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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

Magister.

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RESUMEN

El presente trabajo pretende analizar los factores que afectan el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje del idioma inglés en los colegios públicos del Ecuador. El objetivo principal de esta investigación es analizar los factores que afectan el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje del idioma inglés. Este trabajo se realizó en la ciudad de Quito; cinco colegios públicos que están alrededor de la ciudad fueron seleccionados. La muestra usada para este trabajo fue de quince profesores y quince estudiantes. Los profesores seleccionados llenaron un cuestionario, los estudiantes respondieron una encuesta y la persona responsable de la investigación llenó una hoja de información de cada clase observada. La información obtenida mediante las encuestas y las hojas de información fue usada para respaldar y analizar la información proporcionada por los profesores. La conclusión principal de este trabajo, es que en los colegios públicos ecuatorianos los factores relacionados con las aulas tales como el número de estudiantes, los recursos en el aula (TV, computador, pizarrón inteligente) no son lo suficientemente buenos para ofrecer un proceso eficiente de enseñanza-aprendizaje del idioma inglés.

Palabras claves: factores, actividades, clase, observación, resultados, instituciones, aula, grupo.

ABSTRACT

This study intends to analyze the factors that affect the English language teaching-learning process in Ecuadorian public high schools. The main goal of this research is to analyze the factors that affect the English language teaching-learning process. This research took place in Quito; five public high schools around the city were selected. Fifteen teachers and fifteen students were the sample for this study. All the observed teachers had to fill a questionnaire, students answered a survey and the researcher filled an observation sheet for each observed class. The information obtained in the surveys and observation sheets was employed to support and analyze the data given by teachers. The main conclusion for this study is that in Ecuadorian public high schools factors concerning classrooms such as the number of students, teaching resources (TV, computer, smartboards) are not good enough to offer a more efficient English language teaching-learning process.

Key words: factors, activities, lesson, observation, results, institutions, classroom, group.

INTRODUCTION

One problem that has affected Ecuadorian high school students when they have to start the university is that their level of English is not the expected after almost twelve years of study the language. For that reason, it is important to analyze the factors that affect the system of English education in Ecuadorian public high schools, in order to improve the English teaching-learning process in public high schools in Ecuador.

That is why, 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.

Also, English language teaching-learning process in Ecuadorian public high schools can not be improved because the authorities and the teachers do not know which factors need to be developed to get the desired results. Factors such as students, teachers, and environment are principal elements to take into consideration in order to know better how the English language teaching-learning process can be improved. In Ecuador, there has not been so much research attention toward factors that affect the English language teaching-learning process.

Different studies have been used as a support for this study. For example, Yang (2007) did a research to demonstrate how ethnicity and language proficiency influence in the use of language learning strategies in students from a junior college. Yang says that only the effects of ethnicity on the use of learning strategies were examined in this study. For that reason, it is not possible to view the whole picture of the language learning strategy of aboriginal students in Taiwan.

Another study by Wu (2008) was about differences in language learning strategies use for students with high and low EFL proficiency level. This author says that this study only give information about six types of language learning strategies.

Finally, Kim & Petraki (2009) did a research to show the opinion of native and non-native teachers about the use of L1 into the classroom. Also, the author says that the sample of students and teachers was not big enough for this research.

Authorities of public high schools in Ecuador would use the data gathered in this research to improve the process that they are using to teach English in their institutions. In this form, students will benefit from the results gotten in this research because teachers and institutional authorities will have more information about which factors into the English language teaching-learning process need to be developed in Ecuadorian public high schools.

Additionally, this research would help authorities in Ecuadorian public high schools to make a better plan of classes, invest in resources that are necessary to help students face the changes that a globalized world present. And, the results would help the government authorities change some policies in order to modify the English language teaching-learning process in Ecuador.

This research will help future studies with information about how factors concerning students, teachers, classroom, and educational institutions in Ecuadorian public high schools are affecting the English teaching-learning process. And, also which of those factors need to be improved.

The limitation in this research was the number of observations for each class; every class was observed just once to collect data for the research. In order to have a

better understanding of the English teaching-leaning process into the Ecuadorian public high schools, each chosen class should be observed more than one time to monitor which factors really need to be improved.

METHOD

Settings and Participants

This research took place in Quito-Ecuador. Five public high schools around the city were selected to gather the information for this research. The sample for this study were fifteen teachers of public high schools, and fifteen students between the ages of 12 to 17 years who attend classes with the chosen teachers in each high public high school.

Procedures

All bibliographical information needed to support this study was collected and organized in order to write the literature review.

After the scientific information that supports this research was obtained and organized into the literature review, five public high schools around Quito were chosen. Once the high schools authorized the researcher to make the observations, three teachers were chosen in each high school to be observed and get data for their class. Those teachers had to fill a questionnaire in order to know their point of view about factors that affect the English teaching-learning process in their place of work. Also, one student in each observed class was selected to fill a survey; those students were picked randomly from all of the pupils in each observed classroom. The students´ questionnaire was about how students feel in class, how technological resources are employed by their teachers, what they think about the space they have into the classroom.

Additionally, notes were taking to gather information about how lessons were given and an observation sheet was employed for each class to complement the data for the observed classes. Those observation sheets were filled by the researcher while the classes were taught.

Finally, all the information was organized in order to be analyzed later. Only the data gathered from the teachers´ questionnaires was represented by graphs, Excel was employed to give percentages and make the graphs. With the information obtained from the surveys and observations sheets the researcher analyzed the results got from the teachers´ questionnaires. Each question from the teachers´ questionnaire was represented in a graph and the results were described, then these results were analyzed and interpreted using the data got from students and observations sheets in order to have a better understanding of the teaching-learning process into the observed classes.

DISCUSSION
Literature Review

In a globalized world people have to be prepared to communicate with other cultures. For that reason, it is important that Ecuadorian students have the opportunity to learn a language which helps them to be active citizens of the world.

According to the Ministerio de Educación del Ecuador, the National Education Authority in Ecuador has the objective of assuring that students in private, municipal and public schools and high schools get the CEFR (Common European Framework of Languages) B1 after six years of education (Ministerio de Educación del Ecuador, 2011). Thus, it is important to know which factors affect the English language teaching-learning process.

Teaching Approaches and Methods

Mukalel (2007) states that the Grammar-Translation Method is universally used to teach a foreign language, in this method grammar points are taught in order to memorize grammar rules. The principal activity that this method uses is translation, so students develop first the written part and then the oral one; translation is used to compare language elements between L1 and L2. People who are taught with this method usually dominate written English and they have good handwriting, good spelling, etc. For this method, the teacher does not have to be an expert one; this method can be used by any teacher. On the other hand, this author explains that Communicative Language Teaching centered its attention in the communicative part of the language. With this approach the teacher has to create real situation in order to help students to be ready to face any situation in the real life, this approach is creative, purposeful and task-oriented.

Two different methods are exposed by Larsen-Freeman (2000) who argues that Task-Based Language Teaching is an approach that allows students learn through the interaction that students have when they are working in a task. When students have to solve a task they have to talk in order to understand the classmates and the activity, this facilitates language acquisition. In this approach the teacher has to be attentive that students have a feedback about their success in solving the task. Also, the author talks about Total Physical Response approach, this approach was created to reduce the stress that people feel when they learn a foreign language. In this approach the students just interact in a nonverbally form until they are ready to speak, the teacher uses a lot of imperatives to control de class. Vocabulary and grammatical structures are emphasized for this approach.

A method that uses the necessity of information that students have is explained by Richards & Rodgers (2001) Content-Based Instruction is a way that uses the necessity of information that students have in order to facilitate the acquisition of different skills which are useful when students have to do an activity in the classroom. The main goal of this method is how information is communicated and structured through text and discourse.

Additionally, Richards & Rodgers (2001) suggest that Whole Language is an approach that lets students to learn reading and writing naturally and with focus on real communication. This approach uses authentic literature for students to learn, in this way students can be more interested in the materials they use in the classroom. An important point of this approach is that mistakes are seen as sign of learning.

Teaching Techniques

Activities that teachers use in classroom have to include communicative processes like informative sharing, negotiation of meaning, and interaction in order to engage students in communication (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Also, the authors explain that functional activities are those that involve students working with maps, pictures, and the follow of directions; social activities are those in which students use dialogues, discussions, role plays, debates, etc. In addition, Nunan (2004) argues that dialogues and role plays are more affective if they are wholly improvised but the dialogue or the role play has to have a clear aim to be achieved. Finally, the author explains that discussions compel students to collect and share information in order to make a decision.

Another point of view about activities is given by Gower & Philips (2005) they suggest that activities can be divided into controlled, guided, and creative or free communication tasks. For controlled activities the teacher decides on the language to be used and control it accordingly; for guided activities the teacher chose a language area that has to be practiced and give students some materials which allow students to make different language choices; for creative activities the teacher supplies the motivations and maybe the material, but the students have to express their thoughts and believes.

Managing Learning

About this topic Hoover et al. (2003) state that the use of the time for the lesson has to be well organized to help students learn in a better form, but most of the time teachers have some factors such as district mandates, school policy, or a rigid schedule that do not let them distribute time for lesson in an optimal way. Also these authors say that instructional strategies are very important and that teachers have to prepare the instructions for each activity avoiding to waste time in problems that can be prevented. Additionally, it is necessary to make an introduction and an explanation of the lesson´s objectives, and also motivate students to participate in class.

A more humanistic view is given by Groves (2009) who suggests that teachers have to instruct their students not only with knowledge but also with core values. In addition, this author explains that there are two kind of type of time to manage: the time that teachers use to prepare their lessons and the time that they use to teach into the classroom, both of them are important and necessary to give an efficient instruction. Also, this author says that instant feedback is necessary for students to know where they need to improve; this kind of feedback can be made when students help teacher to grade their papers or homework. Similarly, Leach (2006) argues that teacher have to start the lesson in a way in which students feel comfortable and let them to interact in class, teachers have to give directions consistently, firmly but in a friendly form. This author also states that feedback is very important in order to see the process of students and help them to solve difficulties; teachers have to remember that feedback is focused on how students are learning, rather than in how they are behaving.

Lesson Design

In relation to lesson design Nunan (2004) states that the teacher can do a lesson plan using five steps. First, it is necessary to create some exercises which introduce the topic; then the teacher has to work with controlled practice in order to practice vocabulary; after that, students have to listen authentic or simulated conversation about the topic; then, the teacher has to work with exercises that focus their attention on one or more linguistic elements; finally, the teacher has to give students some time to do free practice, this is important because in this part students will find new ways to express their thoughts.

