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

Trabajo de fin de titulación.

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CERTIFICACIÓN

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DEDICATION

This achievement I dedicate with all my love to God, who has gave me the opportunity for living. Also, I want to dedicate to my mother who gave me the life and who has been with me in good and bad moments. To my wife, thanks a lot for helping me to achieve my goal and thrust in me, although, we have been in difficult times and you have always been supporting and giving me all of your love. And also, I dedicate this job to my children who has been my inspiration to overcome this goal.

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With this job, I want to thanks to my wife and children who are the reason of my life, who day after day trusted and gave me their unconditional support and also they helped me with the moral power to persuade along my hard studies. Finally, I want to thanks to Universidad Tècnica Particular de Loja for giving me the opportunity to become real my dreams.

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ABSTRACT

The research is about the factors that affect the English teaching-learning process in EFL classrooms of public high schools. It was carried to analyze the main aspects related to teachers, students, classrooms, and institutions. With that purpose, five public high schools were selected in Riobamba city of Chimborazo province and the participants were in-service teachers and students from 8th to 3rd level of senior year

The method used in this research was quantitative because it made possible to obtain accurate information of the factors that mostly influence the English teaching-learning process. Main instruments used to gather data were questionnaires and observation formats. Questionnaires collected information about teachers and students' perceptions of factors such as percentage of English used in classes, teaching methods, managing learning, teaching resources, lesson design, etc. Observation formats recorded details of teachers' classes and their language proficiency.

The results of this research show that main factors affecting the English teaching-learning process are teachers' lower language proficiency, percentage of the English language used in class, lack of skills in managing learning, class size, classroom space, and lesson design.

INTRODUCTION

There is an important amount of students who enter the University with inappropriate English language skills in Ecuador. In consequence, young Ecuadorian people do not have opportunities to improve their academic and professional lives. This research titled “Factors that affect the English language teaching-learning process in Ecuadorian public high schools” has been carried out to analyze main factors affecting the English language teaching-learning process in Ecuadorian public high schools.

The objectives of this research are: determine the classrooms conditions in which English lessons take place; identify the characteristics of in-service English teachers; and, determine teachers’ instructional competence. By identifying the factors affecting the English language teaching-learning process, it will possible to bring a clear view of areas that need to be improved in the English language teaching field in Ecuadorian public high schools. Therefore, students would improve their language skills and they will have better opportunities in their academic and professional lives.

The factors affecting English language teaching-learning process have been studied also by different authors in other countries. There are three, among others, that are worthily to review.

Firstly, Zu (2001) did a research to discover the problems and strategies of teaching large classes in China. He applied a questionnaire to students who were studying English as a compulsory subject at University level in China. Students considered that the learning environment was safe and relaxing, there was a sense of competition among students, learning in large classes was challenging for them.

However, this research had some limitations such as the fact that Chinese students do not feel uncomfortable in large classes because that suits their cultural characteristics; Chinese learners tend to obey teachers and wait until they are being asked.

The second study was done by Muñoz (2001) to investigate the factors that influence foreign language learning. The author found that students who received extra amount of language practice had better abilities in the English language. Besides, students who received instruction using audio visual materials also had better performance in comparison to those who only were taught using traditional resources. Finally, teachers' attitude and strategies help those students who had social problems out of school. But the results of this study was limited by the unequal distribution of students, there was many students with excellent language skills.

The third study was done by Aduwa-Ogiegbaen & Lyamu (2006) to know whether teaching methods, teaching resources, and classroom physical space had some influence in the English teaching-learning process. The results showed that students did not feel comfortable in the classrooms, they complaint of the lack of space and amount of students. In addition, classes were teacher-centered and traditional materials (textbooks, chalkboard) were used to teach English classes. Despite of the results found, this research was limited by the inappropriate conditions of the schools that, according to the authors, are the characteristics of educational institutions in Nigeria.

Regarding the benefits of this research, public high schools will obtain main advantages because they will have a better approach of the real situation that bilingual education faces in Ecuador. In addition, this investigation has provided the researcher a

valuable experience in relation to the research field and the factors affecting English language teaching-learning process. This investigation is an important tool for pre-service teachers who want to work in public institutions because they will raise awareness of the factors that need to be improved in order to provide Ecuadorian students good English language background.

Despite of the significance of the results found in this research, there were some limitations such as the fact that some teachers felt uncomfortable being observed and they did not behave naturally. In addition, some students exaggerated their behavior while others performed shy as a result of the presence of the researcher in the classroom. Those are some disadvantages of the process of observation mentioned by Richards & Farrell (2005). Another limitation was related to the questionnaires, there were some questions that teachers and students did not answer and that influenced the accuracy of the results; finally, another limitation that I could find was that most of the institution authorities could not support with the information what I was looking for.

METHOD

Setting and participants

This research was carried in Riobamba, a city in the Ecuadorian highlands. In that city, five public high schools were selected to conduct the investigation. In each institution, three teachers were invited to participate in the research as well as one student per each observed class. Those teachers taught 5 hours of English per week and had assigned an average of 38 students in each classroom. About the students, they were teenagers between 12 and 17 years old and all of them belong to a medium- to- low social and economic level.

Procedure

This research is basically divided into two stages. In the first stage, the most important literature about factors related to teachers, students, classroom, and institutions was reviewed in order to elaborate the theoretical framework that supports the results. The second stage consisted on gathering the necessary information for the analysis and elaboration of conclusions and recommendations.

Gathering of data required to apply some techniques such as surveys and note-taking. Surveys consisted on different questions asked to teachers to know more about their profiles and to identify their language proficiency within the Common European Framework of Language Reference. Note-taking was necessary to record details of teachers' comments and their behavior in the classroom. In addition, this research used some instruments such as observation formats and questionnaires. Observation formats consisted on objective questions that were useful to record details of the teaching-

learning process in the classes. And, questionnaires were used to gather data about factors related to teachers, students, classrooms, and institutions. Finally, the quantitative method was used to calculate the percentages of the answers provided by the questionnaires.

The process of the research field consisted of delivering the selected teachers a questionnaire that they answered about different aspect such as teaching methods, teaching activities, lesson design, and percentage of language used in class, class size, classroom space, teaching resources, etc. In addition, teachers were observed while they worked with students in the classes and the details of each class were recorded on observation formats. After each observation, teachers were interviewed using a survey that contained questions to gather information about their language and professional background. Besides, one student was randomly selected in each class to answer a questionnaire that allowed knowing their opinion of the teaching-learning process.

Once all the necessary data was collected, the results of the teachers' questionnaire were quantified using the quantitative method and Microsoft Excel 2010 program to calculate the percentages of answers obtained in each question in order to present the results in statistical charts.

The statistical charts allowed the researcher to have a better approach of the obtained results, and to analyze them it was necessary to use notes of the observation sheets, the answers of the students' questionnaires, and information provided by the teachers in the interview. The analysis consisted on classifying the results according to factors related to teachers, students, classrooms, and institutions. Main factors related to

teachers that were analyzed in this research are: level of education, language proficiency, teaching methods and techniques, percentage of the English language used in class, lesson design, managing learning. Factors related to learners are: students' needs and English level. Concerning classrooms, the factors that were taken into account were: class size, classroom space, seating arrangement, and teaching resources. Finally, class observation and lesson design monitoring were the aspects analyzed in relation to the observed educational institutions.

DISCUSSION

Literature Review

In Ecuador, as in other countries of the world, teaching English as a foreign language is of paramount importance and it faces changes and difficulties. Gloria Vidal, Minister of Education of Ecuador, in an interview given to Vistazo Magazine this year, expressed that bilingual education has experimented important changes in recent years but it still faces some challenges because teachers need to improve their knowledge and proficiency of the English language.

Despite of the difficulties mentioned by the Minister of Education, different Ecuadorian cities have implemented programs to improve the English teaching process as occurs in Guayaquil. An article published by Hoy (2011) explains that the municipality of Guayaquil has supported an initiative to improve the English teaching process in many of the educative institutions because authorities and students consider that English is important for achieving better job opportunities, personal development, and for promoting touristic development. The program consists of delivering software to institutions in order that the teaching process becomes more interactive for students.

The teaching of English is made up of different factors that involve teachers and students. Some aspects are going to be reviewed within this section.

Teaching approaches and methods

Teaching English, as second or foreign language, requires that teachers have a good knowledge of methods and approaches to apply in their lessons. Mukalel (1998) describes characteristics of the grammar-translation method and communicative

language teaching. About grammar-translation method, the author explains that people who learn English by means of this method have good writing skills because they were well trained in the grammar rules of the language. According to him, teachers who use this method do not need many teaching resources because explanations are given in the mother tongue. Besides, this author explains that learners can deal better with language structures by making comparisons between the mother and target language. However, the author mentions that reading and writing skills cannot be considered as the unique way to master a target language because language learning is dynamic process in which communication is of great importance.

Regarding the communicative language teaching, the author comments that main purpose of this approach is communication. Thus teachers are facilitators and use a lot of real world material to encourage learners to communicate using the target language. Moreover, forms of language are selected according to learners' needs. In that way, learners are able to identify the most used structures that will allow them to communicate in a natural environment.

Other approaches used for teaching English in the classroom are Content-Based Instruction (CBI) and Task-based language (TBI). Details of these methods are provided by Brown (2002, p. 234) who says, "content-based language teaching integrates the learning of some specific subject-matter content with the learning of a second language". According to him, learners acquire knowledge not only of the language but also of the contents being taught such as geography, culture, history, or math; it integrates language skills. Concerning the TBI approach, it uses communicative

tasks in which learners have to demonstrate their level of knowledge of the language; meaning, communication, task completion and assessment are important aspects that teachers have to take into consideration. In the same way, Richards & Rodgers (2001) describe these approaches: Cooperative learning and Whole language. They mention that the main purpose of cooperative learning is to teach language and at the same time teach cooperative skills among learners; here the teacher is a facilitator and take part in the teaching-learning process as an independent participant. About Whole language approach, according to the authors, it also emphasizes collaborative work among teachers and students. The teacher is also a facilitator and participates actively in the classroom to create an appropriate learning environment.

To sum up, there are different methods and approaches that are useful for teachers and they can be applied according to the teaching objectives of a lesson.

Teaching techniques

Teachers use different types of methods in English language teaching and each method provides a wide variety of techniques. Mukalel (1998) expresses that is important that teachers demonstrate good knowledge of techniques to organize the teaching process. This author mentions some techniques such as group work to help learners to communicate while interacting with others; works on models to encourage learners using language for describing dimensional features of objects; making guess to stimulate learners to create short sentences to describe characteristics of things; listen and say that consist on exposing learners to pieces of audio materials to develop listening and speaking skills.

