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**Factors that influence the English language teaching-learning process in
Ecuadorian private high schools.**

TRABAJO DE FIN DE TITULACIÓN

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my little daughter Mayleen Victoria, who has been my inspiration to become a teacher, even before she was born.

Karina Proaño



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In the first place I thank God, who gave me the strength to reach my professional goals while being a wife, a mother, a teacher and a student at the same time, without his help none of this could have been possible.

I also thank my supporting family, my husband Rodrigo and my daughter Mayleen Victoria, who have been by my side, unconditionally.

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Karina Cecilia Proaño Celi



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ABSTRACT

The topic of my thesis is: Factors that influence language teaching-learning process in Ecuadorian private high schools.

The principal objective was to identify and analyze factors that affect the English language teaching and learning process. The research was done in six private educational institutions in Quito, where 15 classes were observed and 15 teachers and students were interviewed.

Concerning the Literature Review, meaningful data about this topic was obtained through different steps. First, information about the situation of teaching English in Ecuador was gathered. Then, scientific information was analyzed regarding teaching methods and approaches. Finally, previous studies related to the subject were retrieved from different journals and analyzed.

Results were tabulated and analyzed using a qualitative method, and presented in bar graphs.

In conclusion, many factors must be considered to succeed in teaching and learning English. Foremost, teachers need to improve their English proficiency and master the necessary skills; students should be distributed in groups considering their needs and levels of English. Finally, institutions must provide classrooms and materials that allow teachers and students to feel comfortable during English classes.

KEY WORDS: ESL, ENGLISH, SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING, METHOD, APPROACH.

RESUMEN

El tema del presente trabajo de titulación es: “Factores que influncian la enseñanza y el aprendizaje del idioma Inglés como lengua extranjera en unidades educativas privadas del Ecuador”.

La investigación se llevó a cabo en la ciudad de Quito en donde se visitaron seis unidades educativas que ofrecen la enseñanza de inglés como segunda lengua. En estas instituciones se observaron 15 clases de inglés y se solicitó la colaboración de 15 alumnos y profesores para ser entrevistados y para llenar los formularios que se usaron como instrumento investigativo.

El principal objetivo de la investigación fue recolectar información acerca de la realidad que viven día a día los alumnos y profesores de lengua extranjera, y analizar los factores que influencia para un mejor aprendizaje y una enseñanza más efectiva del idioma inglés.

Previo a la investigación de campo, se realizó una recolección de datos que se usaron como base para iniciar el estudio. Se tomaron en cuenta estudios previos en el tema y se analizaron varias publicaciones científicas con respecto a métodos y teorías de enseñanza de Inglés como segunda lengua.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Educación, inglés, segunda lengua, metodología de educación, teoría de aprendizaje.

INTRODUCTION

In the past couple of years we have been witnesses of significant changes that our country is experiencing with regard to educational standards and the most important is that English has finally been taken into consideration to be part of the improvement program of the national curriculum (Hermosa, 2013).

The ultimate goal regarding second language learning is to improve the quality and quantity of knowledge that students acquire during their last scholar years before starting at university. But the awful truth is that for many years little or no attention has been given to the teaching-learning process of English in public schools which resulted in a giant gap between public and private educational institutions.

Taking into account the situation of teaching English as a foreign language in Ecuador, the intention of the research proposal is to provide a deep analysis of the factors that influence the language teaching and learning process. In order to achieve this purpose four specific objectives have been considered: to identify the level of English of students and their needs within the class; to determine the classroom conditions in which English lessons take place; to identify abilities and skills of English teachers and to determine institutional facilities and norms regarding quality of education.

In order to reach all the objectives mentioned above, research was done in different areas and factors that teachers must take into consideration to teach English as a foreign language successfully.

Before going further, it is necessary to mention that there is a wide variety of studies conducted around the world with relation to the factors that affect the process of teaching

English as a foreign language. These studies focus on different aspects such as methodology, physical spaces, lesson planning, teachers and students' mother language, etc.

The first study that will be presented clearly emphasizes that the learning environment of English in public schools in Nigeria should have been a priority for the state in order to improve the performance of students in their careers and to increase their opportunities to get scholarships and/or jobs in English speaking countries. (Aduwa-Ogiegbaen & Iyamu, 2006)

Equally important, the research that Alsayed conducted in 2003 about the factors that contribute to learn English as a foreign language is included to consider one of the most significant findings of her study: Motivation is a reliable predictor of students' performance in EFL classes.

On the other hand, a study carried by Mitsumi & McDonald, (2005) revealed that besides students' motivations, it was of vital importance that teachers had a profound understanding of second language acquisition process and counted on well-developed strategies to teach English as a second language in order to succeed in teaching different levels of the target language.

Considering the situation in Ecuador in relation to learning and teaching a second language and since there is not enough information or reliable studies in this educational field, this research is intended to be a dependable reference source about the current reality of teaching and learning English as a second language in Ecuador. The conclusions and findings of this study may be useful for different purposes. Firstly, for teachers who may

continue researching in the field of second language acquisition. Secondly, the results may be helpful for educational institutions and authorities that wish to improve their teaching system, and lastly, for the students that need this kind of information as a basis to begin their own research.

Although the current study is based on a small sample of participants, the findings suggest that further research needs to be undertaken in the field of ESOL programs in public and private Ecuadorian institutions since the importance given to this area has been non-existent for many years, and statistics show that educators need more training in approaches and methods for teaching English.

METHOD

The techniques used for this research included questionnaires, interviews and field observations. These procedures were the most practical way of gathering information about the subjects, and their environment

It was decided that a questionnaire was the best method to adopt for this investigation because it allowed gathering large amounts of data about teachers' and students' attitudes, interests, opinions, knowledge and behaviors (past, present and intended).

Setting and Participants

Participants were recruited from six private educational institutions across Quito, capital of Ecuador, where English was taught as a foreign language to male and female teenagers from 8th grade to 3th year of high school. The sample of participants was formed by 15 teachers and students that belonged to the previously chosen institutions.

Procedures

Once objectives were established and educational institutions were selected, applications were submitted to the principals of each institution in order to obtain the permission to observe different English classes and interview three teachers and three students in each high school.

Following this, printed questionnaires were distributed among teachers and students who were requested to fill them out before observing the English class. The observation sheets were then completed during the class. Finally, oral interviews were conducted with teachers in order to find out the level of English that teachers had. Results were presented

in the range of A1, A2, B1, B2, C1 and C2, A1 being the lowest level and C2 the highest level, all of this according to the common European Framework of Reference.