A different view of lesson design is suggested by Woodward (2009) who argues that not all the teachers make a lesson plan starting with a goal or aim, when teachers who work in this way are asked about their goal and aims they give reasonable answers in retrospect: goals and aims can be consider during or after the lesson. Teachers who make their lesson plan in this way can start their planning from different angles on different days, this is that they can start for example with different sorts of content, how people learn and teach, teaching materials or activities, etc. On the other hand, Gower & Philips (2005) state that the lesson plan is a record of what is happening in the classroom, also the authors say that the lesson plan has to start with a main aim. They give six steps in order to plan a lesson. First, the lesson plan has to have a general aim and some specific aims; second, the teacher has to explain the activities that will be used in the class to get the aims and also the teacher has to indicate the time that those activities will take; third, to do a note about the seating arrangement for the activities; fourth, to make a note that explains when the materials and the visual aids will be used;

fifth, to write about the students and how is the class environment; and sixth, to

anticipate problems that students could have during the lesson.

Class Size

There is not an optimum class size, but in 1980s and 1990s in United States of

America created programs to reduce the class size to improve the possibilities of the

students to learn; this program suggested to have classes with no more than 20 students

(Lee, 2005). The results in California of Class Size Reduction program showed that class

size alone does not account for the success of classes; the teachers have to be well

prepared to conduct the class because in small classes the teacher has to interact more

with students and give more feedback. Also, students in small classes participate more in

class and also small class size help students to be more motivated to learn. Additionally,

Gurian (2011) states that small class size does not guarantee a good relationship between

teacher and students or that students will have a good behavior in class. And, this author

suggests that boys can work in classes of twenty to twenty-two students and that girls in

small classes learn better because they find their voice and place into the classroom.

Also, Bentham (2002) argues that large class size is negative for teachers because they

have to spend more time giving directions for activities and less time to interact with

students, for that reason the teachers can lose their motivation. Also, large class size

does not help students to improve their behavior.

Classroom Space

According to Williams & Burden (2004) environment conditions in the

classroom influence the learning-teaching process, but not all students have the same

needs; for that reason, it is important to organize the classroom in a way that works for

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the majority of the students. Also, Ming-tag & Wai-shing (2008) suggest that floor space has to be well distributed in order to get a optimum place for students to do the activities that the lesson requires; wall space is important because in this section students can put some information that they will need when doing activities. General ambience has to be pleasant in order to let students to enjoy the lesson, and teachers have to give students the opportunity to interact in class to facilitate social contact. In addition, Shelton & Pollingue (2005) argue that color, bulletin boards, temperature, space, and so on are factors that influence learning. Desks have to be arranged in a way that let the teacher move easily around the classroom to control in a better form how students are doing activities, bulletin boards are affective to reinforce academic skills. Finally, the teacher can modify the classroom in order to give students the best environment to facilitate learning.

Seating Arrangement

About this theme Gower et al. (2005) suggest that seating arrangement is very important and that the teacher has to keep in mind that ideas about this topic can vary from culture to culture. Seating arrangement can determine some aspects like: the attitude in class between students or the teacher´s attitude to students, and how pupils interact. The authors suggest a horseshoe arrangement in order to allow easy face to face contact for everybody in the classroom, but this is for classes with no more than sixteen students. Another way is to group students around tables to let students see what happen in front of the class, and it is important to remember that when students have a test it is advisable to separate them in order to give them opportunities to concentrated and avoid cheating. On the other hand, McLeod et al. (2003) state that elements like space in the

classroom, type of furniture, and the style of teaching determine the way in which the teacher has to organize seats in the classroom. The teacher has to analyze the space that is necessary to do the different activities; it is important to consider that students and the teacher has to move easily in or around the class; this let the teacher to control how students work and give them the opportunity to rearrange seats when they need. Also, West (2010) adds that seating arrangement can change as your class change; for that reason, this author gives some examples of seating arrangement. The first form in which the teacher can arrange seats is orderly rows, in this way the teacher can keep eye contact and move around students when needed. The second one is horseshoes, in this form the students will feel more capable to share ideas, information, and feelings because horseshoes arrangement makes the class more intimated. Finally, the teacher can make students to seat around the table in small groups in order to help the teacher to control students and help a student effectively.

Classroom and/or Teaching Resources

Richard & Renandya (2002) state that video and multimedia are good tools to work with nonverbal and cultural elements of language. But not only materials are needed in the classroom, body language is very important in order to make students comprehend verbal language in class and to create a system to give meaning for what they are learning. Also, reading materials have to cover different topics to let students understand how they would write a similar text or just to learn the different styles of different writers. On the other hand, Gower et al. (2005) argue that technology is becoming more popular between teachers and students but it is better to combine traditional materials and technology. For example, the teacher can work using real audio

material or use the language laboratory to record students' conversation to work in class. Although there are a lot of resources it is convenient to work with materials that can be created by the teacher in order to take more control of things students learn and how they learn them. In addition, Woodward (2009) suggests that the teacher can use a music tape to make the environment of the classroom more appropriated to initiate a conversation or just to create a relaxed atmosphere in class. Finally, this author argues that the coursebook has to be well prepared in order to give students the opportunity to understand all they have to learn in an effective way, some teachers work with the coursebook and others use it just as a supplementary material for them.

Classroom Observation

There are two kind of classroom observation that a supervisor can make: informal and formal observation (Zepeda & Mayers, 2004). In the informal observation the supervisors just want to know about teachers´ instructionally, and in a formal observation supervisors spend more time to make the observations and also prepare a pre- and a post-conference with teachers in order to explain and talk about the topics related with classroom practices. In addition, Gerais et al. (2002) argue that formal and informal observation are focused in teachers´ professional responsibilities, but to get a complete vision of what happen into the classroom supervisors have to collect date from the teachers too; this data can be plans that teachers used in other lessons or he portfolio of the students. Additionally, Danielson (2008) suggests that the purpose of the classroom observation is recollecting information about the interaction between teachers and students in class. This process can be announced or unannounced depending on

what are the goals of the observation. Also, this author says that classroom observation is just the evidence of practice.

Student´s Motivation

Shaman (2005, p. 39) states, "motivation is activity by one person designed to stimulate or arouse state within a person or group that under appropriate circumstances initiates or regulates activity in relation to goals." This intensity and the directions of motivations cannot be measured directly or objectively. The author also explains that a motive is the state that is inside the students and this state under certain circumstances regulates behavior in relations to a goal.

Another definitions is given by Wlodkowski (2008, p. 2), "motivation is basic to our survival." This process involve the use of human energy to get a goal, one thing that is interesting from motivation is that it cannot be seen or touched and that people only can infer it from what other people say and do. Finally, this author says that motivation is related to learning and learning has relation with cultural experiences.

A different view of motivation by Brophy (2010) says that motivation is a theoretical construct which explains why people behave in a certain way to get their goals. Also, this author suggests that motives are general needs that help people to initiate actions sequences, but goals are more specific and explain the actions sequences. Finally, Brophy (2010, p. 2) states, "student motivation is rooted in student´s subjective experiences, especially those connected to their willingness to engage in learning activities and their reasons for doing so."

Learning Styles

About this topic Lefever (2004, p. 17) states, "a learning style is the way in which a person perceives things best and then processes or uses what has been seen." This author considers four learning styles: 1) Imaginative. These students learn better when they have the opportunity to have interpersonal interaction; they learn by listening and sharing ideas, 2) Analytic. These students learn better by watching and listening; they prefer the teacher give the information, 3) Common sense. These students prefer to play with ideas, to apply what has been learned, etc. they need to combine learning with doing. 4) Dynamic. These students enjoy action, make new things, experiment with new ideas, and they are risk takers.

Other point of view suggested by Henriques & Felder (1995) is that there are two ways in which people perceive the world: sensation and intuition. Sensation learners are better at memorization, internal drills, and they prefer practical materials and well organized classes. Intuition learners are more independent and they do not follow the teacher´s teaching style, also they need more varied activities. Additional these authors argue that some people learn better when information is presented in a visual form, but others learn more easily if this information is presented in a written form.

And one more view by Tinkham & Kaner (2003) consider five styles: *Sensory/intuitive, visual/verbal, inductive/ deductive, active/reflective, and sequential/global*. Sensory/intuitive learners prefer collect information from the external senses or through intuition; visual/verbal learners performance better when they have the opportunity to see or hear the information; inductive/deductive learners need work from specifics and derive the generalities (inductive), or work from generalities and applies

them in specific situations (deductive); active/reflective learners learn better using the information as soon as they get it (active), or thinking first how they could use the information before use it (reflective); sequential/global learners learn better when there are a sequence to follow (sequential), or when they have time to think about all the information and make a critical opinion about it (global).

Students´ Intelligence or Aptitude to Learn English

According to Nikolov (2009) aptitude, in language learning, is the ability to learn easy and fast language, this ability is innate and is different from intelligence or others skills. Also, the author argues that aptitude is related with other factors such as motivation or personality type, the opportunity to learn, etc. In addition, Ellis (1997) indicates that aptitude is believed to be related with general intelligence. Students with high language aptitude learn easier than those who have low language aptitude. Finally, Saville-Troike (2006) suggests that aptitude is formed for four components, these components are: phonetic coding (the capacity to store and retrieve auditory information), inductive language learning ability and grammatical sensitivity (the capacity to make generalization, recognize the grammatical function of elements, etc), associative memory capacity (the capacity to select elements of L2 that are stored, this capacity determine fluency).

The following section will expose some studies which are related with the teaching-learning process. These studies investigated about strategies, techniques, classroom environment, and the use of L1 into the classroom. The importance of these studies is that their results will show the elements that different teachers use to help students to learn in a better way.

One study about ethnicity and language was made by Yang (2007) the purpose of the study is to demonstrate how ethnicity and language proficiency influence in the use of language learning strategies in students from a junior college. A total of 461 aboriginal and non-aboriginal students from the Chang Gung Institute of Technology were the subjects for this investigation, participants took a test in order to indentify which leaning strategies different ethnic and proficiency groups use. This test contained 4 parts: vocabulary, grammar, cloze test, and reading comprehension. A listening test were given to students before the investigation starts, students took this test in language laboratories in the school. The evidence show that the language ethnicity and proficiency have effects on strategy use by subjects on this study; also data suggested that non-aboriginal students tend to use six strategy categories better than aboriginal students.