An interesting aspect about techniques is mentioned by Brown (2002). He recommends teachers to use techniques according to learners' level of language. Main techniques for beginner levels consist on repetition and drills, questions, group and pair activities. For intermediate levels the author suggests use of chain stories, surveys, polls, group problem solving, role-plays, paired interviews, storytelling, and others. And, very useful techniques for advanced levels are group debate, complex role-play, questioning author's intent, writing essays.

Additionally, Dhand (2008) mentions some techniques such as group discussion, projects, use of textbook, and field tripping. This author remarks that a technique is successfully used when it is chose in accordance with the topic of the lesson. Other techniques mentioned by this author are brainstorming to develop criticism and creative skills; case study and conflict develops inquiry skills by inviting students to solve problems; debate and interviewing promote language skills.

Summarizing, the authors mentioned above agree on explaining that techniques help teachers to achieve teaching objectives when they are selected appropriately taking into consideration the method, level of language, and topic of the lesson.

Managing learning

Teachers do not use only methods and techniques in the classroom; they give also instructions, feedback, and time for each activity or task. About giving instructions, Dixie (2003) states it is not an easy task because it depends on the type of activity and resources that learners will do and use in the classroom. He declares that instruction

must be specific, clear, simple, observable, and related to learning activities and learners' behavior.

There are some important aspects that Dixie & Bell (2009) explain about instructions. They must be limited in number; they should be stated using adverbs to express expectations, and teachers should ask questions to evaluate whether instructions were understood clearly. The authors emphasize that a set of questions after giving instructions create a positive environment and ensure the correct development of activities when they are correctly stated and are pertinent in quantity.

Other important aspect of managing learning is feedback. Fisher & Frey (2011) explain that feedback is not a synonym of rewards and some teachers wrongly believe that they are the only source of feedback in the classroom; feedback can also be provided by learners. Other point of view of feedback is the one by Askew (2000). She mentions that feedback can be positive or negative; feedback is positive when it is not focused in the activity and promotes good reaction from learners. Feedback is negative when it is too broad and teachers expend much time clarifying task instructions.

About timing Cowley (2009) mentions different reasons by which managing time is important in English teaching: to give students enough time to work, to work adequately, to control behavior, to clear up doubts. In addition, he comments that each activity on a lesson plan must have an adequate amount of time but sometimes is not easy to stick to these, according to her, teachers should consider delivering of resources and teacher talk when planning time for each activity. Finally, Capel (2005) explains that establishing priorities, listing weekly activities, and leaving time for evaluation of

teaching are some hints that often help teachers to optimize time outside of the classroom.

Lesson design

Teaching does not take place without planning. On the point of view of Richards & Renandya (2002) planning is important because it gives teachers a record or map of the class and help them to overcome any possible problem. Similarly, Butt (2006) declares that planning guarantee good teaching and learning for a long and short period of time. Also, Feeney (2002) mentions that planning has effects in students' behavior therefore it is important to clearly define all the activities that will be done with students.

There are different components of a lesson plan. Mishra (2008) explains that they consist of ten elements: title of the lesson; amount of time to complete the lesson; required materials; objectives; sets of the lesson or actions about the required skills; instructional component that refers to all the events related to the lesson; independent practice to give students opportunity to practice skills; a summary in which students will review content of the lesson; evaluation of knowledge; an analysis of the main events occurred during the lesson.

From a different point of view, Butt (2006) lists four major components of a lesson plan such as: the purpose of the lesson in which teachers describe aims, objectives and expected learning outcomes; the substance of the lesson that refers to the subject knowledge, understanding, and skills; the methods that consist of learning strategies; and, evaluation of the lesson for both teachers and students.

A last opinion about the components of a lesson plan is provided by Richards & Renandya (2002) who propose a model created by Tyler (1994). Tyler's model of a lesson plan contains these elements: objectives, learning activities, learning activities, methods of evaluation.

It can be observed that components of a lesson plan may vary according to models used by teachers but all of them agree on the evaluation element. All the authors mentioned above state that a lesson plan must evaluate students' knowledge of the lesson taught.

Class size

The amount of students in a classroom is a factor that teachers need to consider to plan a lesson. About this, Mayer (2000, p. 31) says, "How teachers implement the course content, instructional pedagogy, and technology use in the classroom may all be influenced by the number of students in the class." A long debate in class size support small classes especially with students that come from lower social and economic backgrounds. The author considers that students learn better in small classes because teachers are able to use techniques and pedagogy effectively. An interesting point mentioned refers to the limited number of research done about the effects of class size in the teaching process. Studies have focused frequently in the relationship between class size and teachers' ability to deal with disciplinary problems.

Similarly, Blatchford (2003) also refers to different points of view that support small classes and others that support large classes. Basically, this author states that enthusiasts who claim in favor of small classes argue that teachers can apply teaching

strategies appropriately. On the other hand, a high cost of class size reduction is the main argument of those who hold teaching in large classes. In sum, this author expresses that there is little research done about the effects of class size in students' learning success.

With regard to large classes, Brown (2002) does not give evidence of the effects in the learning process but he explains that some problems evidenced in classrooms with more than thirty students are: variety of abilities and proficiency, individual attention is reduced, students have fewer opportunities to practice speaking, and it is hard to provide feedback to students' written works.

Classroom space

There are many authors who claim that the physical classroom space influence students' learning. A first argument is presented by Feinstein (2006, p. 368) who argues, "When its attention is drawn to a perceived threat, the brain's ability to learn and remember new information may be minimized." By threats this author refers to a combination of different factors such as social interactions, academic challenges, or physical elements. Concerning physical elements, the author suggests teachers to reduce factors that could diminish students' learning success by providing them a secure learning environment; some elements are lighting quality, noise, air quality and temperature; all of them affect learning to some extent. For instance, bad quality of lighting affects students' vision therefore they are not able to concentrate well. High levels of noise impede conversation, reading, thinking, or listening. And too hot or too cold temperature does not allow learners to concentrate well in classes.

Other aspects are explained by Dimmock (2000, p.109) who says, “Addressing how students best learn involves creating favorable conditions for learning. These conditions include the physical and emotional state of the student, the physical classroom environment...” An important aspect about the physical context is the use of space; changing furniture and designing adequate space increases probability of good learning. Additionally, Ming-tak & Wai-sing (2008) refers to research done by Evans & Lovell (1979) and explain that children’s learning improve significantly when teachers use classroom space creatively.

Specifically in Ecuador, Ministerio de Educación del Ecuador (2006, p. 3) says in the National Plan of Education, “In general, the design of the educational institutions are neither in accordance with the environmental and climatic characteristics nor to the required capacity, that causes functional deficiencies and inappropriate conditions for education”. The plan was designed to improve the physical conditions of classrooms all over the country and will improve quality of physical classrooms by providing functional spaces according to the requirements of the Ecuadorian population.

Seating arrangement

There is evidence that proves that seating arrangement influence seating arrangement. According to Evertson & Weinstein (2006), students are not conscious only of the physical environment but also of its influence on their academic achievement. These authors explain that research done by Hasting & Schwieso (1995) demonstrated that students’ learning improve better when teachers arrange seats in relation to the task developed. They add that effective teaching depends on (1) the space

dimensions of the classroom; (2) materials and furniture used in the classroom; (3) and literacy activities to be performed.

More information about seating arrangement is given by Rathvon (2008) who declares, “Surprisingly little research has examined the effects of specific seating arrangements on achievement or learning-related variables, such as attention and participation, especially in recent years.” However, she mentions that some authors have claimed that the typical row-column seating style and paired desks promotes better collaborative work and increase on-task performance.

A final point of view is offered by Jonson (2002). She restates the importance for teachers on choosing the type of seating arrangement according to the type of work that is going to take place during lessons. For instance, beginner teachers can work using the traditional row format because it allows them to have more control over students. More experienced teachers like to work using different types of arrangements such as hollow circles, square or u-shape because they intend to promote more interaction among students.

In sum, authors above coincide on choosing seating arrangement according to teachers’ need in order to provide better opportunities of learning.

Classroom and teaching resources

Teaching resources are part of language instruction because many authors argue that they help teachers to make classes more interesting. In fact, Maxom (2009) explains that teaching resources add variety and meaning to teaching presentation and meets students’ learning styles. He presents these materials: flashcards, drawings, photos,

videos, and realia. In a similar way, Harmer (2004) explains that teaching aids keep learners motivated and help learners to explain meaning. This author mentions pictures, overhead projector, realia, language cards, boards, and Cuisenaire rods as some examples of materials. He describes that pictures can be used to present new vocabulary, to have students making predictions, to play games, or to start discussions. Overhead projectors are useful in showing, texts, images, diagrams, or students' works. About the board, this author states that it can be used creatively as notepad, explanation aid, picture frame, as game board, and as a notice board.

Final considerations about teaching resources are described by Kochlar (1985, p. 133) who says, "Their importance for teaching resides on the fact that provide unforgettable experiences to learners...their purpose is to avoid class routine" This author classify materials into visual aids such as chalkboard, map, globes, diagrams; audio materials as for example radio; audio visual materials as television or sound motion pictures.

Classroom observation

Classroom observation is considered a tool to evaluate the teaching process. About this, Brown (2002, p. 431) affirms, "Too often, teachers tend to view observations as necessary while 'in training' but unnecessary thereafter unless a supervisor is forced by regulations to visit their class in order to write up a recommendation for rehiring." He describes two types of observation: being observed by others and self- observation. Both types of observations benefits teachers with new ideas and improvement of skills but in the case of self-observation it requires discipline and organization.

In order to perform the process of classroom observation, García & Arranz (2011) state that it is necessary to define the purpose, objectives, and instruments. They explain eight forms of observation. The first is direct observation in which the observer gathers information immediately. Indirect is the second type of observation in which third parties collect information for the observer. Third type is open observation; here the process is not linked to specific purposes while in the fourth type, closed observation, the process is planned. Individual is the fifth type of observation in which one person is observed. On the contrary, in group observation more than one person is observed. Next type is natural observation that is conducted without interfere with the observee' activities. Finally, in designed observation a setting is designed to conduct the observation process. The author mentions that main problem of each type of observation is subjectivity.

Finally, Richards & Farrell (2005) identify peer and self observation. In peer observation teachers observe other colleagues' lesson in order to determine what is being taking place in the classroom. Learning new strategies is among others the positive aspect of peer observation. However, observed teachers sometimes feel uncomfortable because they confuse observation with evaluation. Besides, peer observation is prescriptive and many aspects are considered at once. On the other side, self-observation consists of one teacher watching their own teaching process. The authors explain that self-observation is a good source of objective information which is obtained through records or video tapes. But its main disadvantage is the gap between

subjectivity and real information because teachers usually consider that their teaching process is correct but after collecting results they realize that it is not true.