While conducting scheduled visits to the institutions, information was collected regarding the research topic that could be used as basis or serve as a benchmark for further analysis, comparisons and conclusions. Methodology books, online publications, previous researches and official information from the Ministry of Education were some of the sources that were investigated.

Once the information was collected, it was classified by using bibliographic data collection tabs. There were ten tabs related to the theoretical and scientific support, and five tabs related to previous studies on the topic.

When the observations and the interviews were completed, the results were analyzed using a quantitative method, which helped to present and explain the findings in an easy and simple way considering the four principal factors that were part of the research: Factors concerning Teachers, Factors Concerning Students, Factors Concerning Classrooms and Factors Concerning Educational Institutions.

DISCUSSION

Literature Review

Importance of Teaching English as a Foreign Language in Ecuador

Education in Ecuador is going through a long process of change which aims to improve the quality and quantity of knowledge that students acquire during their scholar years. English National Curriculum is one of the areas that is witnessing changes of form and content in this remedial action led by the government considering that for a long time little or no attention has been given to the teaching-learning process of English in public schools.

The government together with the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Technology and Innovation presented a special scholarship program called “Teach English”. This scholarship aims to reduce the giant gap that actually exists between public and private bilingual schools in teaching and learning English as a second language. This action is the result of the government awareness of the urgent need that public institutions have to hire better prepared teachers in public area for teaching English. Therefore, the scholarship provides complete financing for teachers to improve their language skills, attending different universities in English speaking countries and return to Ecuador with the knowledge required to drastically improve the English proficiency of students in public schools in Ecuador (Vinueza, 2012).

Teaching Approaches and Methods

A considerable amount of literature has been published about methods and approaches for teaching English as a foreign or second language and several excellent

research findings have helped ESOL teachers during decades. Some of these studies are more popular than others, but most of them have proved their effectiveness and convinced teachers to use them and adapt them to the reality of their English classes.

Richards & Rodgers (2008) described the Total Physical Response (TPR) as an English teaching method that uses coordination of speech and action as a way to teach language making the classes full of physical activity. They suggested the possibility to link the TPR to the “trace theory” of memory in psychology that is based on the idea that the more frequently a memory connection is traced, the stronger the memory association will be and the more likely it will be recalled. A similar opinion of TPR is presented by Reilly & Ward, (1999, p.98) who claimed that TPR was useful with very young children who found easier learning through direct experiences using all five senses, and did not yet understand abstract concepts. These two researchers concluded that getting the children to actually do or mime what they wanted them to do was really important, especially when they were very young.

In other aspects of learning, the tendency to teach English in a Natural Context is gaining popularity among teachers. Richards & Rodgers (2008, p. 110) explained that Natural Acquisition contexts are those in which learners are exposed to the language at different social interactions where most of the people are native speakers and where instructions are directed towards them rather than towards students of the language (...)

This approach allows students to be surrounded by the language for many hours each day, so that they observe or participate in many different types of language events, brief greetings, commercial transactions, exchanges of information, arguments, instructions at

school, etc. Going to school, to the mall, or to the supermarket will expose learners to a wide variety of vocabulary and structures that native speakers use in oral speech, which will help them to feel free and fearless because their mistakes will not be corrected.

Other authors such as Krashen and Terrel (1983, p.17) have included the Natural Approach in the group of traditional approaches to language teaching because “these approaches are based on the use of language in communicative situations without recourse of the native language and without any reference to grammatical analysis.”

Going a little bit further in the scientific field, there is also the Cognitive Development Approach based on the research findings of recognized psychologist Jean Piaget. In a recent study Woolfolk (2011, p. 31) mentioned part of Piaget’s findings stating that “our maturity process change radically, though slowly, from birth to maturity because we constantly strive to make sense of the world”. She also mentioned that there were four factors that influenced changes in thinking:

1. Biological maturation,
2. Activity,
3. Social experience,
4. Equilibration.

Besides influencing the way human beings perceived the external world in each part of the process of maturation, these factors were closely related to the learning ability that each person presented.

In their major study Richards, & Rodgers (2008, p. 20) agreed with Woolfolk in considering Piaget’s studies as one of the earliest proponents of the view that children’s

language is built on their cognitive development, they mentioned that “It is easy to see how children’s cognitive development would partly determine how they use language”. A good example is how children use terms like bigger or more, depending on how they understand the concept these words represent and how often they are exposed to the correct use of those terms.

Another important approach that has been used within decades is the Grammar Translation Approach. In its origins it was meant to reinforce students’ abilities in reading comprehension, but it paid little attention to other skills like listening and speaking. A typical activity in this approach consisted of translating from or to the target language drawing attention to grammar rules like for example certain verb forms. (Lightbown & Spada 2006)

Talking about the influence that the Grammar Translation Approach has made in almost all foreign language teaching methods, Mukalel (2005, p. 45) stated, “It has been so universal and its impact has been so great and lasting than even today The Grammar Translation Method survives in various forms in all parts of the world”. He also suggested that the GTM would enable the learner to master the grammar of foreign language through a contrast made between the native language or the mother tongue and the target language, thus, translation was considered as the best device to achieve such a grammatical contrast.

To give further information about popular ESL teaching methods and approaches, it is of vital importance to talk about the Content Based Approach, which has been widely spread in schools that provide their students a program of total immersion in the second or target language. This approach gives the students the opportunity to study one or two

subjects in the target language instead of the traditional ESOL class, which allows them to focus not only on learning the second language but also on getting immersed and understanding the English speaking communities' beliefs, traditions, needs and wishes. The CBA also helps learners to use the new language in different levels and situations that are included in the academic subjects associated with each target language. (Lyster 2007, p. 67-70)

CLIL programs have, of course, both advantages and disadvantages. However, it is hard to find convincing information about the opinions and attitudes of teachers and students about the real benefits of the increasing tendency of school authorities to include CLIL programs in their curriculums. This difficulty is the result of the lack of formal studies in the field. Lightbrown & Spada (2006, p. 156) claimed that in immersion programs students choose to receive content-based instruction in a second language; Nevertheless, no other option is available. For example, in some countries the only language of schooling is the language of a previous colonial power. Ecuadorian high schools are good examples where students have no other options. Despite the large percentage of indigenous communities, the only language available for CLIL programs is usually English.

Managing Learning

For decades educators have struggled with some questions about their development when talking about managing learning. A lot of questions come to their minds when they think about the attention they pay and the time they spend on planning learning activities. In his survival guide for teachers Partin (2009) suggested that systematical observation could be a good way of getting feedback about teachers' development in class. On the other hand,

Konza, Grainger & Bradshaw (2001) argued that “Effective classroom management required specific skills like planning, organizing and reflecting as well as an attitude for team work and perseverance.” Besides considering planning and teaching activities for their classes, teachers had to pay special attention to the kind of language that they used in class, and tried to turn negative statements into positive ones in order to gain students attention and respect. For example, it gives better results if we tell students to play and run during the recess in the central yard of the school, than to remind them that they cannot play and run in the classroom.