A different study by Wu (2008) was about differences in language learning strategies use for students with high and low EFL proficiency level. For this study there were two groups of students: the first one has 49 sophomores and the second one has 88 freshman, all of this students took a questionnaire called SILL (Strategy Inventory for Language Learning) this instrument measure the type and frequency of strategy use. Additionally, a test to measure the level of English proficiency was given to students, this test has four parts: listening, reading, writing, and speaking. As a conclusion the author says that lower and higher proficiency EFL learners use compensation strategies, higher proficiency EFL learners use more often language strategies, proficiency level had strong relation with the use of cognitive strategies, and cognitive strategies are related with listening and reading proficiency.

Also, relationships between learning environment and motivation were investigated by Wu & Wu (2008). The population for this study was 3,589 non-English major freshman students; the researches use some instruments to collect data. Students had to complete a survey during class time; this quantitative data was processed using software called SPSS (Statistic Package for the Social Science). To keep students motivated is necessary to construct an environment that remains students how important is English in their lives, and how they will apply what they learn in class for real life.

Another study done by Mehrpours (2008). The purpose of the study is determine if a contextualization technique is better than a descontextualization technique to learn vocabulary. The researcher uses fifty male students; they were divided in two groups: the first one work on vocabulary using sentence-making practice in written and spoken forms, and the second group learn vocabulary using rote memorization of word list. Students took a pre-test to guaranty that all students were homogeneous to start the study, and a post-test to measure the differences between the achievement of the two groups. As a conclusion, the author says that rote memorization of word list (descontextualization technique) is better than sentence-making (contextualization technique) in order to acquire vocabulary.

Finally, Kim & Petraki (2009) did an investigation to show the opinion of native and non-native teachers about the use of L1 into the classroom. The participants were 6 native English speaking teachers and 6 Korean native speakers and 30 students from 3 different levels. The researchers collected data using questionnaires, interviews, and observation. First, questionnaires were given to teachers and students in order to know their opinion about the use of Korean into the classroom, then students and teachers

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were divided into groups in order to make the interviews; finally, 6 classes were observed in order to verify the data collected before. The researchers find that teachers and learners recognize the importance of L1 language into the classroom but principally in the initial stages. To conclude, the authors say that students, teachers and administrators have to work together in order to indentify a consistent approach for the use of L1 language into the classroom.

Description, Analysis, and Interpretation of Results

In this section all the information given by teachers, who work in the observed public high-schools, will be presented using graphs. Those graphs will be presented with percentages in order to show what teachers think about factors that affect the teaching-learning process in their classrooms.

Additionally, the data gathered in this research from observed teachers will be supported with the data given by observed students, and also the information obtained from the researcher; in this way the analysis of information will be reliable.

Quantitative Analysis

Factores Concerning Teachers

Which level of education do teachers have?

Author: Herrera Mora Marco Antonio
Source: Teacher´s questionnaire
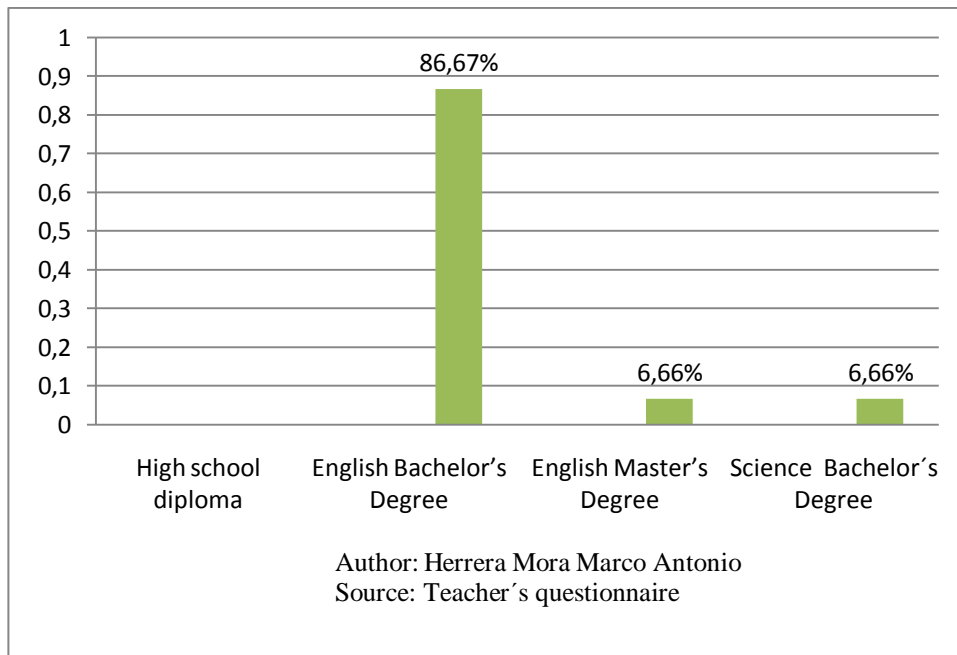
The graph demonstrates that 86,67% of the observed teachers have an English Bachelor´s degree, only the 6,66% of them have an English Master´s degree, and 6,66% have a Science Bachelor´s degree.

As it is seen in graph 1 most of the observed teachers have an English Bachelor´s Degree and one has an English Master´s Degree, this result means that all of those observed teachers can speak English and according to data gathered on the observation sheets most of the observed teachers have a B2 or C1 levels of English. So, those teachers do not have problems to speak English most of the time in class.

On the other hand, one of the observed teachers has a B1 level of English and this can be a problem because students need that the teacher has a higher level of English to teach them. This situation could be because the teacher does not have a Bachelor`s Degree related with English.

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

Author: Herrera Mora Marco Antonio
Source: Teacher´s questionnaire
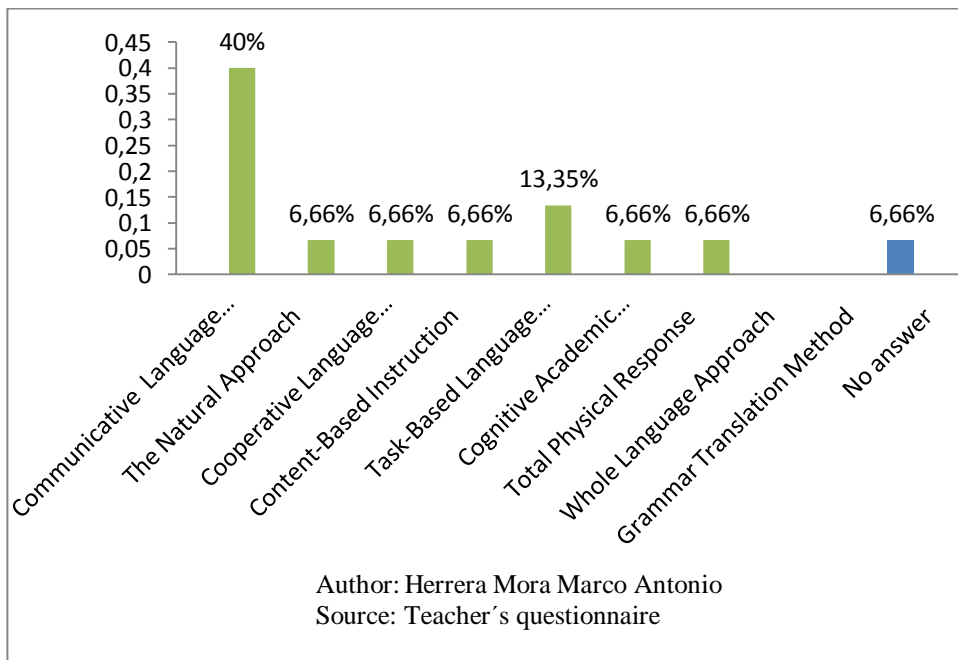
Graph 2 shows that 40% of observed teachers use the Communicative Language Teaching, 13,45% of them use Task-Based Language Teaching, 6,66% use the Natural Approach, 6,66% use Cooperative Language Learning, 6,66% use Content-Based Instruction, 6,66% use Cognitive Academic Language Learning, and also 6,66% did not choose one of the options.

According to the observed teachers Communicative Language Teaching was the most used approach during the lessons. But, in accordance with the information gathered in the observation sheets, the most used method during the observed classes was Task-Based Language Teaching because most of the lessons were taught using tasks that students had to solve in pairs and in groups in order to let students interact to solve the tasks. Additionally, according to the student´s questionnaire most of the students like the form in which teachers lead the lessons and the activities that they do in class.

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

Graph 3

Author: Herrera Mora Marco Antonio
Source: Teacher´s questionnaire
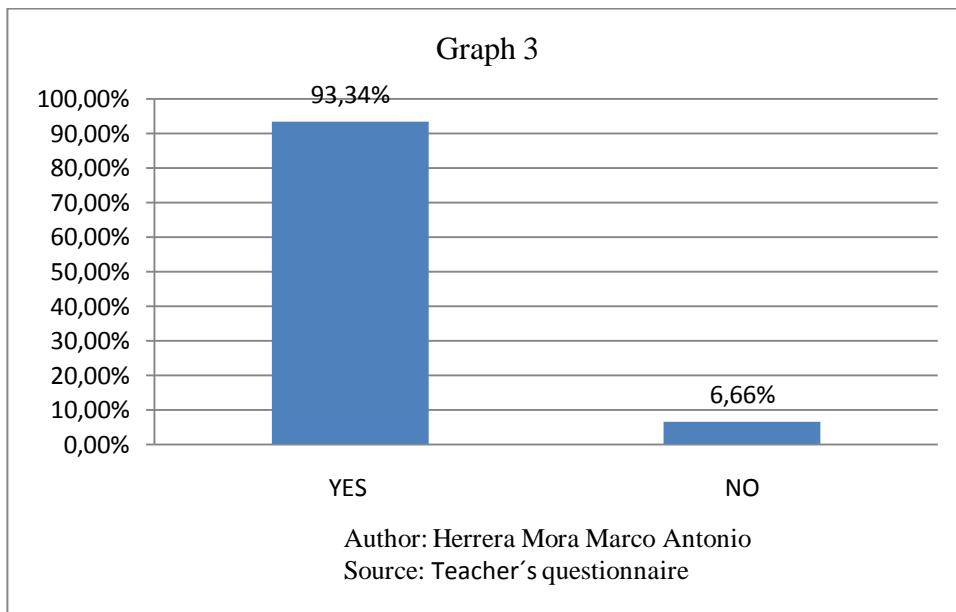
Graph 3 shows that 93, 34% of teachers use whole-group activities, and just the 6, 66% do not use it to teach English.