Student's motivation

Motivation is an important factor in the foreign language classroom. Saville-Troike (2006) identifies two types of motivation; integrative and instrumental. Integrative motivation leads students to learn because of their interest for being in contact with target language culture. On the other side, instrumental motivation derives from students' goals about specific facts such as travelling or improvement of their economic background. Similarly, Broughton (1980) expresses that in learning a foreign language students' demonstrate instrumental motivation.

Differences between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation are presented next. Woolfolk (2007) states that intrinsic motivation is related to students' personal interests and extrinsic motivation requires that learners receive an external reward.

Learning styles

Learning styles define the way students learn a foreign language. Therefore Harmer (2004) remarks that for planning the different activities in the classroom teachers must consider the different learning styles of students. He describes four learning styles from a methodologist named Tony Wright and they are: enthusiasts, oracular, participator, and rebel. Enthusiast learners like to work in accordance to a group's goals. Oracular learners work to achieve personal goals. Participator learners guide their learning process based in group goals while rebel learners follow their own objectives.

Learning styles are determined by the different characteristics and personal preferences of learners. Felder (1995) classifies learning styles as: sensory-sights, related to physical senses; intuitive, related to ideas; visual, learning by graphic sources; actively, learning by doing physical actions; reflectively, learning by self-reflection; sequentially, learning from process; globally, learning from general facts; inductive, learning from details; deductive, learning from generalizations. Finally, Gross (2009) states that learning style help learners to organize new concepts for retaining new information.

Students' intelligence or aptitude to learn English

The level of success in English learning may be determined by students' aptitude or intelligence according to some authors. As, Dörnyei (2005, p. 31) defines, "the concept of language aptitude is related to the broader concept of *human abilities*, covering a variety of cognitively-based learner differences." He also expresses that students' success in learning a foreign language has been associated to intelligence.

The relationship between language aptitude and success in language learning has been explained by many authors such as Ellis (1997). He affirms that learners who performed well in language learning are those who have obtained high scores in aptitude tests. However, Harmer (2004) considers tests as ineffective tools because they label students as more intelligent and less intelligent.

To conclude with the revision of literature review, five studies are going to be examined carefully to know how different aspects influence English teaching and learning.

Firstly, Zu (2001) did a research to discover the problems and strategies of teaching large classes in China. He applied a questionnaire to students who were studying English as a compulsory subject at University level in China. Among the negative answers students expressed that they were not able focus on the topic of the lesson, communication with the teacher was poor, they did not like to sit at the last seats in the class, and the air of the classroom was polluted with many students. However, they considered that the learning environment was safe and relaxing, there was a sense of competition among students, learning in large classes was challenging for them. At last, the author concluded that teaching in large classes requires that teachers use combination of teaching methods and improve their knowledge in managing large classes.

The second study was done by Muñoz (2001) to investigate the factors that influence foreign language learning. The researchers applied a questionnaire and a test to four groups of students from five public schools in Spain; the test was used to evaluate students' level of written and spoken English and the questionnaire was used to gather information of learners' social background, extracurricular English courses, and language usage. The results showed that students who received extra amount of language practice had better abilities in the English language than those who only receive regular instruction at school; they only had better scores. Besides, students who receive instruction using audio visual materials also had better performance in comparison to those who only were taught using traditional resources. Finally, teachers' attitude and strategies help those students who had social problems out of school. The

researcher concluded that teacher's strategies and behavior are important in classroom management. In addition, factors related to school environment improve students' language learning.

The third study was done by Ames & Archer (1998) to analyze how specific motivational processes were related to the mastery and performance goals in the classroom. The participants of this research were 176 students from junior and high schools, 4 to 5 students were selected randomly to answer a questionnaire to know their opinion about the class received. The questionnaire contained questions that assessed students' perception of the dimensions of classroom goal structure, learning' strategies, attitude toward the class, and perceived ability. Main results showed that each time students perceived that their class achieved the learning objectives they respond positively reporting their learning strategies, they demonstrated also preference for challenging tasks and like the class. Researchers concluded that a classroom with goal orientation influence learning and motivate students to perform better achieving the goals of the class.

Fourth study was performed by Sirarpi (1967) to analyze the problems in teaching English to American Indians regard administrative aspects, teacher's skills, students' performance, and instructional materials. In relation to the methods used in this study, two questionnaires were applied to teachers and students; the first questionnaire asked for factual information and the second was about attitudes and opinions. The researcher found that main aspects influencing students' learning were their lack of interest, incentive and motivation to learn English due to their cultural background. With regard

to teachers, some of them demonstrated lack of awareness of the problems of second language learning, and training in teaching methods. Among main conclusions, the researcher state that more training in classroom management and teaching method was required to improve student's performance in language learning.

The fifth study was done by Aduwa-Ogiegbaen & Lyamu (2006) to know whether teaching methods, teaching resources, and classroom physical space had some influence in the English teaching-learning process. This study was performed with the participation of senior secondary students from five public schools in Nigeria; they answered a questionnaire with questions related to the aims of the research. In addition, the researchers observed classes in each of the high schools to analyze the type of methods and resources used in teaching English; students' attitude toward the language and behavior in the classroom was also observed. The analysis of the questionnaires showed that students did not feel comfortable in the classrooms, they complaint of the lack of space and amount of students. As a result of the observations, researchers found that classes were teacher-centered and traditional materials (textbooks, chalkboard) were used to teach English classes. At the end of the study, the researchers concluded that the English teaching process did not have a good quality and this caused that students did not performed well in university language tests because of their poor skills.

Description, Analysis, and Interpretation of Results

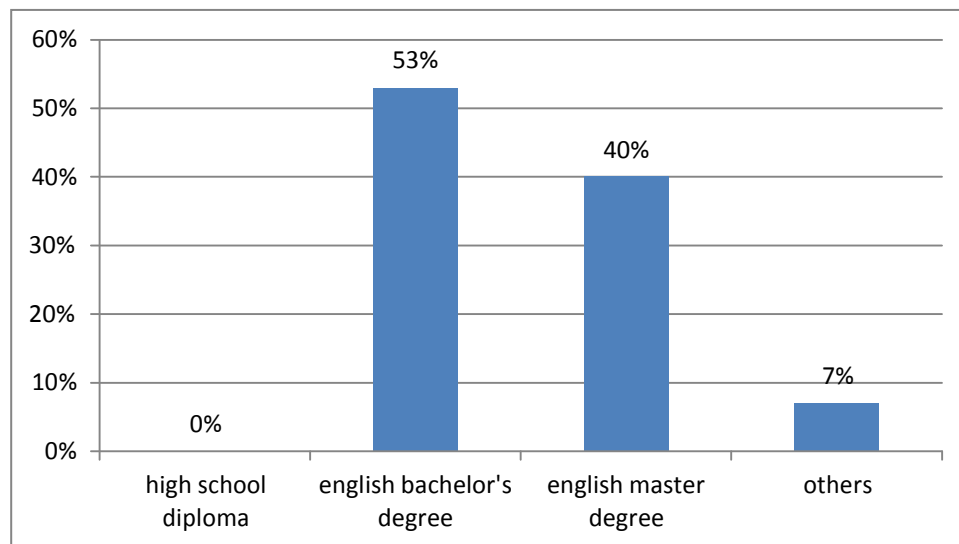
The analysis that is going to be presented in this section is quantitative and aims to establish the factors that affect the English teaching – learning process in public high schools. Each graph below analyzes factors concerning teachers, classroom and students according to the responses of the teachers' questionnaires. The results obtained are sustained with data collected in the observation process and the answers of the students' questionnaire.

Quantitative Analysis

Factors Concerning Teachers

Which level of education do teachers have?

Graph 1



Autor: Angel Humberto Talahua Ch.

Resource: teacher's questionnaire

In accordance with the results observed in the graph above, 53% of the interviewed teachers have an English bachelor's degree; 40% of the teachers have an English master degree; and 7% of the teachers have other type of degree such as doctor or engineer. During the interview, the group of teachers with an English bachelor's degree explained that they studied English for an average of six years at different language institutes in the place they live. The time while teachers have been teaching English varies according to the years of experience, some of them have been working in the field during 10 year; others for 20 years; and others for 6 years. Those teachers expressed that the easiest skill to teach is reading. It was not possible to continue gathering information about other aspects such as advantages or disadvantages of teaching English in Ecuador or the benefits of staying more time in an educational institution due to the fact that an important proportion of teachers has a A2 level and they were not able to give accurate answers in the interview.

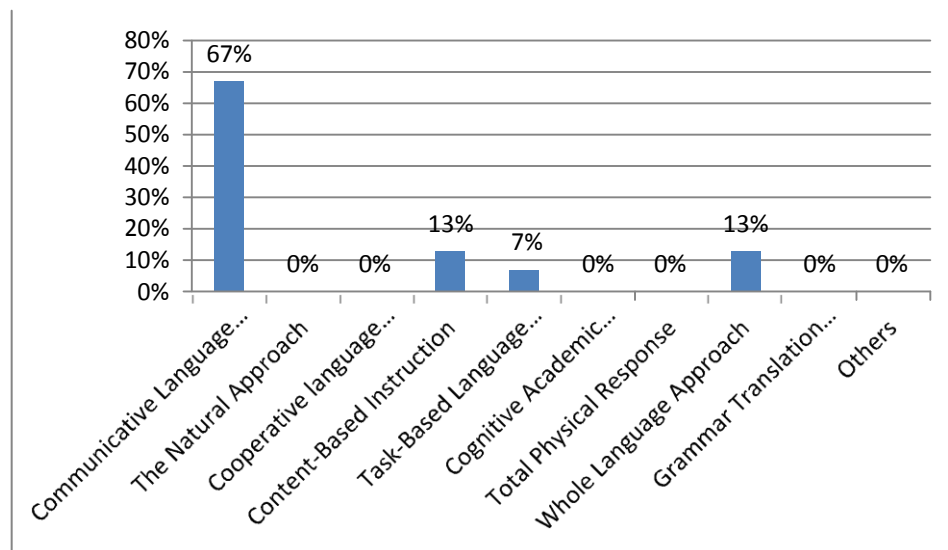
Teachers' low language proficiency is considered by Gloria Vidal, Minister of Education of Ecuador, as an important challenge that bilingual education faces; according to her, teachers need to improve their knowledge and proficiency of the English language.

The results in graph 1 gives evidence that public high schools have a staff of teachers with a good profile in the field of English teaching because they have completed their bachelors' degree at any University. Moreover, almost half of the interviewed teachers have a master's degree in English. However, an important amount

of those teachers do not have good language skills and it is a factor that influence students' language learning since teachers are source of knowledge for their pupils.

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

Graph 2



Autor: Angel Humberto Talahua Ch.