Lesson Design

A lesson plan can have different meanings depending on each teacher’s experience such as his or her age, methodology and beliefs. In their preparation book for TKT examination Spratt, Pulverness & Williams (2005, p. 91) stated that “A lesson plan is a set of notes that help us to think through what we are going to teach and how we are going to teach it. It also guides us during and after the lesson. The main components of a lesson plan show us what the aims of the lesson are and what the teacher and the learners will do and the procedures they will follow during the lesson.”

This argument shows only a few of the reasons why writing a lesson plan is of vital importance for teachers. Lesson plans are versatile and can be adapted to different kinds of groups and their specific characteristics and needs. They can help teachers to think logically through the stages in relation to the time they have available, to stay on target and to keep a good record of what the class has done. It might also form the basis for future lesson plans with a similar class. (Gower, Phillips & Walters 1995, p. 128)

Class Size

Teaching experience and common sense tell us that smaller class sizes report big differences in language teaching. Several researches have supported or disclaimed this fact, and some significant differences have been found between non-reduced and reduced size of classes. Finn & Wang (2002) suggest that, “Smaller classes can provide a more supportive classroom environment, greater opportunity to learn, broader or deeper curricular alignment, more individual monitoring or assistance, more practice and application activities, or flexibility to teach the whole class, groups or individuals as needed”. Along the same point of view Blatchford (2003) explains that findings in a survey about class size reported that small classes increase monitoring of students behavior and learning opportunities for more immediate and individualized teaching. It also gives the teacher an opportunity to have frequent interactions with each child and to provide them with more detailed knowledge.

Classroom space and seating arrangement

“The fact that teachers can see the faces of all the students in the classroom has been associated with increase of engaged time.” (Konza, Grainger& Bradshaw, 2001). As teachers we know that tables in rows and U shapes both have advantages and disadvantages, so our goal must be to discern what kind of arrangement we should make in each class so that we can take advantage of it. When we talk about the classroom space, we are not only talking about the seating arrangement, but also about other factors that teachers should consider in order to make students enjoy coming to the class. Bosch (2006) encourages teachers to pay attention to small things like the brightness of the board and the

lightening of the class. Besides, traffic patterns should exist for frequent activities like going to the bathroom, or sharpening pencils and coloring pencils. These small changes could make a big difference.

Classroom and teaching resources

Experience shows us that sometimes the textbook is not enough to fulfill students' needs in specific areas, so teachers have access to a wide variety of extra material that they can use in their classes daily. In some cases this supplementary material comes along with the text book, like flashcards, posters and, cut outs (Spratt, Pulverness & Williams 2005). Good teachers should be aware that supplementary materials are not always going to be available, so they should take full advantage of the materials at hand. Gower, Phillips & Walters (1995) comment that, "It is unusual to find classrooms without a board or something similar where teachers can write, draw, or simply make graphics to explain something during the lesson." It is essential, then, to obtain the maximum effect of it. Teachers should start the class with a clean board and try to keep it as clear, straightforward, and easy to read as possible.

Classroom Observation

Despite the fact that teachers usually have a negative point of view of classroom observations, in the precedent factors it was already mentioned that observations can help teachers in many ways. Richards & Farrel (2005) give some more reasons why observations are not as unpleasant as we might think. They argue that observation provides an opportunity to novice teachers to see what more experienced teachers do when they teach a lesson and how they do it. But experienced teachers can also benefit from peer

observation. It provides a perfect opportunity for the teacher to see how someone else deals with many problems each teacher must face on a daily basis.

Clinical observations are usually made by supervisors or coordinators in order to evaluate teachers' work and development. These observations usually follow a schedule so that the teachers are aware of the date and the aspects that are going to be evaluated, and they have the opportunity to improve their weak points and present a better version of themselves to the supervisor. In the post observations, proposals are made to improve subsequent classroom performance. "In more general terms clinical supervision aims at promoting more effective teaching" (Richards, & Numan, 1990, p. 85).

Learning Styles

Learners play the principal role in language teaching, which is the principal reason why classes must be planned considering all the aspects that students require. To explain this, Smith (2003) claimed that students could be of the same age, they could be from the same socio-economic background, or they may not be. Additionally, when teaching he suggested analyzing their different needs, especially learning difficulties, poor eyesight, personalities, motivation, cognitive abilities and so on. In light of these ideas, Konza, Grainger & Bradshaw (2001, p.198) wrote that even in streamed classes there will be students with a range of cognitive abilities and potential. As an example of this, they explained that some students will have better memory than others, and be able to process information more quickly and more effectively. Individual students may struggle in one area and have extraordinary talents in another. Finally, they mention that all these cases

require teachers to be creative, patient, and prepared to ensure that the curriculum is meeting all students' needs.

Students Intelligence or aptitude to learn

Discussions about multiple intelligences theory have been held for a long time by scientists and educators. Even though this theory has supporters all around the world, it is still a target of much criticism from its detractors. As a result, some major scientific research has been held in different locations and by different professionals. In the scientific scope, psychologist Howard Gardner (1943) was quoted by Woolfolk (2001) to explain the theory of Multiple Intelligence. First of all, the psychologist gave a recap of the aspects that this theory included. In simple words, Gardner believed that intelligence could be measured in different aspects and levels. Contrary to what was traditionally believed, an intelligent person was not only one who had abilities in exact sciences or a good memory, but it could also be someone who was an excellent dancer or who was good at writing stories. Then Woolfolk (2001, p.97-108) introduced more specific examples of each kind of intelligence: the *linguistic learners* are good at spoken and written language, and they can learn a language better than other learners; the *logical-mathematical learners* are able to solve logical problems; the *visual-spatial learners* visualize images to remember information; the musical learners respond to rhythm and sound, they love activities which involve music and song; the *bodily-kinesthetic learners* learn best by using all the senses; the *interpersonal learners* like to work with other people; and lastly, the *intrapersonal learners* who prefer to work alone. In spite of the acceptance that this theory had, debates and further research are surely going to be held about intelligence.

To complement this idea Candling & Mercer (2001) explained that learning quickly is the distinguishing feature of aptitude of some students but “successful language learners may not be strong in all of the components of aptitude. Some individual may have strong memories but only average abilities in the other components of aptitude.” (Candling & Mercer, 2001,p. 69)

In order to support these ideas and findings, it becomes necessary to add a firm base by mentioning some previous studies about the researched topic since they include relevant information about its main focus as well as relevant information on the field of factors that affect the English language teaching and learning process.

