immediate personal relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). I can catch the main point in short, clear, simple messages and announcements	I can read very short, simple texts. I can find specific, predictable information in simple everyday material such as advertisements, prospectuses, menus and timetables and I can understand short simple personal letters	I can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar topics and activities. I can handle very short social exchanges, even though I can't usually understand enough to keep the conversation going myself.	I can write short, simple notes and messages relating to matters in areas of immediate need. I can write a very simple personal letter, for example thanking someone for something.	I can use a series of phrases and sentences to describe in simple terms my family and other people, living conditions, my educational background and my present or most recent job	I can write a series of simple phrases and sentences linked with simple connectors like „and", „but" and „because".
A1	I can recognise familiar words and very basic phrases concerning myself, my family and immediate concrete surroundings when people speak slowly and clearly.	I can understand familiar names, words and very simple sentences, for example on notices and posters or in catalogues.	I can interact in a simple way provided the other person is prepared to repeat or rephrase things at a slower rate of speech and help me formulate what I'm trying to say. I can ask and answer simple questions in areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics.	I can write a short, simple postcard, for examples sending holiday greetings. I can fill in forms with personal details, for example entering my name, nationality and address on a hotel registration form.	I can use simple phrases and sentences to describe where I live and people I know.	I can write simple isolated phrases and sentences.