Resource: teacher's questionnaire

Main methods used by the teachers who participated in this research were the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Content-based Instruction (CBI), Task-based Instruction (TBI), and Whole-Language approach (WLA). Among them, the method most used was the CLT because 67% of the teachers used it. In the second place there is the CBI and WLA because of 13% of the teachers preferred to use them in the observed classes. And, the last method is the TBI that was used by 7% of the teachers. Even though a higher percentage of teachers indicated the CLT as the common method used to teach English, it was observed that teachers used mainly Spanish language to

give explanations of complex meanings. According to Mukalel (1998), the use of the native language to give explanations is a characteristic of the grammar – translation method. On the contrary, the author explains also that main purpose of CLT is communication; teachers are facilitators and use a lot of real world material to encourage learners to communicate using the target language. Observations showed that students did not communicate using the target language due to their basic level of English; therefore, the CLT method was not used in the proportion that teachers said.

With regard to the use of CBI approach, Brown (2002) mentions that learners acquire knowledge not only of the language but also of the contents being taught such as geography, culture, history, or math. In some of the observed classes teachers taught math classes and students learned some topics such as shapes and their characteristics; the target language was used in those classes to explain the contents.

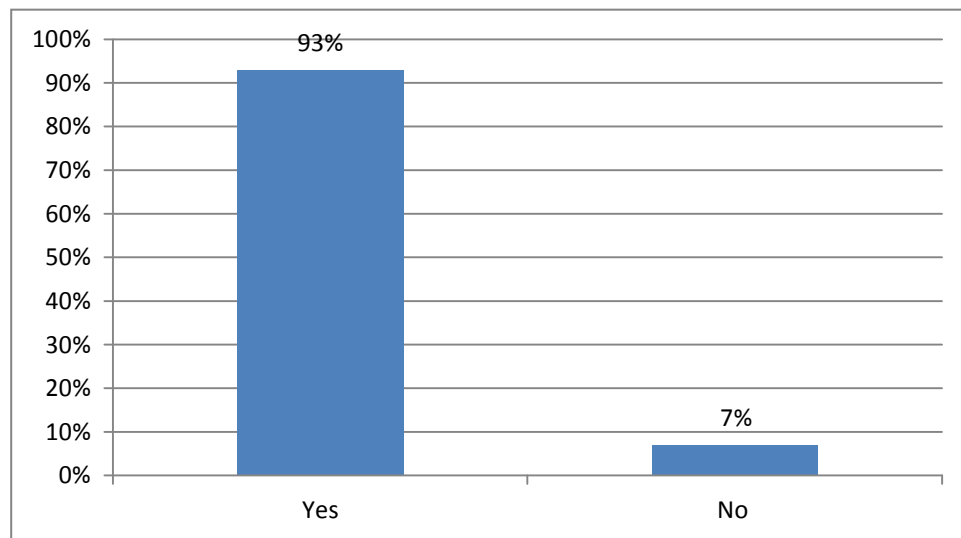
It was observed that some teachers used group work as a teaching technique. As Richards & Rodgers (2001) explain, the Whole Language approach emphasizes collaborative work among teachers and students. Therefore, observed teachers tried to act as facilitators and participated actively in the classroom to create an appropriate learning environment. However, class size was over 31 students per classrooms and students showed poor skills to organize themselves in order to present their results in front of the class and to debate with other groups.

About the Task-Based Instruction method, teachers were asked about the reasons why they selected this method, they gave answers such as “*Because I always give instructions to students*”, “*Students need instructions to work*”, “*Instructions help*

students in class". This shows a lack of knowledge of the characteristics of the method. According to Brown (2002), the TBI approach uses communicative tasks in which learners have to demonstrate their level of knowledge of the language. Meaning, communication, task completion and assessment are important aspects that teachers have to take into consideration. It was observed that any of those characteristics were present in the lessons.

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

Graph 3



Autor: Angel Humberto Talahua Ch.

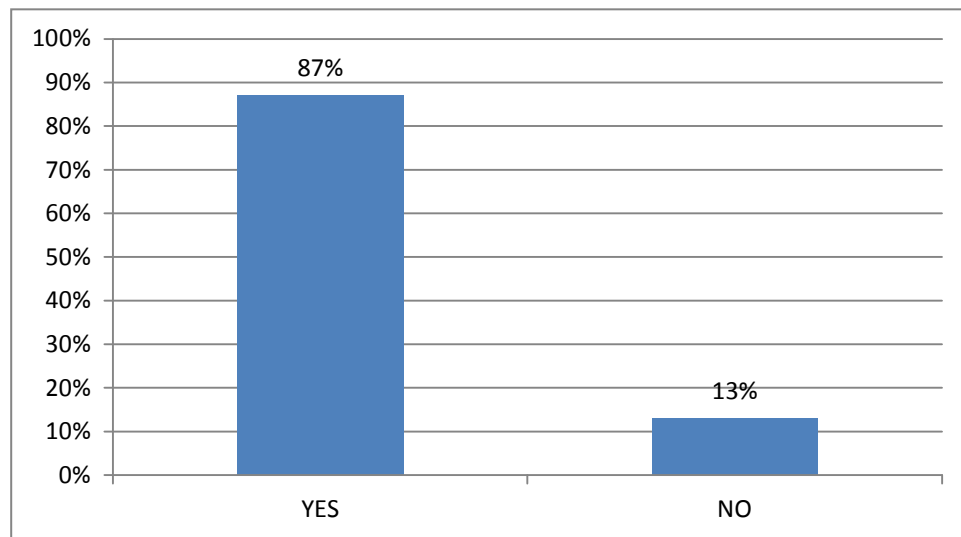
Resource: teacher's questionnaire

It can be seen from the data in graph 3 that 93% of teachers indicated that they use whole-group activities to teach their lessons and only 7% did not like to use group activities. Certainly, teachers presented some topics and students were divided in groups assigning them an activity related to the theme of the lesson. But the amount of students per classroom was over 31 and the physical space was not big enough; therefore,

teachers had problems to organize group of students. It was observed that groups were formed by more than six students in some cases and they had difficulties to accommodate their seats. Moreover, interaction among students was dominated by conversations about other topics and only few students were involved in the tasks. Students showed poor skills to organize themselves in order to present their results in front of the class and to debate with other groups. Here, it is important to remember what Hasting & Schwieso (1995) mentions about effective teaching; it depends on the space dimensions of the classroom and furniture used in the classroom.

Do teachers use individual activities to teach their lessons?

Graph 4



Autor: Angel Humberto Talahua Ch.

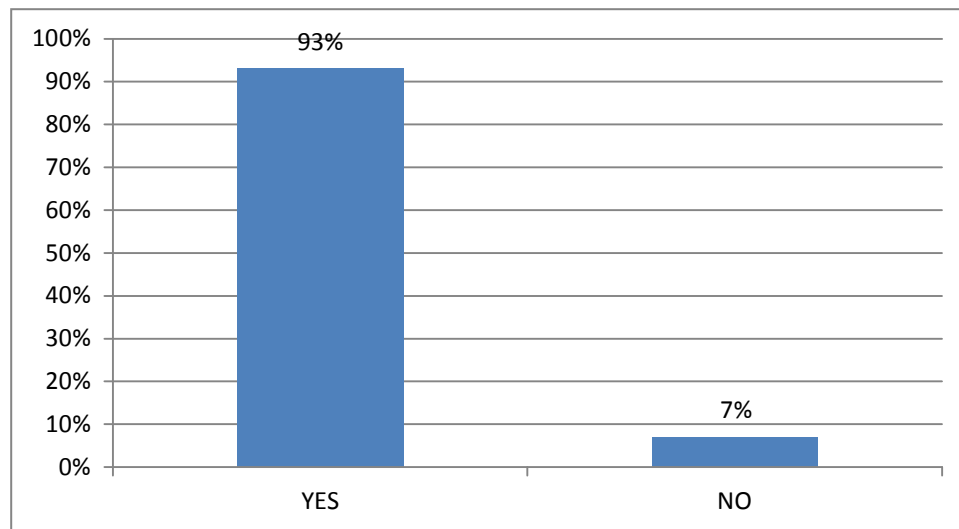
Resource: teacher's questionnaire

Individual activities are preferred by the 87% of teachers, as graph 4 shows, while 13% of teachers did not like this type of work in the classroom. The results coincide with the observed classes, students worked individually in their seats doing activities

such as completing sentences, practicing vocabulary, reading, writing, etc. That type of work required that students' seat followed the traditional format row that is described by Jonson (2002) as a way to have more control over students. In addition, Rathvon (2008) expressed that row-column seating style promotes better collaborative work and increase on-task performance. In this case, it was observed that individual activities allowed students to work better and there were less disciplinary problems. A great majority of students' answers confirmed that they like the activities used by the teacher in the class and considered them as source of motivation to learn English.

Do teachers use group work activities to teach their lessons?

Graph 5



Autor: Angel Humberto Talahua Ch.

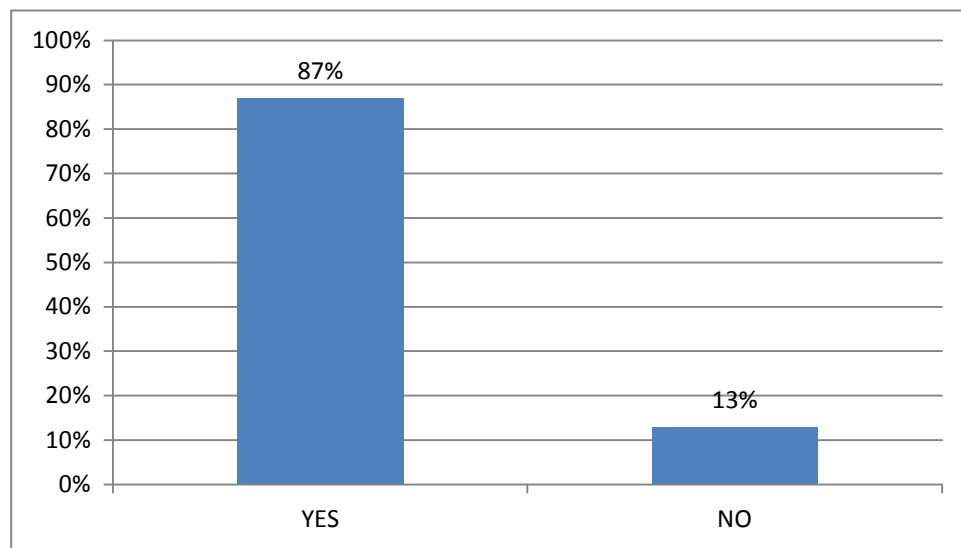
Resource: teacher's questionnaire

The graph above shows that 93% of teachers used work activities to teach their lessons and 7% do not use this type of activities. Although this results state a clear preference for group work activities, it was found that a low percentage of teachers used

group work in real classes. Most of time teachers organized activities in an individual or whole group scheme to work mainly with exercises from the textbook. Therefore, the activities were assigned according to the requirements of the contents. Some of the activities that students worked on groups were discussions about topics from the textbook, but they exchange their ideas using their native language. Teachers tried to monitor each of the groups, when students had doubts about some aspect of the activity they asked the teacher using Spanish language and the teacher answered them in the same language. Students used only the English language to present the results of the tasks. In fact, teachers acted as facilitators but they do not encouraged learners to use the English language to ask questions and work in groups.