The result shows in graph 3 is supported by the data gathered through the observations because most of the observed teachers started their lessons using whole-group activities such as asking students about the last lesson or asking students what they think the lesson is going to be about. Also, the observed teachers answered that they use whole group activities because they let students to be involved in the lesson and also that this kind of activities allow students to feel comfortable when they have to participate in class. On the other hand, the 6,66% of teachers answered that they do not use whole group activities because there are so many students in class.

In addition, students answered that they feel comfortable and the activities that teachers do in class help them to keep the motivation to learn English.

Do teachers use individual activities to teach their lessons?

Graph 4

Author: Herrera Mora Marco Antonio
Source: Teacher´s questionnaire
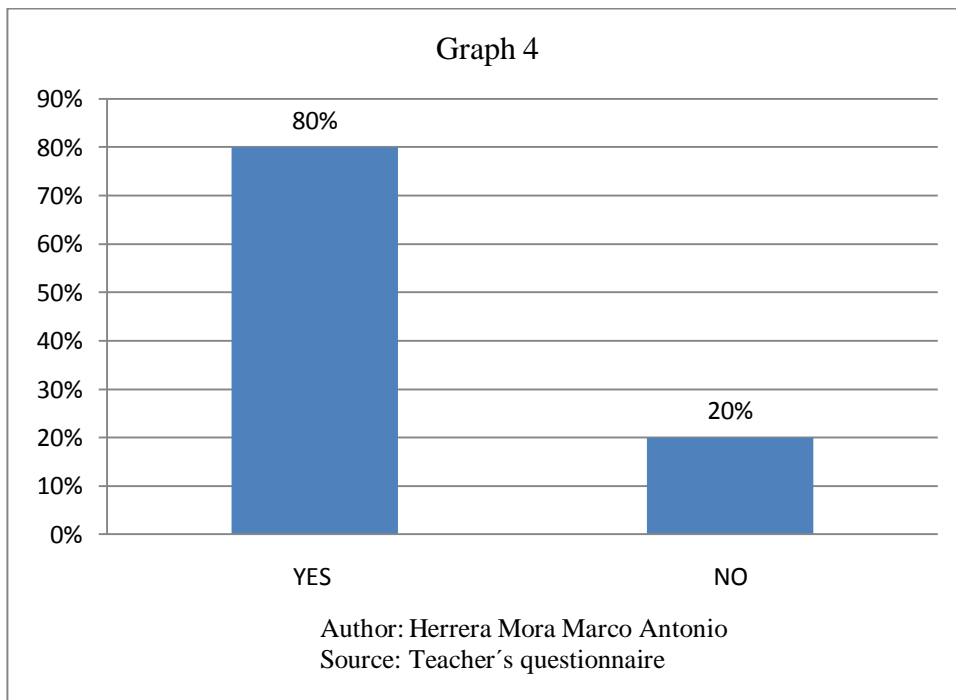
Graph 4 illustrates the answers that observed teachers gave. The 80% of the teachers use individual activities, and 20% do not use this kind of activities to teach English.

Information obtained from the observation sheets reflects that most of the teachers use individual activities in class, and according to observed teachers they use individual activities in order to get the feedback needed to know if students understand the lesson. Also, they use these activities to control that four skills are developed in a correct form. In contrast, teachers who do not use individual activities say that the time is too short and there are too many students in class to use individual activities.

According to students, the individual activities that teachers employ in class are interesting and motivating. On the other hand, some students do not think that individual activities are good for the lessons.

Do teachers use group work activities to teach their lessons?

Graph 5

Author: Herrera Mora Marco Antonio

Source: Teacher´s questionnaire
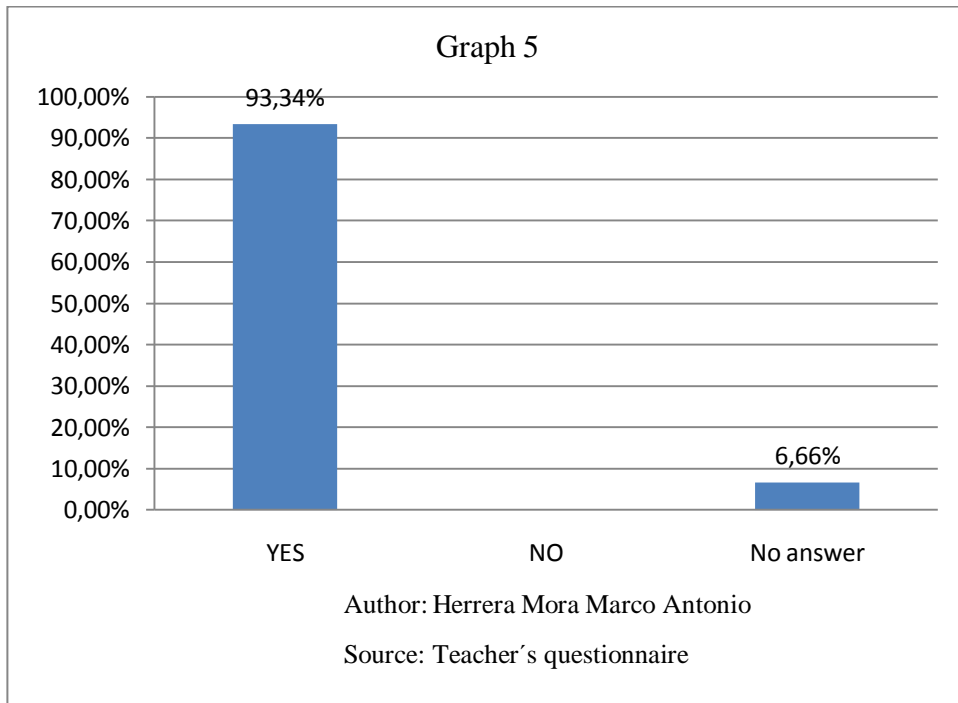
Graph 5 shows that 93, 34% of observed teachers use group work activities, and the 6, 66% did not answer the question.

The observed teachers answered that they use group work activities to allow students to interact more in class, letting them feel more confident to express their ideas with the rest of the group. Also, teachers say that they use group work activities because there are a lot of students in class and in this way students can help each other.

Also, students answered that teachers use different activities that let them interact with other students in class and students said that this activities help them to be motivated to learn English.

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

Graph 6

Author: Herrera Mora Marco Antonio
Source: Teacher´s questionnaire
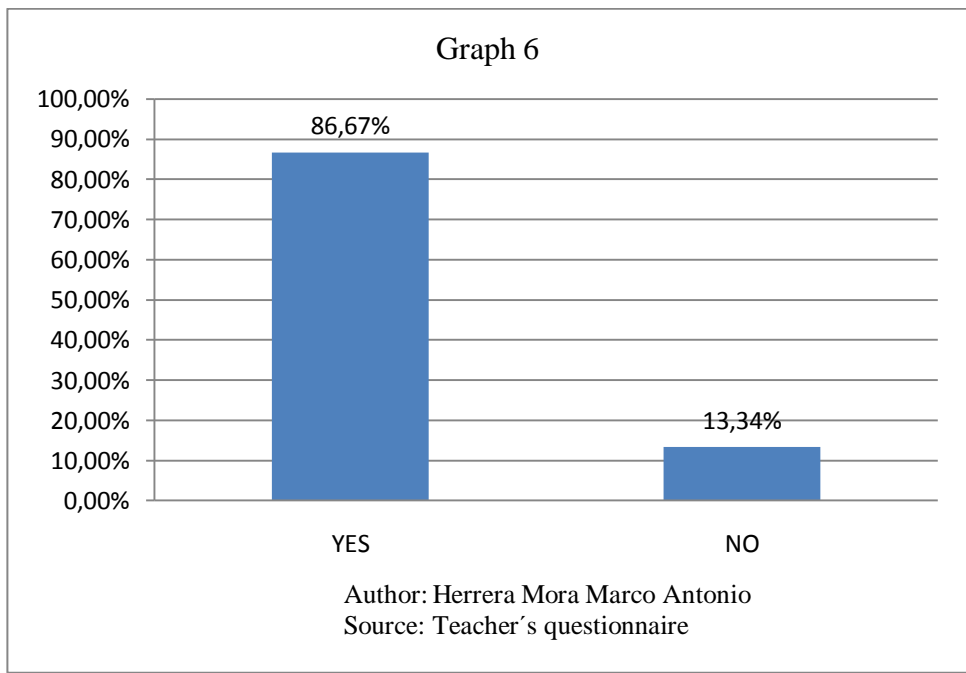
This graph shows the answers of the observed teachers. The 86, 67% of the observed teachers said that they speak English most of the time during the lessons, and just the 13, 34% of them said that they do not speak English most of the time.

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Information gathered in the observation sheets shows that almost all teachers use English most of the time in class. In fact, 7 of the observed teachers use English 100 % of the time during the lesson, 7 of them use English 75% of the time during the lesson, and only 1 teacher uses English 25% of the time during the lesson. Also, students said that teachers speak English a lot of the time in class, and also that sometimes they can not understand what the teachers say in class.

Do teachers plan their lessons?