Aduwa-Ogiegbaen & Iyamu (2006) conducted a study with the purpose of examining the factors responsible for the poor quality of teaching of English as a Second Language in public secondary schools in Nigeria. The sample of this study included 3000 senior secondary school students from 30 schools in the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria. The main instruments used for this study were a questionnaire and observation schedules.

Aduwa-Ogiegbaen and Iyamu found out that there was a dominance in the use of textbooks, dictionaries, boards and posters in English language teaching. However, modern media such as audio, videos, language laboratories, flash cards and computers were rarely used. They also detected that the situation in most of the schools in the six geographical zones in the country was so bad that parents and guardians were asked to pay one thousand Naira (about \$10) per child in public and private schools to help rebuild dilapidated secondary schools. These two authors concluded the study by declaring that the public secondary schools in Nigeria were far behind the times in offering multiple pathways to the

teaching and learning of English as a Second Language. The effect of this was that secondary school students who found their way into university were already at a disadvantage due to poor background and preparation in language education. Finally, they recommended that the learning environment in public schools in Nigeria should be given priority attention by state and federal governments so that children could learn well.

Another study conducted by Alsayed (2003) aimed to examine some factors and determine their correlation with success in second language learning: attitude, instrumental and intrinsic motivation, social background, early first language acquisition and early exposure to the second language. Researchers picked up 50 subjects from the British Council Records on the basis of their IELTS test scores. 25 subjects have gotten mark seven out of nine or above on the exam, and 25 have gotten five and below in the IELTS during the years 2000/2001. The main research tool in the present study was a semi-structured interview that was held with each participant. The interviews lasted almost 10 minutes each. To prevent any inhibition, the researcher took notes and interviewees were encouraged to talk spontaneously. Results were analyzed using statistics to find out the correlation between each variable and the four skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking).

The results of this study showed that motivation played a very important role in the success in learning English as a foreign language. We can enhance language learning through motivating students to get high marks. There seemed to be a spiral relationship between motivation and success. If the student was more motivated, he would put more effort into his performance during the examination, which would result in better

achievement. To conclude, he suggested teachers to experiment and come up with new ideas that could motivate the whole class.

Kim (2010) conducted a study to understand how teachers' questions helped to guide the linguistic and cognitive development of English as Second Language. Teachers' questions were part of various classroom discourse strategies that educators used leading to ELLs' ownership in language learning. In order to get information, Kim created two research questions: "How do effective teachers scaffold their students' learning through questions across a school year? How do effective teachers' questions affect the development of student ownership in language learning?"

Kim did most of the research on her own observing Meredith and Nina, both ESL teachers. Constant comparative method and analytic induction were used to analyze data. Kim adapted Charmaz's interactive coding procedures and made detailed notes during each classroom observation. After each observation, she keyed her observation notes into a computer and expanded on them while listening to audiotape recordings. To reduce the likelihood of inaccurate interpretation, she considered multiple perceptions. For example, she shared her analyses with other researchers through ongoing data analysis conversations and used their feedback to re-examine the accuracy of her interpretation.

Kim found different answers for each research question. First of all, teachers seemed to use coaching questions to guide students toward the instructional and behavioral objectives they had set for them. The role of coaching questions was similar to telling, but it allowed students to exert a small degree of ownership through their responses.

Moreover, teachers used collaborating questions to have dialogues about personal experiences with students throughout the year. In conclusion, one key aspect of collaborating questions was to understand students' points of view of learning in the class.

Analyses of teacher questions showed that Meredith and Nina provided scaffolding to promote student participation in classroom activities, and their attempts seemed to have brought qualitatively different outcomes in the way students engaged in the class discussion.

Kim concluded remarking that the changes in the class discussion involved not only student participation structure, but also the depth and breadth of linguistic information in student questions and responses. This time, teachers were not in the center of the classroom conversation. They were collaborators sharing equal responsibility for participating in the classroom community. Although the students' English skills were not fully developed, they participated meaningfully in class discussions, which suggested that they developed ownership in language learning.

Another related study was carried out by Kubanyiova (2006). This study was held in order to explore the impact of a 20-hour in-service teacher development course with the focus on creating a motivating learning environment on the cognitive and behavioral development of eight English as Foreign Language (EFL) teachers in Slovakia. It counted on eight EFL teachers, seven females and one male as participants.

In order to analyze the results Kubanyiova used a new instrument for measuring components of the second language learning classroom environment that was developed exclusively for the purposes of this study. This instruments included the Classroom

Environment Scale, CES (Moos,1978) as well as situated constructs in L2 motivation research which have previously shown good psychometric properties.

The findings provided a very clear message: The students' perceptions of their classroom environment showed no improvement during the research project and, therefore, it was reasonable to conclude that the course failed in its goal to promote significant change in teaching practice that would make a difference for the students in the classroom.

In conclusion, as the quantitative data demonstrated, training-induced change did not occur at the level that would have impacted students' perceptions of their classroom environment, so it was fair to claim that no change took place as a result of this initiative. Having received quality training, a self-selected group of teachers who were highly motivated to pursue their professional development, not only did not change significantly, but, for most of them, the process of change did not even begin.

Kubanyiova found some limitations: even though the research participants enthusiastically endorsed the course input as meaningful and valid and may have begun to conceptualize their beliefs about teaching, many found that these were in stark contrast with the political, cultural, and social structures within their schools. As a result, they did not attempt to adopt the practice they considered meaningful. Curiously, two of the three teachers who have demonstrated that some seeds might have been sown, were the ones who decided to set up their own English language school during the course of the project in which they could 'teach the way they wanted'.

Finally, Mitsumi & McDonald (2005) presented a study whose purpose was to (1) identify the students' English proficiency levels, (2) examine factors which enhance or

delay second language learners' acculturation and language acquisition processes, and (3) consider how the two processes might be interdependent. To complete the study they counted on 15 students who belonged to different high school levels. All of these students were in the category of Newly Arrived Learners with Adequate Formal Schooling (Freeman & Freeman, 2002). For the sake of anonymity, each student chose a pseudonym.

The students were interviewed to elicit a broad range of linguistic and cultural information. Both sets of interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed. The following steps were appropriate to the students' language levels: 1) locating informants, 2) interviewing informants, 3) making an ethnographic record, 4) asking descriptive questions, 5) analyzing interviews, 6) making a domain analysis, and 7) discovering cultural themes. Transcriptions were coded into repeating and significant domains as they emerged from the data. Domain summaries were written for 14 topics the students mentioned or repeated.