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

Graph 6



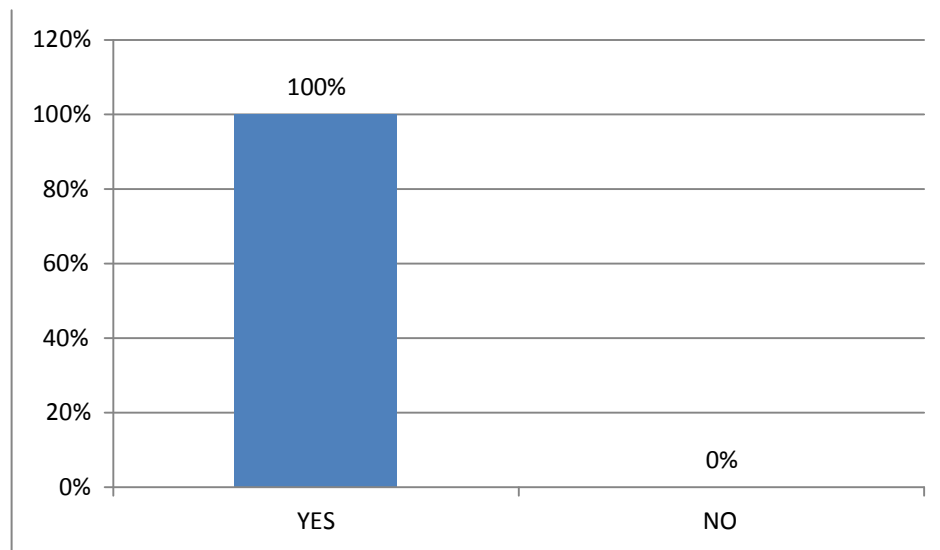
Autor: Angel Humberto Talahua Ch.

Resource: teacher's questionnaire

The results above demonstrate that 87% of the teachers used English most of the time in their classes and 13% of them used Spanish language to explain the topics or vocabulary. But it was observed that teachers spoke in English the 50% of the time and the Spanish language was used the other 50%. Before using the mother tongue, teachers always try to explain meaning by using drawings of physical gestures but they always repeated instructions and contents using the Spanish language. Students' questionnaires confirm the observations made in the classroom, that half of the learners commented that teachers speak only in English and the other half answered the opposite.

Do teachers plan their lessons?

Graph 7



Autor: Angel Humberto Talahua Ch.

Resource: teacher's questionnaire

For the teachers who participated in this research, planning is an important part of the teaching process, because all of them told they plan their classes. The observations carried out in the classrooms made possible to evidence that teachers planned their

lessons but they did not put in practice the designed steps. Only half of the teachers began the class with a warm up and most of the time they forgot to present the topic of the lesson and the objectives. In addition, lessons started with a direct presentation of new topics without a previous introduction that allowed students to infer the contents. After introducing new contents, in almost all the observed classes' teachers organized students in groups or individual work, and they did not assign time for each activity. However, the answers of the students' questionnaire showed that learners worked usually in timed activities. It was observed that 'timed activities' consisted on announcing the remaining time to finish the tasks rather than set the time at the beginning of the activity. Moreover, it was possible to check some lesson plans while teachers worked in the classroom; each activity was clearly described with appropriate instructions, timing, feedback, etc., but teachers obviously did not follow the sequence of the plan.

What most concerns about lesson plans is the fact that many teachers taught the classes using the textbook as the only guide and the plan was not taken into account. In consequence, it was observed that teachers were not aware of the importance of lesson planning for the success of the class.

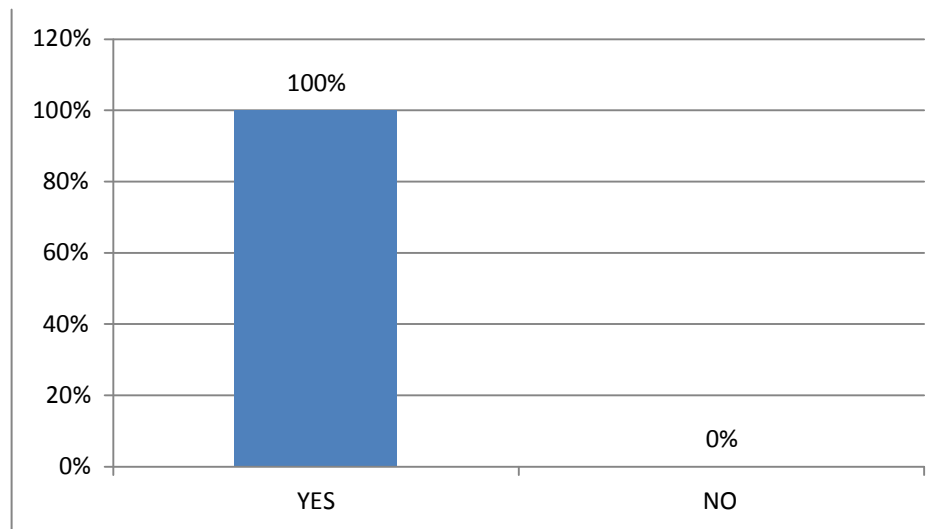
As Feeney (2002) mentions, planning has effects in students' behavior therefore it is important to clearly define all the activities that will be done with students. It was mentioned before that teachers had problems organizing students, especially for working in groups, maybe because lessons plans were not put into practice. The fact that teachers

decided to work following instructions of the textbooks caused that they gave unclear instructions; students seemed confused and they did not work well.

In sum, the observed teachers did not follow the lessons plans they designed for the classes and this situation influence the teaching-learning process because students worked in the activities without a clear purpose.

Do teachers consider aspects such as discipline, timing, feedback, and instruction to teach their lessons?

Graph 8



Autor: Angel Humberto Talahua Ch.

Resource: teacher's questionnaire

As graph 8 presents, all teachers reported that they usually consider aspects such as discipline, timing, feedback, and instruction to teach their lessons. Similarly, students commented that teachers control discipline, assign time to work on activities, provide feedback before classes and give clear instructions. But observations gave other perspective about the situation. Even though teachers tried to control discipline,

students talked and commented that lessons were boring in many of the observed classes. As it was mentioned previously, teachers did not assign time before students began the activities. In the same way, feedback consisted on asking students questions to know whether they comprehended the contents of the lesson. And, instructions rarely come directly from teachers; they only repeated what the teachers' book stated about the activities. Moreover, as it was mentioned before, teachers did not follow the lesson plans they designed for the classes.

About instructions, Dixie & Bell (2009) explains that a set of questions after giving instructions create a positive environment and ensure the correct development of activities when they are correctly stated and are pertinent in quantity. It was observed that teachers gave instructions but they did not ask questions to know whether students comprehended the lesson; questions were made only after the contents of the lessons were taught.

Turning to feedback, Askew (2000) mentions that feedback is negative when it is too broad and teachers expend much time clarifying task instructions. In fact, it was observed that teachers gave vague instructions that took much time and they always used the Spanish language to explain better.

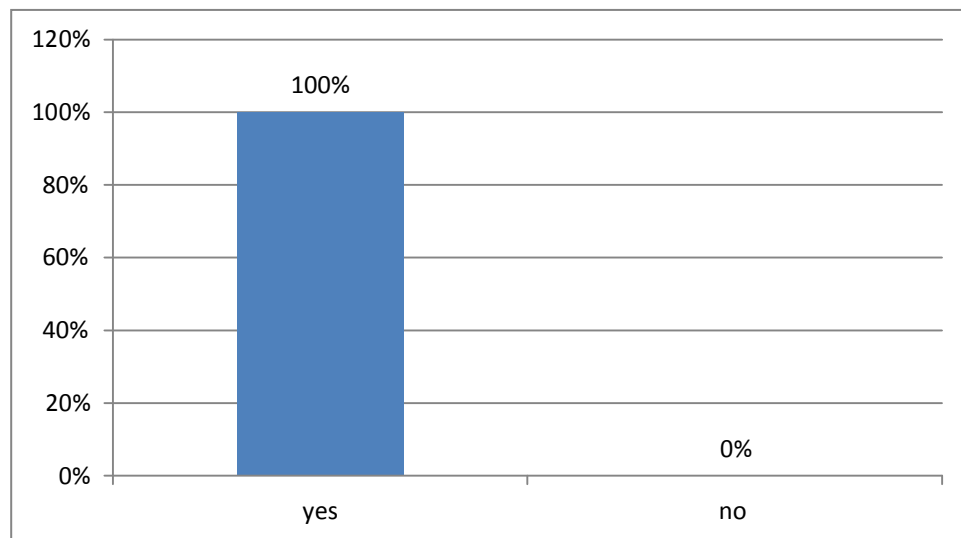
Finally, about timing Cowley (2009) mentions different reasons by which managing time is important in English teaching: to give students enough time to work, to work adequately, to control behavior, to clear up doubts. Observations showed that teachers did not assign time before students worked in activities, teachers only remembered students about the remained time to finish the activities. Sometimes

students spent the majority of the time trying to organize among them when they worked in groups. Moreover, when students worked individually the activities finished as students completed the activities and explained their answers to the teacher. It was mentioned before that some teachers' plans were checked and all the planned activities had a duration time but teachers did not follow the plan. In consequence, the classes were disorganized and students' behaviors were affected because teachers did not give instructions correctly, they did not provide positive feedback, and they did not manage time adequately.

Factors concerning students

Do teachers consider students' needs to teach English successfully?

Graph 9



Autor: Angel Humberto Talahua Ch.