Author: Herrera Mora Marco Antonio
Source: Teacher´s questionnaire
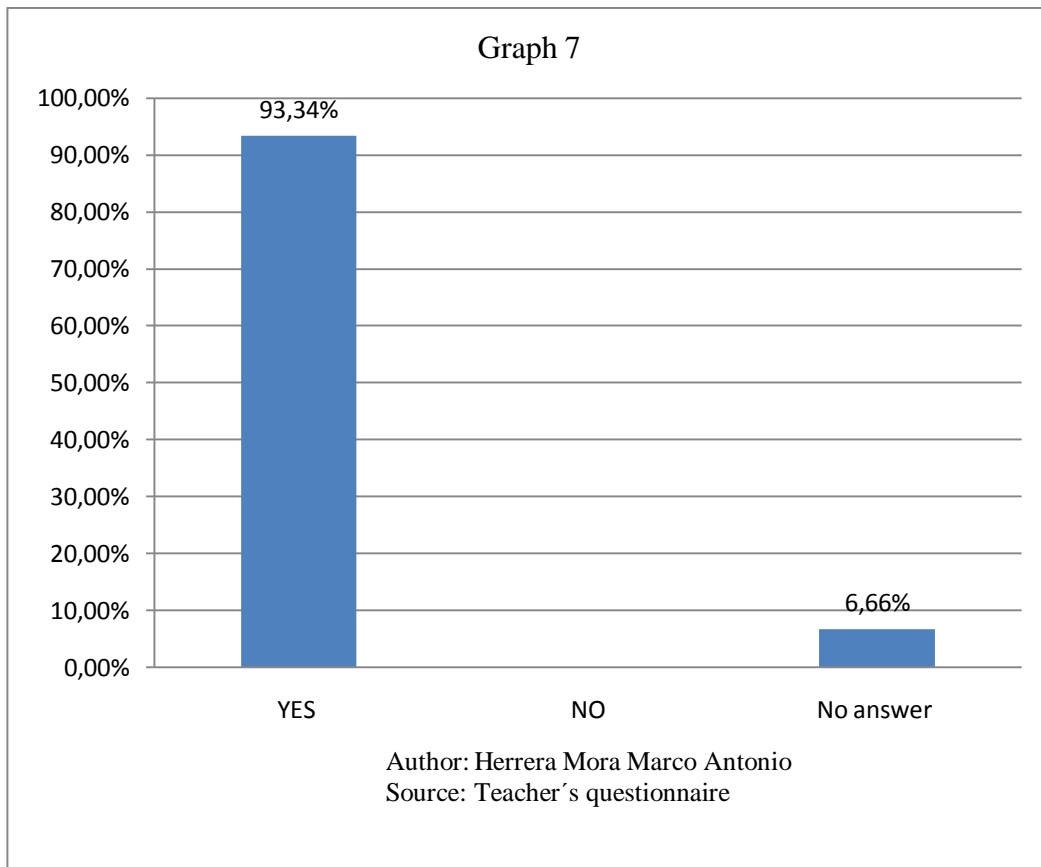
Graph 7 shows the answers of the observed teachers. The 93, 34% of observed teachers have a plan for the lesson, and the 6, 66% just did not answer the question.

According to the information obtained in the observation sheets, most of the observed teachers employ a logical and clear sequence of activities during the lessons.

For that reason, it can be said that most of the observed teachers have a plan for their lessons. Additionally, a couple of the observed teachers showed the lesson plan to the researcher before the class starts.

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

Graph 8

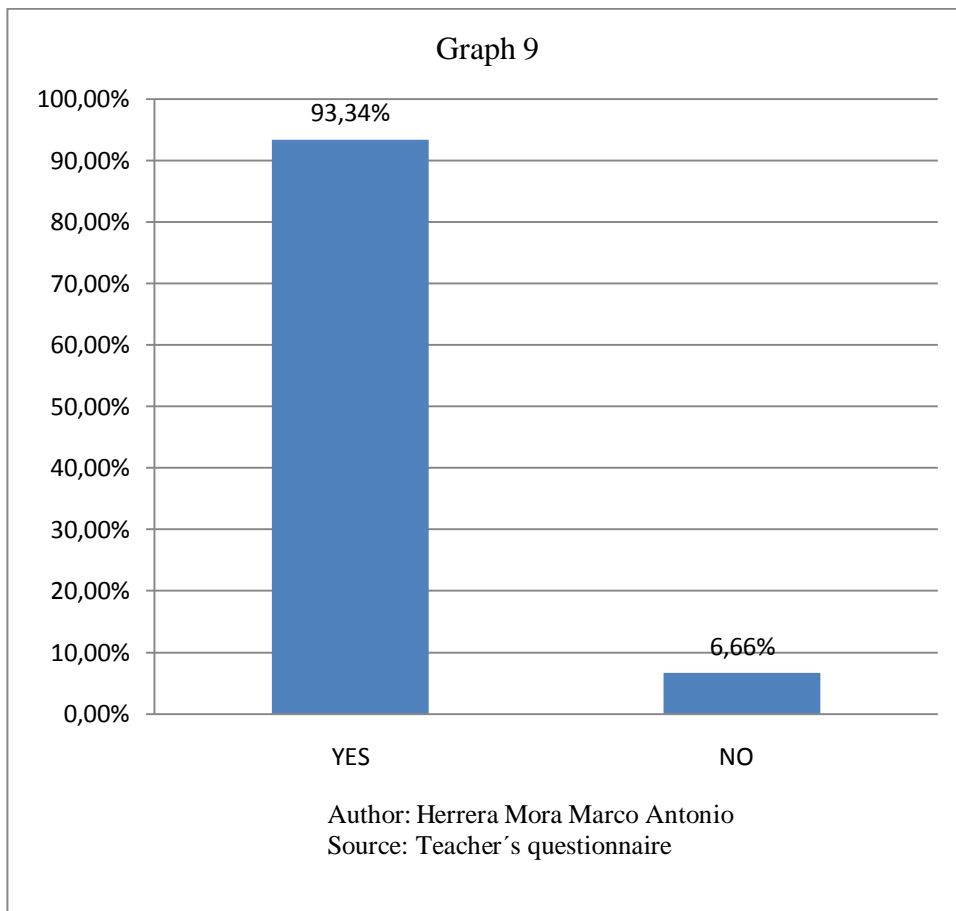Author: Herrera Mora Marco Antonio
Source: Teacher´s questionnaire
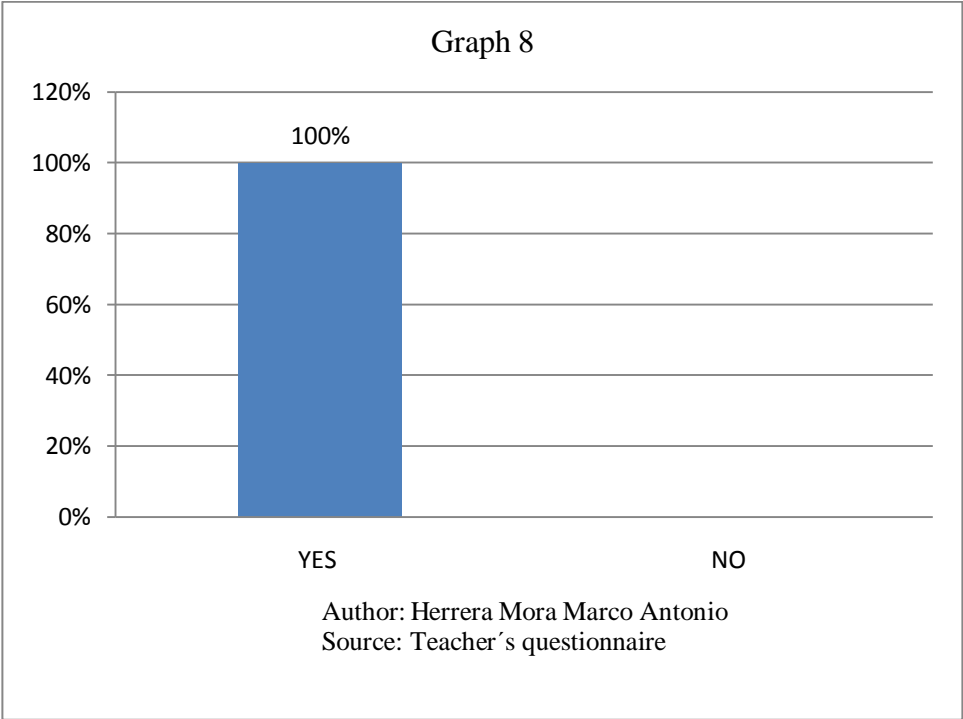
This graph shows the answers of the observed teachers. The 100% of observed teachers consider discipline, timing, feedback, and instruction to teach their lessons.

Almost all of the observed teachers mention that they consider aspects such as time, lesson topic, objectives, warm up activities, introduction of the new topic, etc. during the lessons. In fact, most of the observed students believe that the teachers consider discipline, timing, feedback, and instruction during their lessons. Also this information can be confirmed with the data obtained in the observation sheets; this data confirms that almost all observed teachers consider discipline, timing, feedback, and

instructions in their lessons. On the other hand, some of observed students answered that the teachers do not consider these aspects in class; they do not think that teachers control discipline in class or give clear instructions for each activity.

Factors Concerning Students

Do teachers consider Students´ needs to teach English successfully?

Graph 9

Graph 9

93,34%

6,66%

YES   NO

Author: Herrera Mora Marco Antonio
Source: Teacher´s questionnaire

Graph 9 shows the information given by the observed teachers. The 93,34% of the observed teachers answered that they consider students´ needs to teach English, and 6,66% of them answered that they do not consider students´ needs.

It was observed that most of the teachers consider students´ needs because almost all of the students were motivated to interact during the lessons and the activities the teachers have planned for the class were interesting for students.

Do teachers consider Students´ level to teach English successfully?

Graph 10

Author: Herrera Mora Marco Antonio
Source: Teacher´s questionnaire
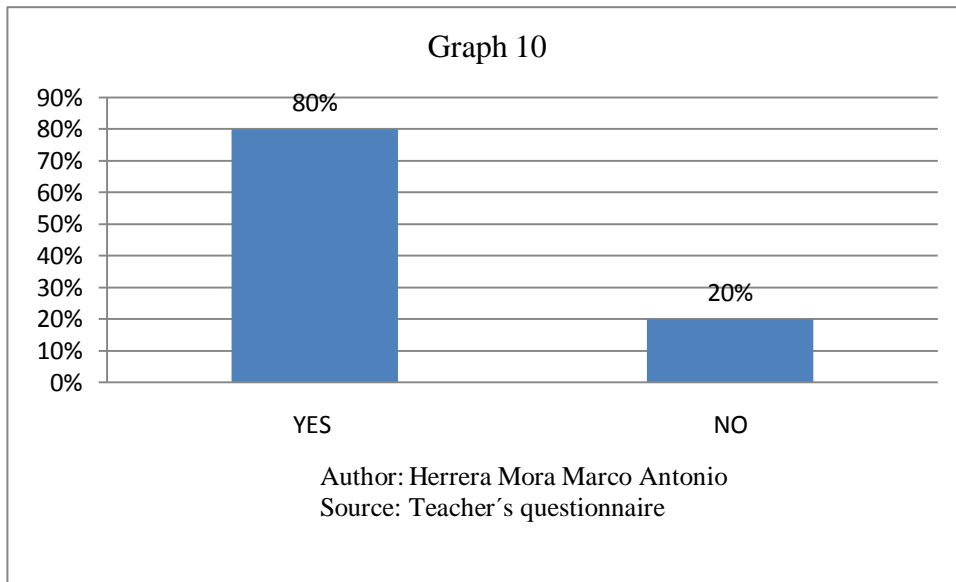
In this graph 80% of the observed teachers answered that they consider students´ level to teach English, and the 20% answered that they do not consider it.