The interviews revealed that two of the students were very high novices or barely emerging intermediates, five were clearly advanced, and the remaining students were in the intermediate range. The most advanced speakers of English had certain common characteristics. They were critical of their English ability feeling the need to improve (accent, for example), yet they all liked English. They had had the most exposure to English used either at home, or in the US, or both. The advanced ELLs had clear personal goals for their future; they enjoyed reading or writing and were engaged in watching TV in the target language. They also expressed belonging to some specific groups, for example, a circle of English speaking friends or a sports team. On the other hand, there they had two students whose profiles were similar and turned out to be the two weakest speakers from the group.

They both had lived a relatively short amount of time in the US. Nonetheless, with or without prior formal English study, their oral proficiency was similar with neither having used English for real communication purposes before.

The students in this study identified multiple factors in their struggles and triumphs in changing countries. They could describe their cultural experiences in both places as well as their attempts to cope with differences in schooling and living in general. A wide range of domains impacted the students' acculturation successes: language learning, school life, hobbies and activities, making future plans, cultural differences, friendships, homesickness, peer relationships, career plans, dating, trips home, and insider/outsider feelings.

Cultural experiences had a strong impact on the students' campus and community perceptions. Language learners found themselves entangled in very complex and multidimensional cultural webs which interacted with the new language. They needed adult and peer relationships to sustain them while they were building new social relationships concurrent with new school and cultural competencies. Specific adult interventions were needed from coaches, teachers, family members, counselors and other people who were supporting them with the new challenge.

Mitsumi & McDonald (2005) concluded mentioning that the implications that were part of the study were supported by teachers' education and their development of teaching skills. Educators needed an in-depth understanding of second language acquisition processes coupled with language development strategies to address the students' levels of proficiency. "Lumping" all ELLs together as if they all had the same instructional needs is a mistake. It was important to touch on the fact that instruction of English language itself

should be done by those who have an interest and demonstrated expertise in teaching a foreign language rather than placing the burden on every teacher, no matter where their abilities lie. Teachers also needed to be well versed in the cultural struggles and connections students were making, or needing to make, in order to be successful in their new culture. From this information gathering, teachers needed strategies to adapt with particular students on how to build effective support systems and healthy activities in the new setting. This required teacher involvement and strong motivation for working with transitioning students, as well as cultural and linguistic competencies.

All the studies mentioned above were closely related to the theme of this thesis, factors that influence English language teaching and learning process because the researchers that carried out those studies presented the analyses and results of different factors that have been in discussion in Ecuador for a long period of time. For this reason, it was appropriated to use them as a reference point for this research. The previous studies helped the researcher by giving a general idea of which was the situation of teaching and learning English as a Second Language in different parts of the world, and gave some good examples of what teachers could do or avoid in the classroom.

Description, Analysis and Interpretation of Results

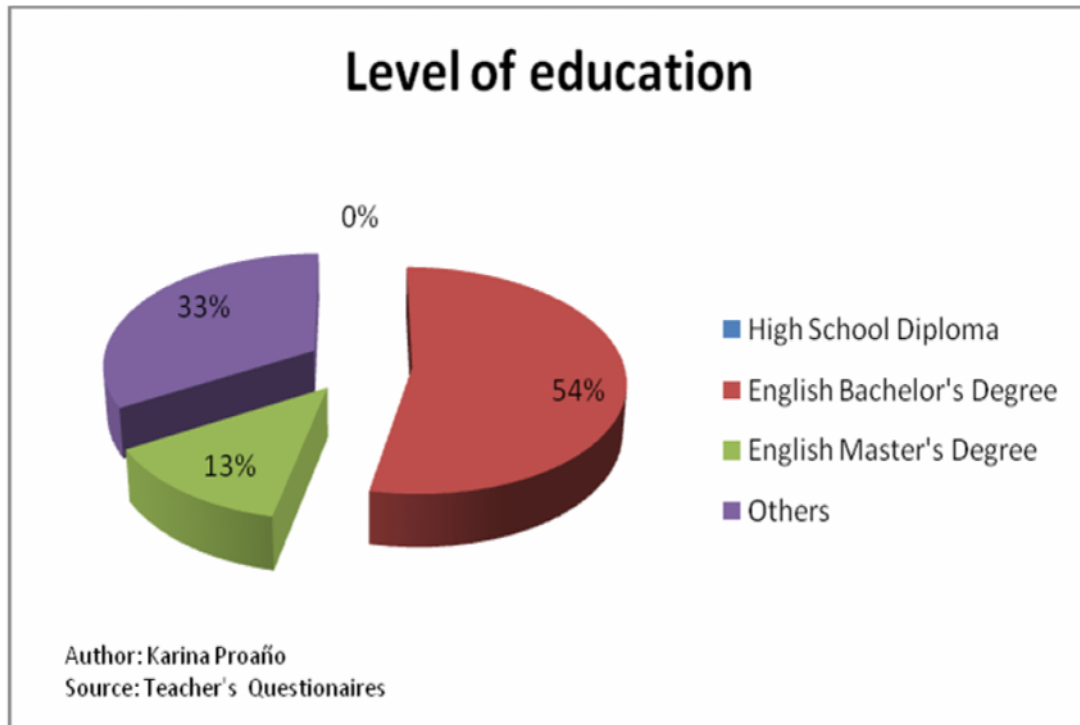
Research instruments were analyzed and interpreted by dividing the questions into four factors: Factors Concerning Teachers, Factors Concerning Students, Factors Concerning Classrooms and Factors Concerning Educational Institutions.

The quantitative analysis includes the tabulation of each question from both teachers and students questionnaires as well as the interpretation of Observation and Interview sheets. Then the results are presented in bar graphs that help to understand the findings. Finally, there is a written description and analysis of results.

Quantitative Analysis

Factors Concerning Teachers

Which level of education do teachers have?



Regarding the level of education that interviewed teachers had, it can be observed that from the total sample of teachers, eighth of them declared to have an English bachelor's degree, two claimed having an English masters degree, and five of them declared having another kind of degree different from education field.

The oral interviews aimed to find out what level of English teachers had. Therefore, it is important to mention that there was not connection between the level of formal studies and the level of English proficiency they had. Moreover, in some cases teachers with many years of experience and with masters degrees in education turned out to have the lowest proficiency level of English, contrary to some teachers who did not have a degree in education but had an acceptable knowledge of English language. For example, one of the two teachers that had an English masters degree, also had 12 years of teaching English experience, but surprisingly, in the oral interview he reached the framework's fourth highest skill in English. On the other hand, the teacher that claimed having an English Sufficiency and Proficiency certificated from the National Polytechnic University did not have a professional college degree. Nevertheless, in the oral interview reached the framework's second highest skill.