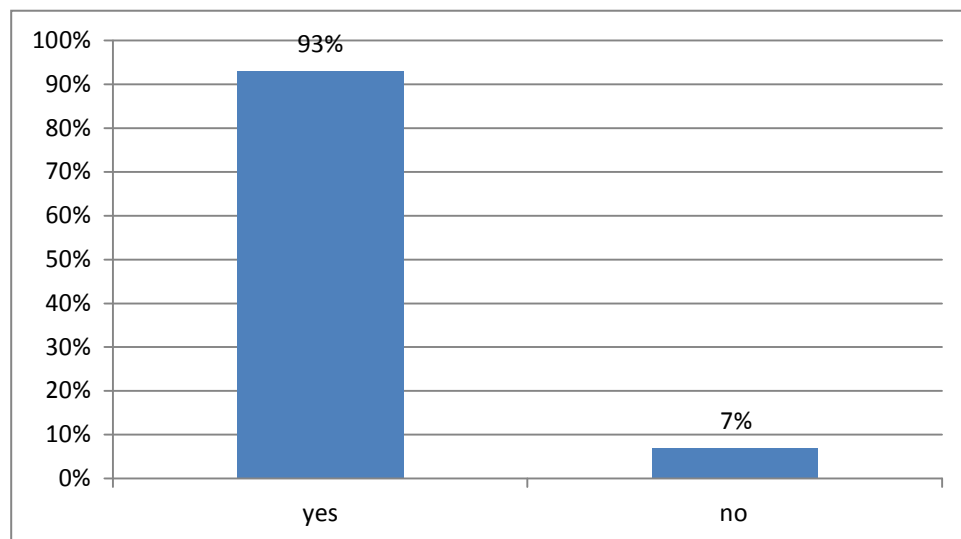
Resource: teacher's questionnaire

Graph 9 shows that 100% of the teachers consider students' needs to teach successfully. According to this, teachers explained that they consider some aspects such

as students' age, level of English, personal interests, etc. when they design teaching activities. Also, they take into account students' learning styles to select teaching resources. In addition, most of the teachers expressed that they prefer to work with topics related to students' interests such as music, movies, or famous people in order to develop interest in the lessons. Students confirmed these results because they expressed that class activities motivated them to learn English and they liked the way the teachers present the contents of the lessons. Observations done in each class confirmed what teachers and students responded in the surveys. Teachers frequently called students' attention making connections between the topics of the lessons and students' interests. Unfortunately, it was observed that students lose interest progressively during the duration of the class due to the teachers' poor skills in managing learning.

Do teachers consider students' level to teach English successfully?

Graph 10



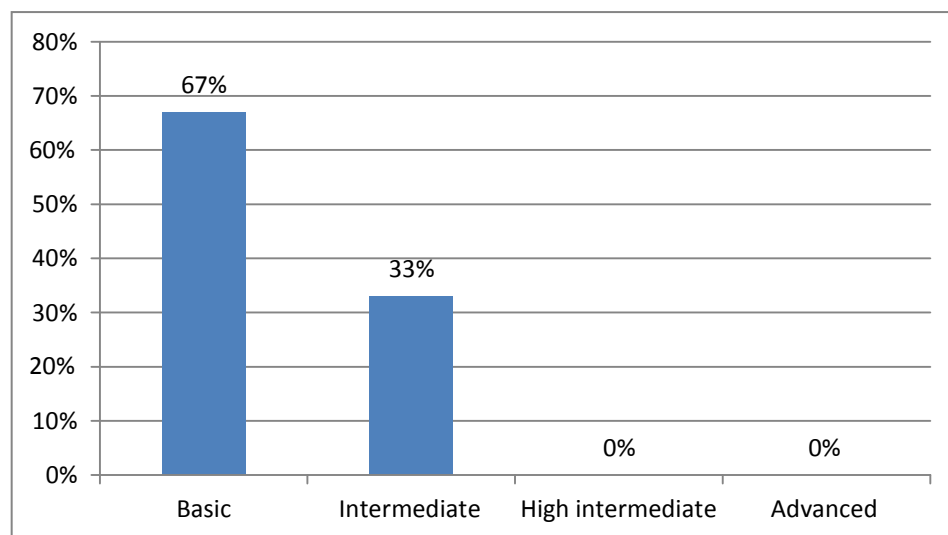
Autor: Angel Humberto Talahua Ch.

Resource: teacher's questionnaire

Graph 10 shows that 93% of the teachers consider students' level to teach English successfully. This means, that they teach grammar structures or vocabulary according to students' language level. About this, students considered that class activities were easy to follow and they frequently understood the content of the lessons. In fact, students comprehended the contents because teachers usually repeated the class using the native language, Spanish. As teachers always worked with the textbook assigned for the course, students permanently worked in activities according to their language level.

Which is the level of the students?

Graph 11



Autor: Angel Humberto Talahua Ch.

Resource: teacher's questionnaire

With regard to the level of English of the students, the graphic above shows that 67% of students had a basic level and 33% of students belonged to an intermediate level.

It was observed that all students' language level varied from basic to intermediate level because teachers used graded materials for each level and authorities explained that at the beginning of each school year new students take a placement test and the majority of them get a basic level. In addition, students who approve their school year usually reach an intermediate level and they did not progress further although they belong to senior courses.

In order to explain the great percentage of students with a basic level of English it is important to analyze the answers in the students' questionnaires. Many students expressed that the teacher did not speak in English in the class and they did not provide students any kind of feedback. Moreover, teachers only asked whether students comprehend the contents making questions such as *It is clear?* Or *Did you understand?* In fact, it was observed that teachers used English only the half of the time and they used Spanish language to explain complex meanings. Besides, teachers did not encourage students to use the English language as they should.

It was observed also that students were evaluated globally as part of the planned activities of the school year and the scores of those tests were the only type of feedback obtained by the students. Therefore, it seems that teachers of the different observed institutions considered themselves, as Fisher & Frey (2011) explain, as the only source of feedback in the classroom.

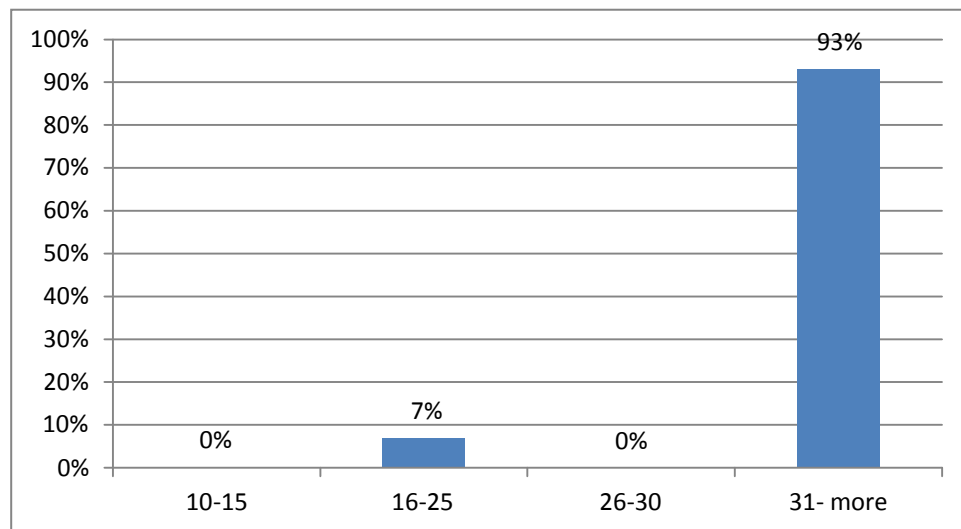
Being teachers the only source of feedback in the classroom, their lower English language proficiency seems to affect students' improvement of language learning due to the important amount of students with basic level of English, even in senior years. That

is just what Mrs. Gloria Vidal, Ministry of Education, refers to; bilingual education is affected by teachers' language skills.

Factors concerning classroom

How many students are there in the observed classes?

Graph 12



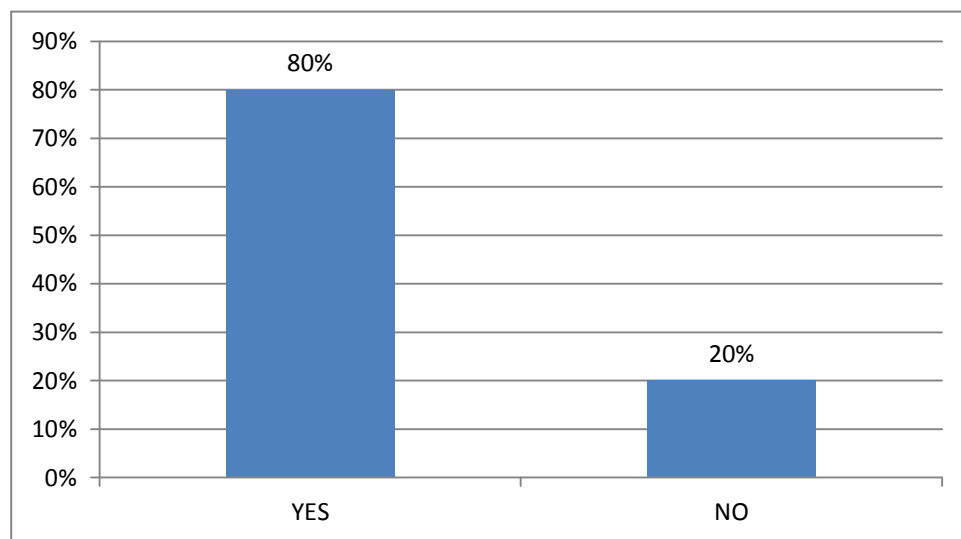
Autor: Angel Humberto Talahua Ch.

Resource: teacher's questionnaire

Teachers' responses of the amount of students in the classrooms indicated that a 93% were 31 or more learners in the observed classes and only 7% of the classes had 16 to 25 students. This fact was confirmed throughout observations because almost all classes had between 34 and 42 students. In this case, a class with more than 30 students is considered by Brown (2002) as a source of some problems such as variety of abilities and proficiency, individual attention is reduced, students have fewer opportunities to practice speaking, and it is hard to provide feedback to students' written works. Observations confirmed what this author mentions since teachers showed difficulty to

manage discipline. Students chatted a lot between them, especially when they worked in groups. Surprisingly, teachers and learners expressed that they work effectively with the current number of students in the classrooms. There is a clear contradiction between teachers and students' responses and the real context observed in the classes. Therefore, class size is another factor that affected the teaching-learning process in the observed classes because teachers showed poor skills in managing learning and some activities done were not suitable due to the amount of students. About that, Mayer (2000) explains that the number of students affects course content, pedagogy, and the type of technology used in the class. In addition, some studies have focused frequently in the relationship between class size and teachers' ability to deal with disciplinary problems. *Do teachers feel comfortable with the number of students they are working with?*

Graph 13



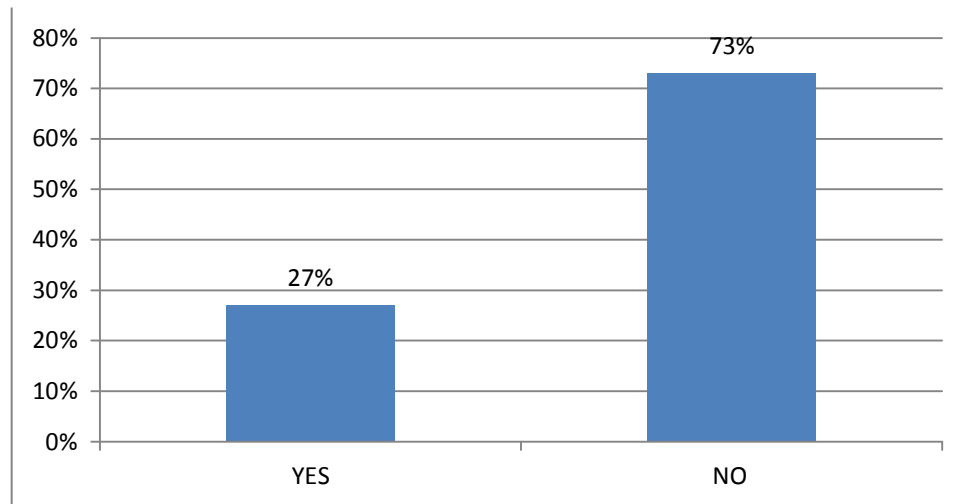
Autor: Angel Humberto Talahua Ch.