Most of the observed teachers knew that not all of the observed students have the same English level. For that reason, sometimes teachers adapted the activities to students who do not have a higher level of English; making tasks that all students can solve or giving instruction in Spanish for students who need more help in class.

As a result, most of the observed students think that activities they do in class are easy to solve for them, and only some of students think that activities which their teachers use are difficult to solve. But almost all observed students work in a good form during the lessons and almost all of them could understand when the teachers speak in class.

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Which is the student´s level?

Graph 11

Author: Herrera Mora Marco Antonio
Source: Teacher´s questionnaire
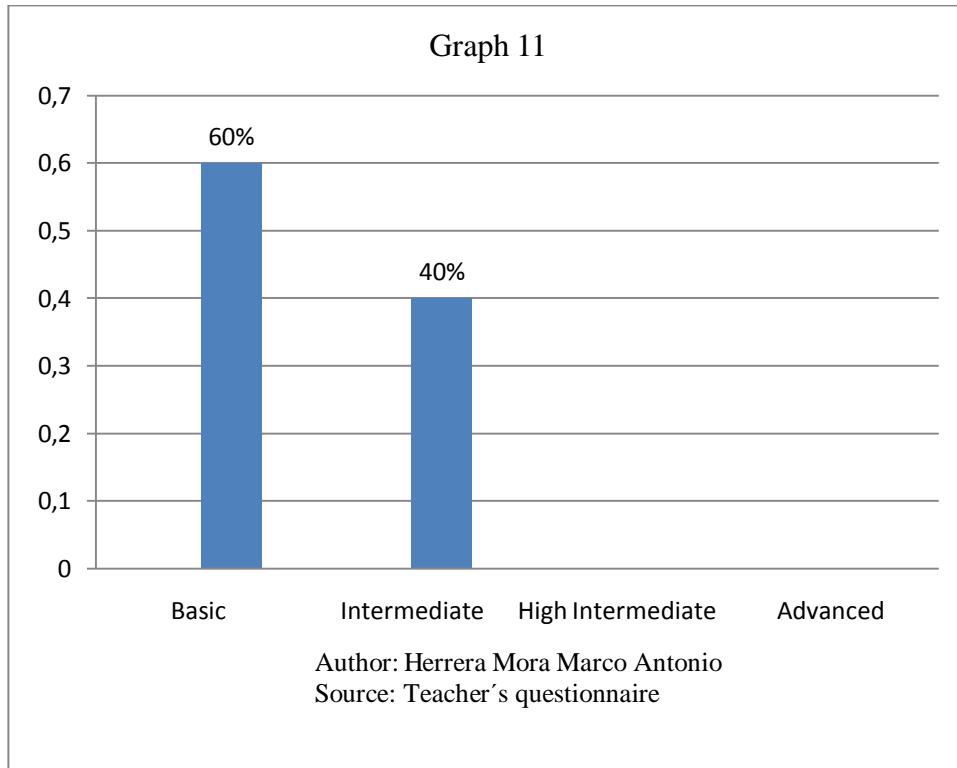
Graph 11 shows the answers given by the observed teachers. The 60% of the observed students have a basic level of English, and 40% of them have an intermediate level.

According to the data gathered from the observed students, most of them think that activities are easy to complete, some of them think that activities are complicated to complete or that they are very easy to complete. Also, the contents for the lessons were for basic or intermediate levels and it was observed that students feel confident working into these levels. Additionally, it was noticed that most of the students did not have problems solving the tasks in class or listening what the teachers said. On the other hand, when the topics were more complex students sometimes had problems to understand the lesson.

How many students are there in the observed class?

Graph 12

Author: Herrera Mora Marco Antonio
Source: Teacher´s questionnaire
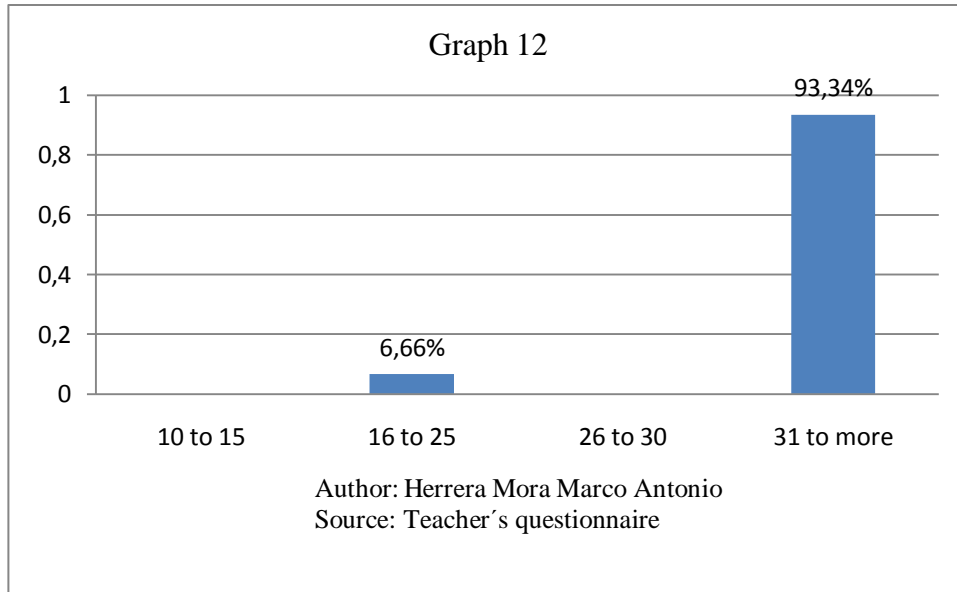
Graph 12 represents the information that the observed teachers gave. The 93,34% of the observed teachers said that classes have more than 31 students, and only the 6,66% of the observed teachers said that classes have between 16 to 25 students.

According with the information recollected in the observation sheets, almost all the observed classes had more than 31 students, and only one observed class had between 16 to 25 students in class. This information from the observation sheets support the data given in graph 12.

Additionally, some of the observed students believe that the number of students in class let them learn English in a better way, and almost the half of the observed students think that the number of students in class does not let them to learn English in a good way. In fact, sometimes the number of students was a problem for the teachers because they could not correct all students and also not all students could participate in class as frequently as students want to interact in class.

Do teachers feel comfortable with this number of students they are working with?

Graph 13

Author: Herrera Mora Marco Antonio
Source: Teacher´s questionnaire
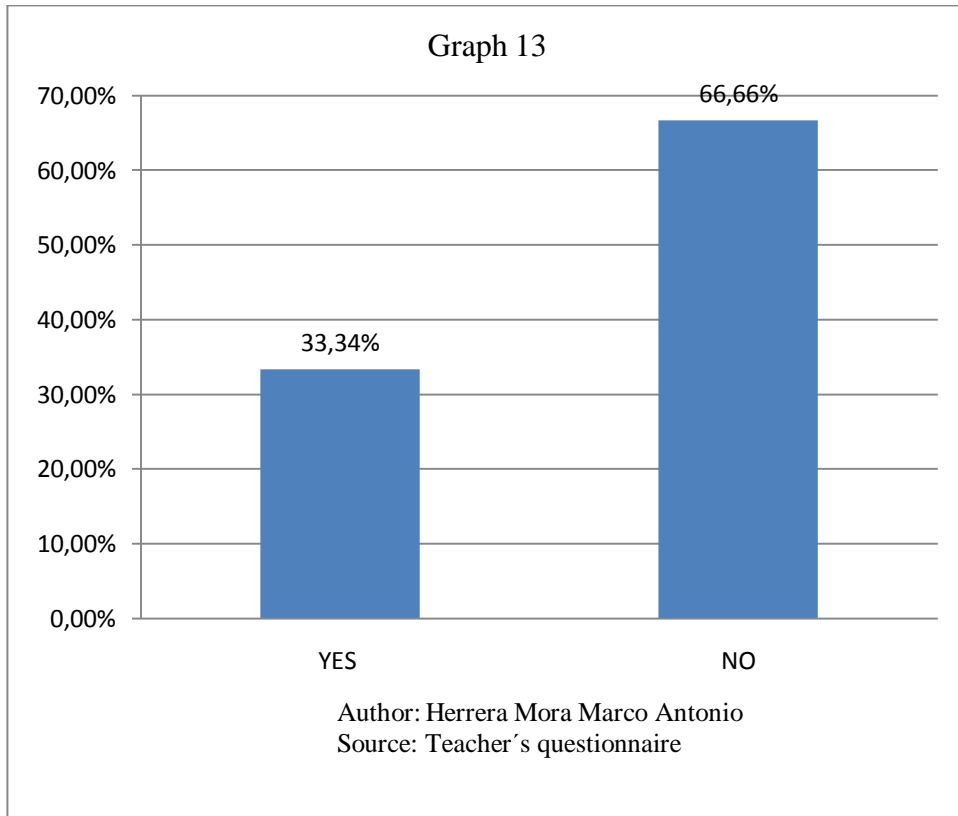
This graph illustrates what the observed teachers answered. The 66,66% of the observed teachers said that they do not feel comfortable with the quantity of students in the classroom, and the 33,34% of them said that they feel comfortable with it.

These results show that it is difficult for most of the teachers to work with large classes; it was observed that for almost all of the observed classes there were more than 31 students attending the lesson.

In addition, more than the half of the observed students answered that they think the number of students help them learn English in a good form, and the rest of the observed students disagree with it.