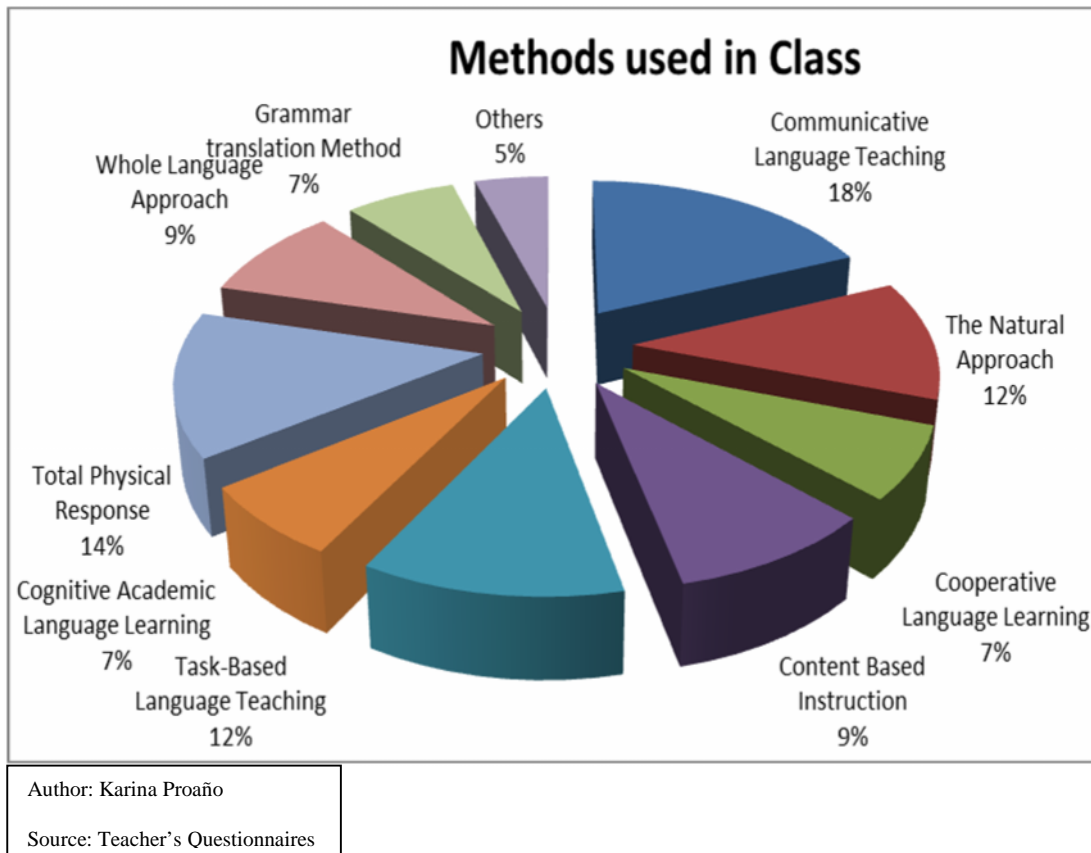
Following this topic, oral interviews showed that only two teachers reached the framework's highest skill, one of them being north american and the other mentioned having lived in the United States several years. Five teachers reached the framework's second-highest skill, two teachers reached the framework's third highest skill, and the remaining six teachers reached the framework's fourth highest skill. This means that these six teachers did not meet the requirement of the Ministry of Education of reaching at least

the framework's third highest skill in order to be able to work as an English teacher.

Finally, it is important to mention that among the teachers who reported to have studied in an undergraduate program different from education, there were professionals in different fields that worked as teachers because they had a good mastery in the language. One of them was studying for a PhD in English, another was a Computer Engineer, there were a Commercial Engineer and an Engineer in Foods and Dietetics.

By knowing what are the professional degrees that teachers had, it can be concluded that Mitsumi and McDonald were right in their study when they strongly recommended that “English classes instructions should be done by those who have interest and demonstrated expertise in teaching a foreign language rather than assigning teachers no matter which their abilities were” (Mitsumi & McDonald, 2005, p. 36). This advice could be adapted to the results of this research because it seems that some teachers casually ended up in the education field and did not have the interest and expertise needed in order to motivate students to learn English successfully.

Which of the following Methods was used in the observed classes?



Nowadays there are various methods and approaches that teachers can use in class. In the present research observed teachers had eight options of methods to choose from. The precedent graph shows the results of the choices that teachers made about the methods they use in class. One of the most used method was the Communicative Language Teaching with its eight points. This was closely followed by the Total Physical Response with six points, then the Task-Based Language Teaching and the Natural Approach which received five points each.

Next there was the Whole Language Approach that received four points. Then there

were the Cognitive Academic Language Learning, The Cooperative Language Learning and the Grammar Translation Method, which received three points each. Finally, the option “Others” received two points.

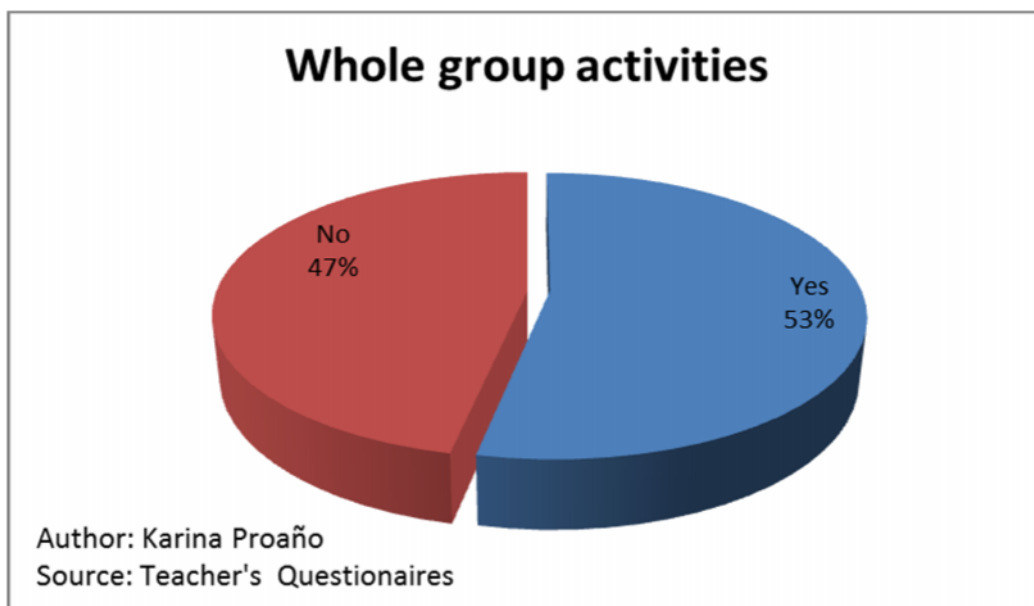
As an interpretation of these results it can be said that all the interviewed teachers used more than one method in their classes. Almost all the observed classes included a rehearsal or review of the previous class and homework check, an introduction of the present lesson and different activities to finish the lesson and make sure it was successful (closure). Teachers used different methods in each part of the lesson; for example, Grammar Translation in the rehearsal part, Communicative Approach in the introduction of the new class and Task Based Instruction in the closure of the lesson.