Resource: teacher's questionnaire

Even though almost all of the observed classrooms have around 38 students, 80% of the teachers expressed that they feel comfortable working with that amount of students. On the other hand, only 20% of the teachers considered that they not feel comfortable working with more than 31 students. Additionally, more than the half of students commented in the questionnaire that the number of students facilitate the English learning process. However, observations showed a different context because teachers had difficulties dealing with students' behavior. Specifically, teachers tried all the time to stop students' chatting while working in the activities; mainly because they constantly spoke in Spanish about topics unrelated to the lessons. As it was mentioned before, teachers did not manage learning effectively according to the number of students in the classroom. Again, it is important to remember what Mayer (2000, p. 31) says, "How teachers implement the course content, instructional pedagogy, and technology use in the classroom may all be influenced by the number of students in the class".

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

Graph 14



Autor: Angel Humberto Talahua Ch.

Resource: teacher's questionnaire

The graph above indicates that 73% of the interviewed teachers consider that the space to work with the assigned group of students is not enough. And, the 27% of teachers considered that the space is adequate for working with students. In relation to this question, students' answers showed a different result because more than the half of learners considers that classroom space helps them to work adequately. It was possible to observe that classrooms with more than 31 students looked overcrowded, and students' seats were too closed each other allowing students to talk between them while teachers were teaching the classes. In that way, noise impeded other students who tried to pay attention to listen to the teacher; specifically, those who sit at the back of the class. Regarding noise, Feinstein (2006) explains that high levels of noise impede reading, thinking, or listening.

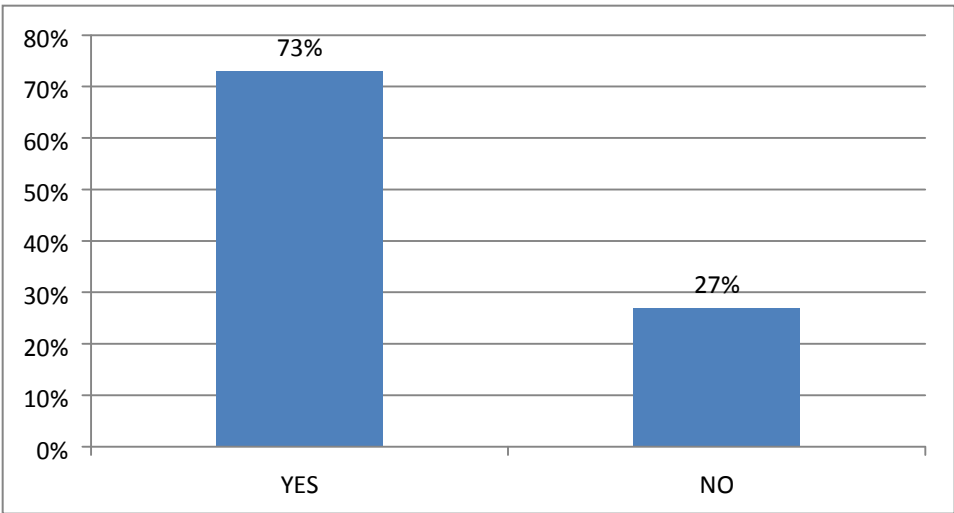
There are other factors that were not considered in the questionnaires but it was possible to observe and, according to Feinstein (2006), they also influence the teaching-

learning process. Those aspects are lighting quality and temperature. Because of the classroom space was not enough for the number of students, the temperature inside the classroom was hot and it was possible to observe that many students looked dull and their level of concentration was short. In addition, there was excessive lighting from outside and that caused that the whiteboard, that was made of an acrylic surface, bright too much and it made difficult for students to read the contents on the board. Those aspects are some of the difficulties mentioned in the National Plan of Education, created by Ministerio de Educación del Ecuador (2006).

Even though learners considered that classroom space is good for their learning process, teachers, results of observations, and the authors' explanations make possible to confirm that the size of the physical classroom was not adequate for students' learning process.

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

Graph 15



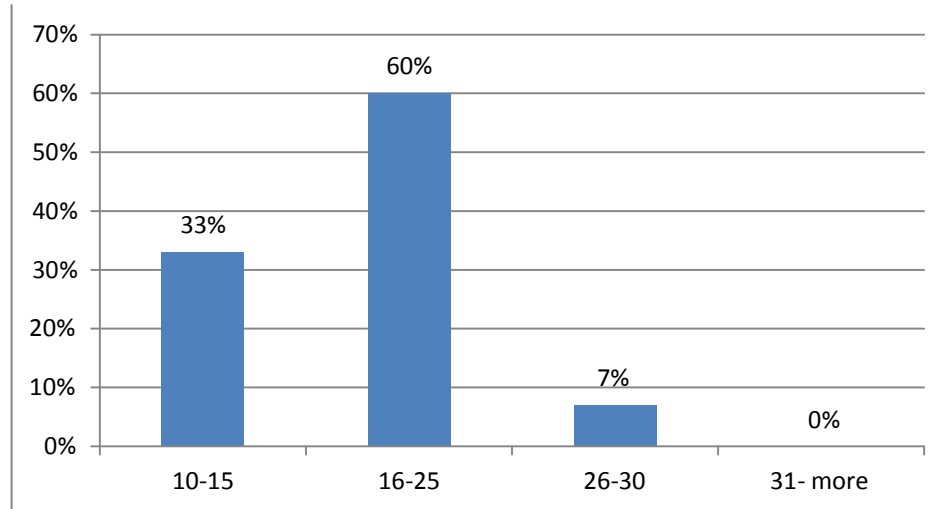
Autor: Angel Humberto Talahua Ch.

Resource: teacher's questionnaire

In relation to the teachers' responses about seating arrangement, the graph above indicates that 73% of them arrange seats in relation to the activities planned for the classes and 27% of them do not do it. It was observed that students had difficulties moving seats to work in groups due to classroom space and number of students. Students were able to put seats together but that caused teachers difficulties for circulating around the classroom. In addition, students were sit too closed that they speak about unrelated topics all the time and they did not worked effectively. Even though teachers arrange seats in relation to teaching activities, it does not help students to learn better; specifically when they worked in groups. It was observed that in this type of context, row column style or paired desks promoted better collaborative work and increase on-task performance just as Rathvon (2008) mentions. Actually, students answered in the questionnaire that they liked the way seats were arranged by teachers to work in the different types of activities. Despite the fact it was not possible to know specifically the type of seating arrangement about students expressed positively, it was observed that students responded better to class instruction when they worked individually.

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

Graph 16



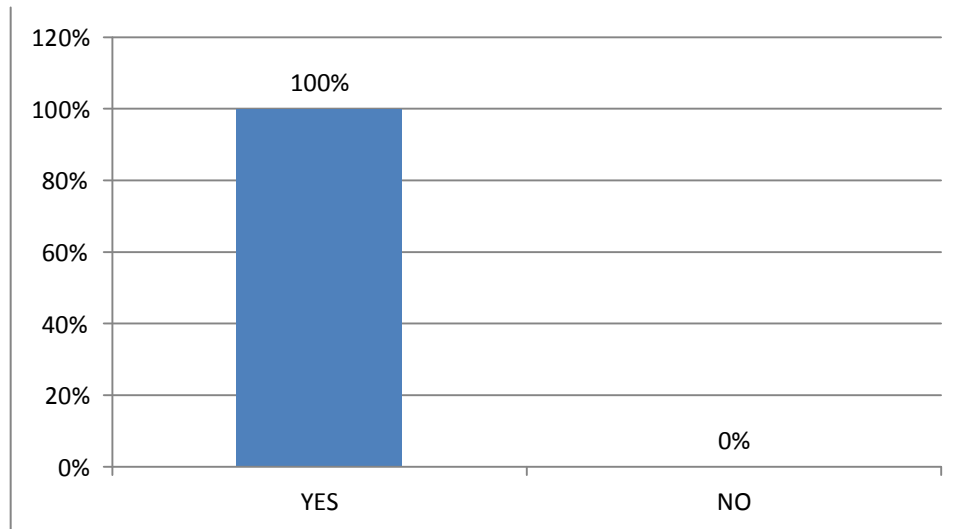
Autor: Angel Humberto Talahua Ch.

Resource: teacher's questionnaire

It can be observed in graph 16 that 60% of the teachers consider a class with 16 to 25 students appropriate for teaching English; 33% of the teachers prefer to teach groups of 10 to 15 learners; and, 7% would like to work with 26 to 30 students per class. These results show that teachers would feel more comfortable working with less than 31 students. Regarding that, Mayer (2000) explains that a long debate in class size support small classes especially with students that come from lower social and economic backgrounds. This author considers that students learn better in small classes because teachers are able to use techniques and pedagogy effectively. Those affirmations are suitable for the observed classes because students from public high schools usually belong to lower social and economic levels and this fact was confirmed throughout the observations done in the classes.