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

Graph 14

Author: Herrera Mora Marco Antonio
Source: Teacher´s questionnaire
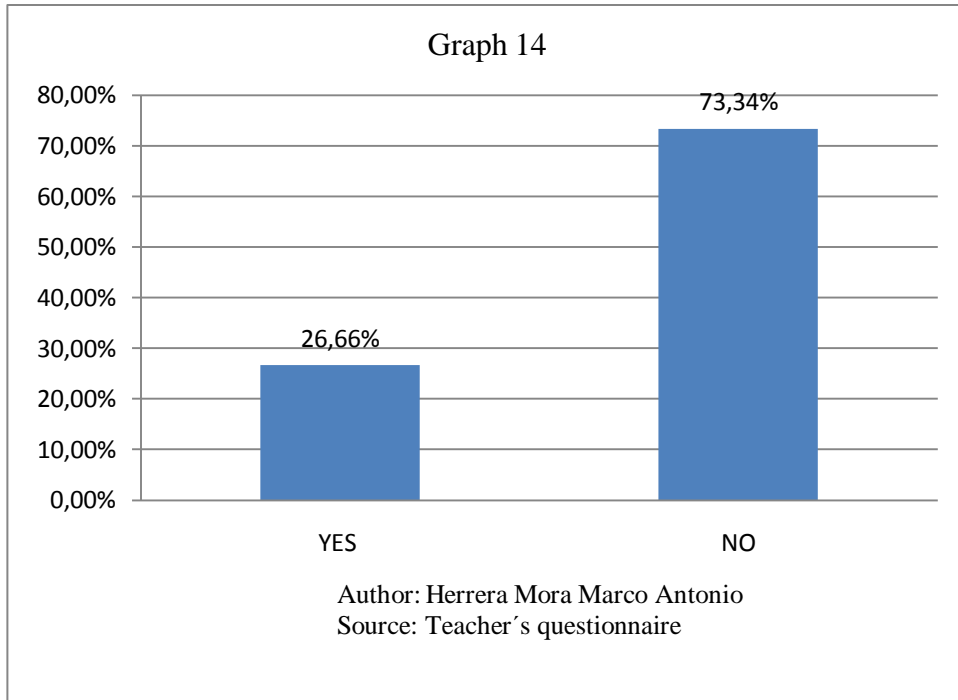
Graph 14 shows the answers of the observed teachers. The 73,34% of the observed teachers answered that they do not think they have enough space in the classroom, and 26,66% of them believe that there is enough space in the classroom.

Most of the observed classrooms have enough space for students to make different activities; even when there were more than 30 students in each class most of the classrooms were big enough. In fact, the data gathered in the observation sheets shows that most of the observed classes have enough space, and only few of the observed classes do not have enough classroom space. Also, all of the observed students answered that they feel comfortable with the classroom space.

As a result, the information obtained in the observation sheets is not similar like the data gathered in the teachers´ questionnaires, and it can be because most of the

observed teachers had problems working with more than 30 students since it is hard to keep the control of this quantity of students but not because the classrooms space is not big enough.

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

Graph 15

53,34%

54,00%
52,00%
50,00%
48,00%
46,00%
44,00%
42,00%

46,64%

YES   NO

Author: Herrera Mora Marco Antonio
Source: Teacher´s questionnaire
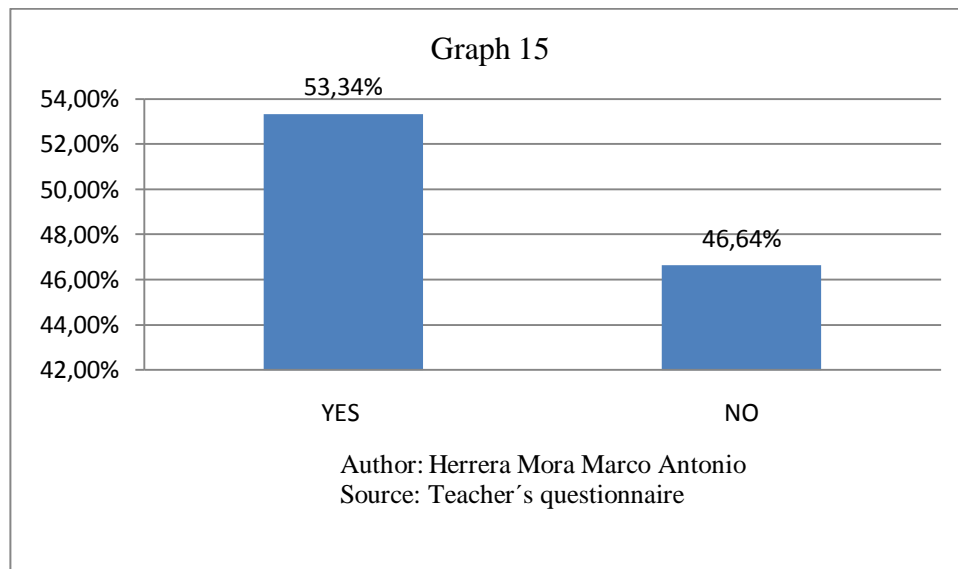
This graph shows what observed teachers answered. The 53,34% of observed teachers answered that they arrange the seats according to the kind of activity required for the lesson, and the 46,64% of them answered that they do not do it.

According to the information obtained during the observations, in almost all the observed lessons, orderly rows were the kind of seating arrangement that teachers used the most. It is because, as graph 12 shows, almost all of the observed classes have more than 31 students and according to West (2010) in this way the teacher can keep eye contact and move around students when it is necessary.

Also, most of the students think that the form in which the seats are arranged by the teachers are good for the kinds of activities that they do in class.

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

Graph 16

Author: Herrera Mora Marco Antonio
Source: Teacher´s questionnaire
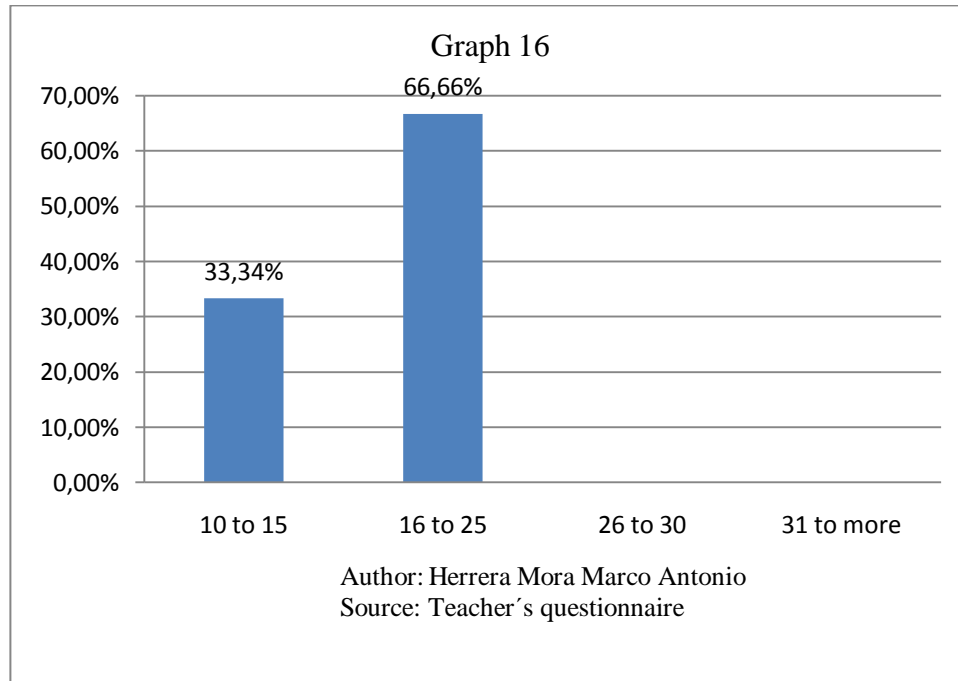
Graph 16 represents the information obtained by the teachers´ questionnaires. The 66,66% of observed teachers said that the appropriate number of students in a classroom is from 16 to 25 pupils, and the rest of them with 33,34% said that from 10 to 15 students are the appropriate number to teach English.

All of the observed teachers do not think that a class with 31 students is appropriate to teach English. It was observed that almost in all observed classes the number of students was a problem to keep the concentration or to spend more time interacting with students instead of giving instruction about the activities.

Finally, could be better to have from 16 to 25 or less students for each class not because the classroom space is not enough but because it is difficult for teachers to control more than 30 students during the lesson.

Do teachers use teaching resources (TV, Tape/ Cd recorder, computer(s), Smartboard, and supplementary materials)?

Graph 17

Author: Herrera Mora Marco Antonio
Source: Teacher´s questionnaire
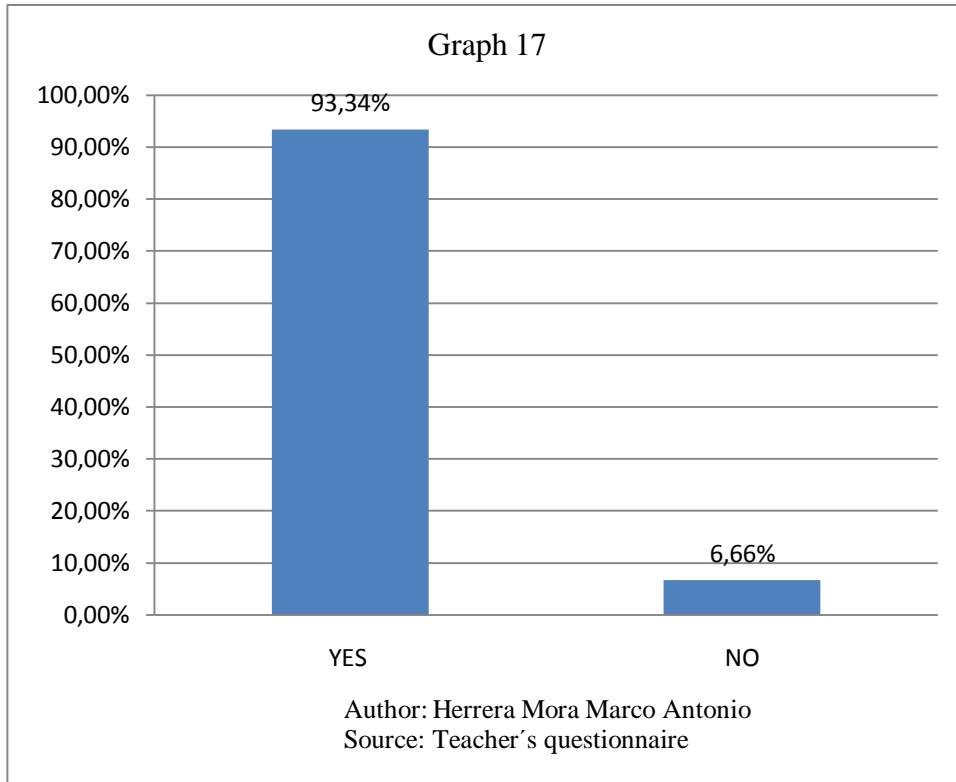
In this graph 93,34% of the observed teachers answered that they use different kind of teaching resources, and just the 6,66% answered the contrary.