There were two observed classes that used a method that was totally different from the methods mentioned above. The method was called ABEKA BOOK and it included watching videos with pre-recorded classes, a lot of repetition, seatwork activities and games. The objective of the class was reached intrinsically within all the activities and students did not even realize that they were being assessed. This is a method that started in a Christian School in Pensacola, Florida. It was used with native students. By observing the class one could say that there was a lot of hard work involved to achieve the expectations and requirements that this method demanded.

Students had different opinions about the methodology their teachers used in class. Most of them gave positive comments and expressed their approval, but four students expressed their dissatisfaction and rejection of their teachers methodology. One of them did not give a particular reason. Another said the class needed to be more dynamic and less

boring. The third one did not agree with the class being held totally in English since he did not understand the instructions. And the last student commented that classes need more games and different activities.

Were whole- group activities used in observed classes?

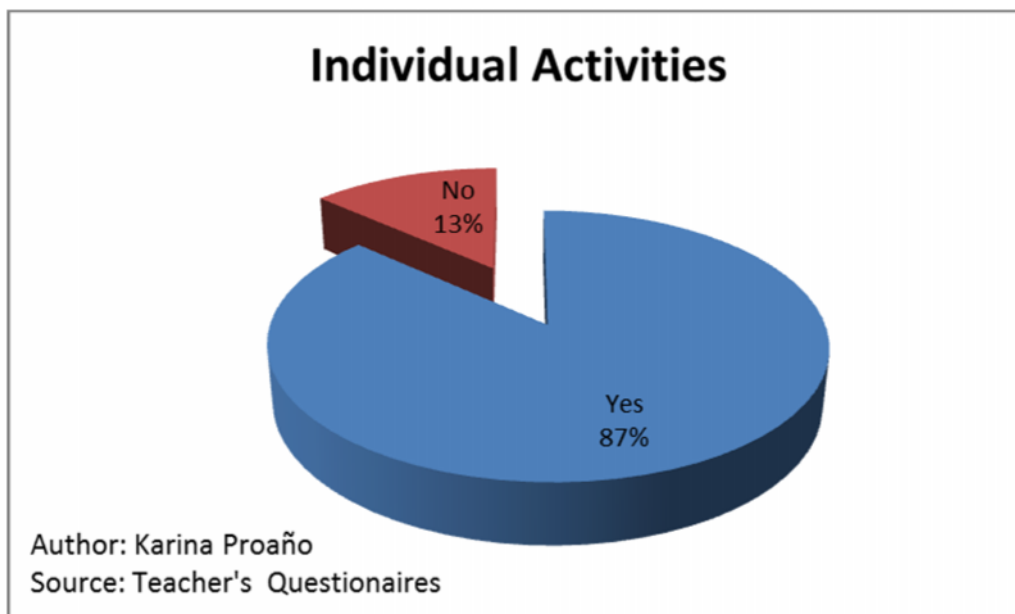


Regarding this question the graphic shows that eight teachers said they did use Whole Groups activities in their classes, while seven teachers claimed that they did not use whole group activities in their classes.

Organising the whole class as one group is a traditional teaching strategy. When using this strategy, teachers organize students in such a way that allows them to participate together in some kind of an activity (Cooper, 1993). Considering this important fact and the results gathered from the classes that were observed, it may be concluded that teachers who responded that they did not use whole group activities in class either did not understand the question or did not know the meaning of “Whole-group activities” as a concept.

As a matter of fact all the observed classes included some kind of whole-group activities. In one of the observed classes, new ideas and concepts were explained throughout whole-group activities. In another class, they were used at the end of the lesson to summarize what had been taught and in a discussion sessions to evaluate students' understanding of the topic.

Were individual activities used in observed classes?



From the precedent graph it can be observed that 13 teachers said that they DID use individual activities. They correspond to the 87% of the whole sample. Two teachers said they DID NOT use individual activities in their lesson. They are equivalent to 13% of the sample.

The findings for this question were very similar to the reality observed in classes. The teachers that said they did not use individual activities claimed that the number of students was so big that they were forced to keep students working all the time. It is well known that the more activities students have, the more attention they pay and the more

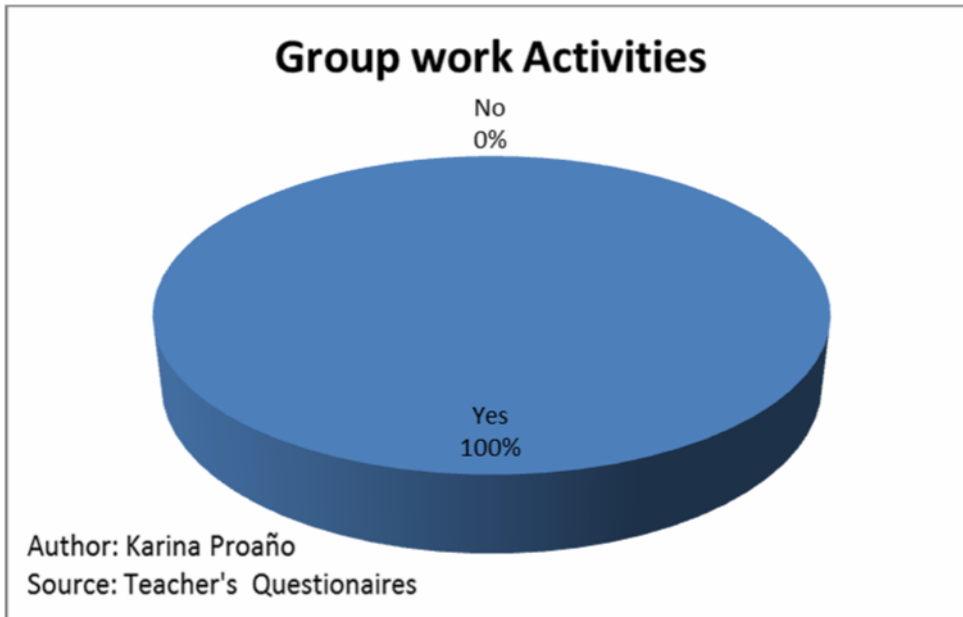
they learn. These claims were easy to prove, especially in a class with more than 31 students, where individual activities would have been difficult to monitor, control, and assess.