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

Graph 17



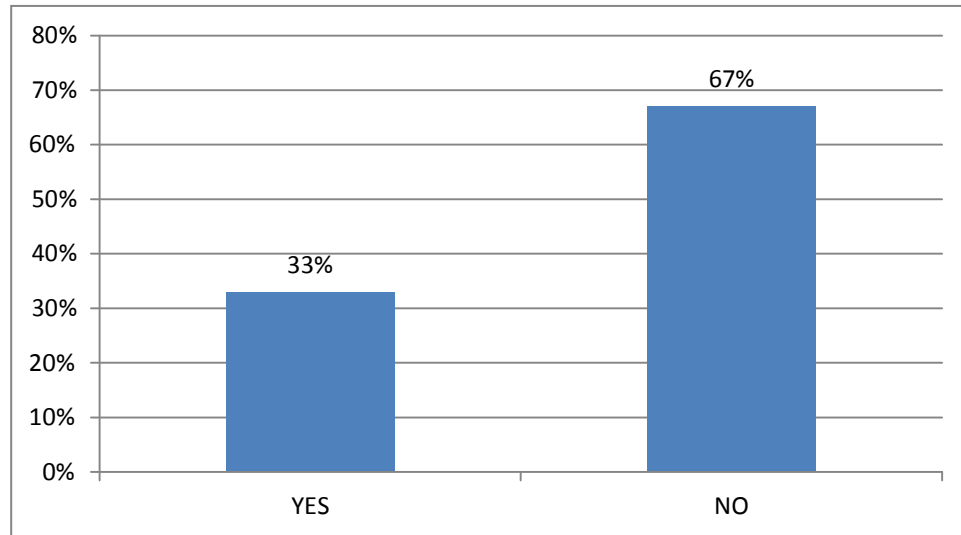
Autor: Angel Humberto Talahua Ch.

Resource: teacher's questionnaire

All the interviewed teachers answered positively to the question about the use of teaching resources in class. About a similar question, more than the half of interviewed students informed that teaching aids are used in classes. These results were confirmed by the observations carried out in the public high schools because almost all teachers used some type of teaching resources such as CD-player and flashcards. Those resources were utilized well and awoke students' interest in the topics. In fact, Maxom (2009) explains that teaching resources add variety and meaning to teaching presentation and meets students' learning styles. In a similar way, Harmer (2004) explains that teaching aids keep learners motivated and help learners to explain meaning. Effectively, those aspects mentioned by the two authors were observed in the classes.

Do you consider appropriate the resources you have in class?

Graph18



Autor: Angel Humberto Talahua Ch.

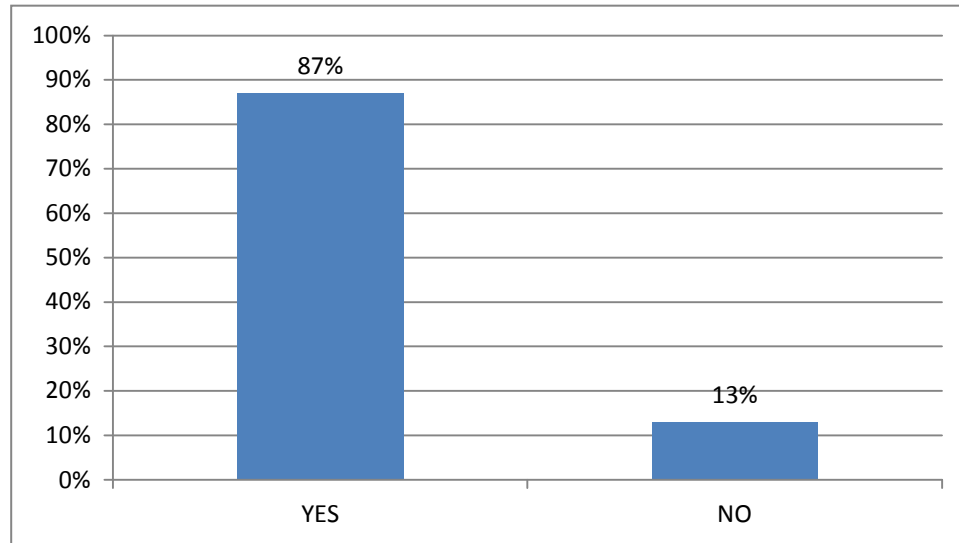
Resource: teacher's questionnaire

Concerning the results showed in the graph above, 67% of teachers considered the resources in class not appropriate and 33% of the opinions demonstrated the opposite. For example, some of the teachers' answers that expressed disagreement with the current resources were: *"Because I consider the institute should have other resources"*, *"Because we need more materials to teach"*, *"Because I think that a CD player is not enough for teaching a foreign language"*. Those opinions demonstrate that even teachers used CD players or flashcards, they consider that the observed high schools need to provide them with a variety of resources. In fact, Kochlar (1985, p. 133) says, "Their importance for teaching resides on the fact that provide unforgettable experiences to learners...their purpose is to avoid class routine".

Factors Concerning Educational Institution

Does the institution review your lesson plans?

Graph 19



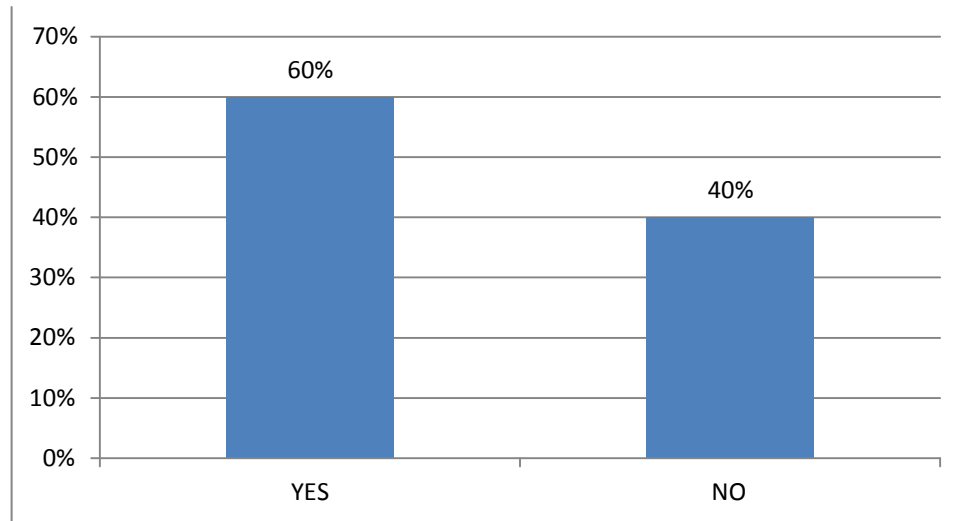
Autor: Angel Humberto Talahua Ch.

Resource: teacher's questionnaire

In relation to revision of lesson plans by the part of educational institutions, 87% of teachers answered positively and 13% of them gave negative responses. The teachers that had their lesson plans reviewed by the high schools indicated that it occurs mainly once a month. Effectively, a small amount of the plans reviewed during the observed classes had a coordinator's signature that evidences a control process. Apparently, that irregular revision causes that teachers do not follow the lesson plans as they should. Moreover, the reviewed lessons plans did not have any kind of observation or correction regarding some possible mistakes or errors done by teachers although the formats had a section for coordinators' observations.

Does the institution monitor your teaching?

Graph 20



Autor: Angel Humberto Talahua Ch.

Resource: teacher's questionnaire

Regarding institution monitoring of teachers' classes, 60% of the participants answered that classes are monitored by authorities of the high school while 40% responded the contrary. Those who answered positively commented that monitoring takes place once a month in great part of the institutions and once a week in other high schools. About classroom observation, Brown (2002) explains that it is considered unnecessary by teachers unless it is required by regulations. However, this author comments that being observed by others and self- observation benefits teachers with new ideas and improvement of skills. Linking what the previous author explains with Mishra (2008)'s descriptions of the parts of lesson plans, the analysis of the main events occurred during the lesson would have helped the observed teachers to evaluate their

learning process in order to determine their pitfalls. Unfortunately, as it was mentioned previously, teachers do not put into practice their lesson plans.

Conclusions

- According to the results obtained in this research, the factors that affect the English language teaching-learning process in Ecuadorian public high schools are in this order: teachers' lower language proficiency, percentage of English language used in class, lack of skills in managing learning, class size, classroom space, lesson design, and seating arrangement.
- Concerning class size, all the observed classes had more than thirty one students and it impeded teachers to work adequately, especially in group work activities.
- Even though the classroom space was adequate, it was not good enough for the amount of students. Students' seats were too closed together and it made difficult to arrange seats in groups. This situation caused also a boring and noisy environment.
- In general terms, classrooms did not have enough resources. Teachers used only CD players, flashcards, and the whiteboard. However, those materials were used appropriately in relation to students' need and they called their attention effectively.
- Seating arrangement was usually related to the type of learning activity, and it showed better results when students worked individually since they were more involved in the tasks and the level of noise was low in those moments.
- An important percentage of teachers have an English bachelor's degree but their proficiency in the English language was found low.
- In the class, most of the teachers did not use English, due to this there was a considering amount of students who have basic level of English, even in senior years, because students imitated their teachers.

- Despite the fact a great proportion of teachers indicated that they use the communicative language method in class, observations allowed proving that the grammar translation method was applied in all classes.

Recommendations

- Teachers must improve their language skills because they are source of important reference for students in the process of English language learning.
- It is important that teachers develop good skills in managing learning since students need to learn to work effectively in order to progress in their language skills.
- Teachers have to put into practice their lesson plans because it will help them to work correctly and they will also get a better approach of their level of success in the teaching-learning process.
- Authorities must check teachers' lesson plans more frequently in order to provide them feedback about the teaching process.
- Teachers would improve the teaching process if they use techniques to manage large classes in order to involve students in the learning process effectively.

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ANNEXES

Table for themes of the Content Outline

Theme	Pg. N°	Information	Form N° __
Title of the book/article Citation in APA format:			
Theme			
Title of the book/article: Citation in APA format:			
Theme			
Title of the book/article: Citation in APA format:			

Table for previous studies

Title of the Study:		
Citation in APA format:		
Item	Information	Form N° __
Research question(s), objectives, or hypothesis:		
Subjects or participants:		
Setting or place:		
Methods:		
Results:		
Author's/Authors' Conclusions & Recommendations:		
Limitations identified by the author(s)		

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?

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

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

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

4. Which is the level of your students?

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

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

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

Others	()
--------	-----

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

YES ()	NO ()	
Why? _____		

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

YES ()	NO ()	
Why? _____		

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

YES ()	NO ()	
Why? _____		

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

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

10. Do you plan your lessons?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

YES ()	NO ()
Which ones? _____	

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

YES ()	NO ()
Why? _____	

19. Does the institution review your lesson plans?

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

20. Does the institution monitor your teaching?

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

UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA PARTICULAR DE LOJA
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 MODALIDA ABIERTA Y A DISTANCIA
 CARRERA DE INGLES
 OBSERVATION SHEET

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION:	
DATE:	
YEAR(desde 8vo básicaa 3ro bachillerato):	

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

<i>*Students' Needs(age, personality, attitude, aptitude, motivation, and learning styles)</i>	
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)

<i>*Students' Level</i>			
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 %	()
------	-----	------	-----	------	-----	-------	-----

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
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 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 aprender 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!!!!