Some observed high schools have resources such as: TV, Cd recorder, Computer in the classroom but the teachers did not use them during the observed lessons. On the other hand, some other observed high schools do not have those kinds of resources and teachers have to work just with the board and photocopies.

In contrast, 53,33% of the students answered that those kind of resources are used during the lessons, and 46,66% of them answered that during the lesson those resources are not used.

Do teachers consider appropriate the resources they have in class?

Graph 18

Author: Herrera Mora Marco Antonio
Source: Teacher´s questionnaire
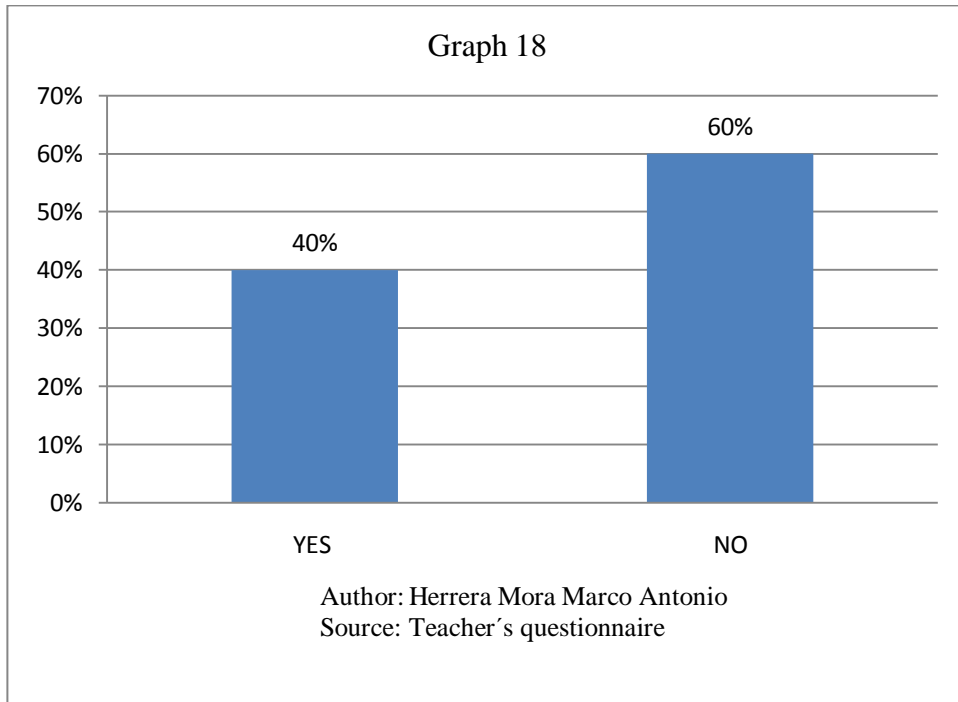
Graph 18 illustrates that 60% of the observed teachers do not think that resources they have in class are appropriate to teach English, and the 40% of them consider that resources in class are appropriate to teach English.

Some of the observed teachers answered that the technological resources like computers, TV, CD recorders that they have in class are old, and also that the programmes that they use in class have to be updated.

Additionally, almost the half of the observed students mention that resources like TV, CD recorder, computers, etc. are not used by the teachers during the lessons. This is because, the teachers do not use them even when some of the observed high schools have TV, Cd recorder, or computers; or because they do not have this kind of resources into the classroom.

Factors Concerning Educational Institutions

Does the institution review your lesson plans?

Graph 19

Author: Herrera Mora Marco Antonio
Source: Teacher´s questionnaire
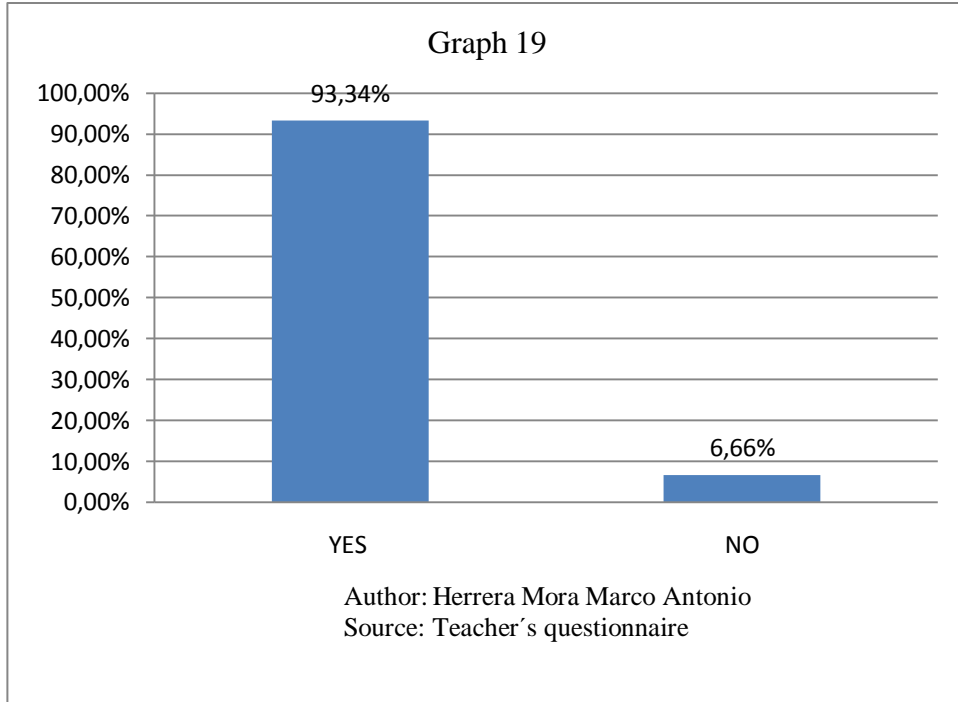
This graph shows the information given by observed teachers. The 93,34% of the observed teachers said that the educational institutions review their lesson plans, and only the 6,66% of them said that educational institutions do not review their lesson plans.

According to the information given by the teachers, 46,66% of the educational institutions review lesson plans once a month, 33,33% of the educational institutions review lesson plans once a week, 13,33% of the educational institutions review lesson plans in times that teachers did not indicate, and the 6,66% of the educational institutions do not review lesson plans. On the other hand, it was observed that only a couple of the teachers have the lesson plan with them.

Does the institution monitor your teaching?

Graph 20

Author: Herrera Mora Marco Antonio
Source: Teacher´s questionnaire
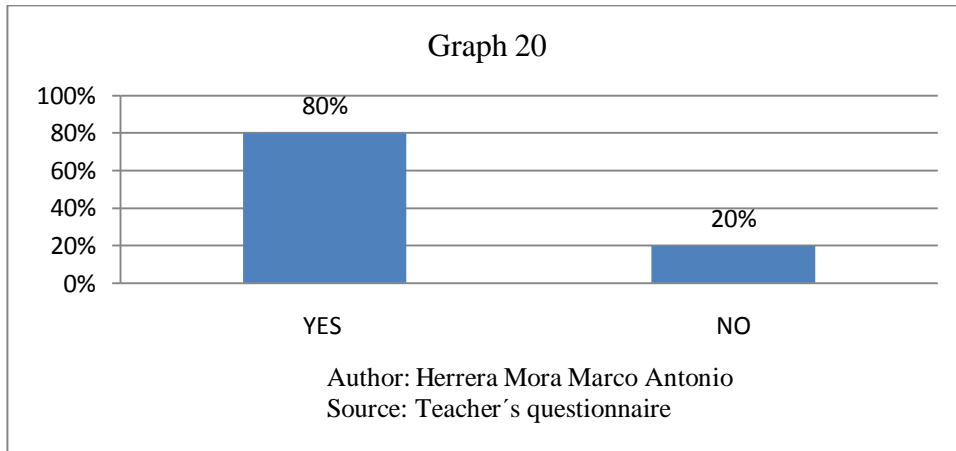
Graph 20 shows the answers of the observed teachers. The 80% of the observed teachers said that educational institutions monitor teachers´ work, and the 20% of the observed teachers said that institutions do not monitor teachers´ work.

According to the observed teachers, educational institutions monitoring teachers´ work once a week or at least once a month. On the other hand, the rest of the observed educational institutions do not monitor teachers´ work. And, according to Danielson (2008) it is important because classroom observation recollect information about the interaction between teachers and students in class.

It was seen during the observations that for most of the teachers it was usual that another person monitor the lessons because those teachers did not feel uncomfortable working while another person was present during the lesson, but some few teachers did not want to be observed and sometimes disagree to let someone to observe the lesson. As a result, it can be said that most of the educational institutions monitor teachers´ work because for most of the observed teachers were usual to have a person present during the lessons.

Conclusions

➢   Classroom space is not a factor that affects the teaching learning process, most of the classrooms have enough space and also students feel comfortable into the classrooms.

➢   Almost all the observed teachers have at least an English bachelor´s degree, and most of them have a B2 or C1 level of English. So, most of the observed teachers are professional into the field of education.

➢   The number of students for each class is a problem because it was difficult for teachers to keep control of more than 31 students; also teachers do not feel good working with this number of students.

➢   Some of the observed teachers are not clear about which methods or approaches they employ in class.

➢   The seating arrangement most used for the observed teachers was orderly rows even when they do group work activities. But, orderly rows is not a good seating arrangement to do group work activities.

➢   Teachers do not use frequently technological resources such as TV, Cd recorder or computer during the lessons. And, some observed high schools do not have those technological resources into the classrooms.

Recommendations

➢ Technological resources are important in the English teaching-learning process; Ecuadorian public high schools should implement those resources into the classrooms and also give their teachers a course in order to know how to employ technological resources in class.

➢ Ecuadorian public high schools should invest in courses for their teachers, in order to instruct them in working with large groups of students.

➢ Ecuadorian public high schools should invest in English language courses for their teachers, in order to ensure that they are always in touch with the English language.

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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!!!!!!

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!!!!!

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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 %	( )

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TEACHER'S INTERVIEW

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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	( )