On the other hand, teachers with “Abeka Method” used seatwork as an individual activity while they were checking homework or while oral quizzes were taken.

To conclude, through the analysis of this question it can be inferred that it is really important to prepare individual activities in ESL (English as a Second Language) and EFL (English as a Foreign Language) classes, since there are a lot of benefits. As Bilash (2009) stated in individual work “Students work at their own pace, they are confident about what they know and what they need to spend more time on, and they can use their preferred learning styles and strategies” (p. 137).

Finally, it can be inferred that it was really important that teachers think carefully when to include these kinds of activities in their classes, considering the number of students, the time and the resources available. Besides, teachers should avoid underestimating students’ abilities because their mistakes are good indicators of their progress. If students are able to identify their mistakes, they will acquire knowledge that will last longer in their minds. This will lead to correct use of the forms they have learned.

Were group work activities used in observed classes?



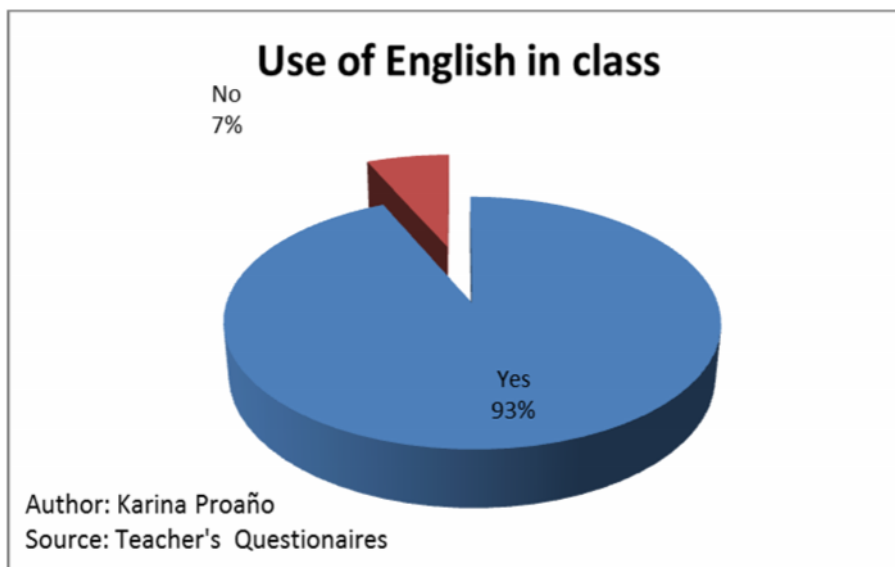
It is clear in this graph that 100% of teachers said they DID use group work activities in their classes. These results were totally upheld during the visits to the classrooms. All the teachers did different group work activities in their classes with different purposes, techniques and results.

In an advance class, there were discussion tables about the topic the teacher presented, and then students had to reach an agreement and present their conclusions to the class. In another class, the teacher used group work to share resources and prepare a poster of sea animals. In a language class, group work was used in reading circles; the teacher divided the class according to their level of English, and then checked each group's pronunciation and reading comprehension.

Work group activities were really challenging for teachers because if students were not matched up well, pair work was not useful. It was also important that the ability of students to work on this kind of activity was taken into consideration. Once all these facts have been considered, there is place to mention some of the benefits of group work in class. For instance, students had the chance to work with their peers and learn from them, and sometimes, it was possible that struggling students learn from more capable peers. “This method is useful especially with students who prefer interpersonal learning settings” (Bilash, 2009 p. 156).

During the observation of all classes, students seemed to enjoy group work, participated actively and cooperated with the assigned group. Unfortunately, the disadvantages were visible too because the level of noise and distraction dramatically increased while developing work group activities.

Was English used most of the time in observed classes?

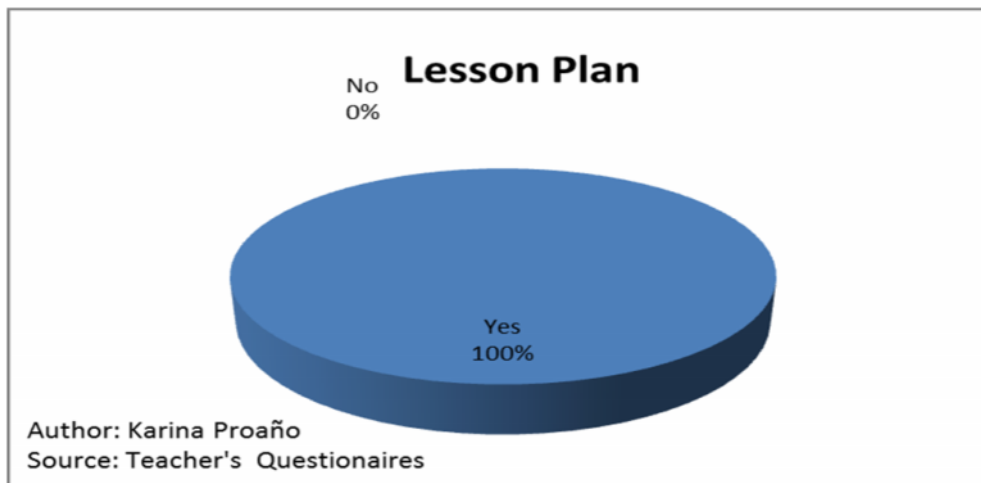


This question received 14 positive answers that are the equivalent to 93% and one negative answer that is equivalent to 7% of the total sample.

Besides having the results from the questionnaires, observation comments can be included in the analysis of this question. It was really clear that all teachers tried to use English most of the time, nevertheless, in some classes it was not possible. The observed sample included classes from all the levels from basic to upper advanced levels. The only classes where the teacher managed to use English 100% of the time were two advanced level classes. In respect of the remaining 13 classes, English was used in a range from 75% to 95% of the lesson.

Another important fact that was observed during the research was that teachers tried to use English outside the lesson period such as in recess or during free hours. Students were not happy with this, but they tried to keep on talking to their teacher in English.

Do you plan your lessons?



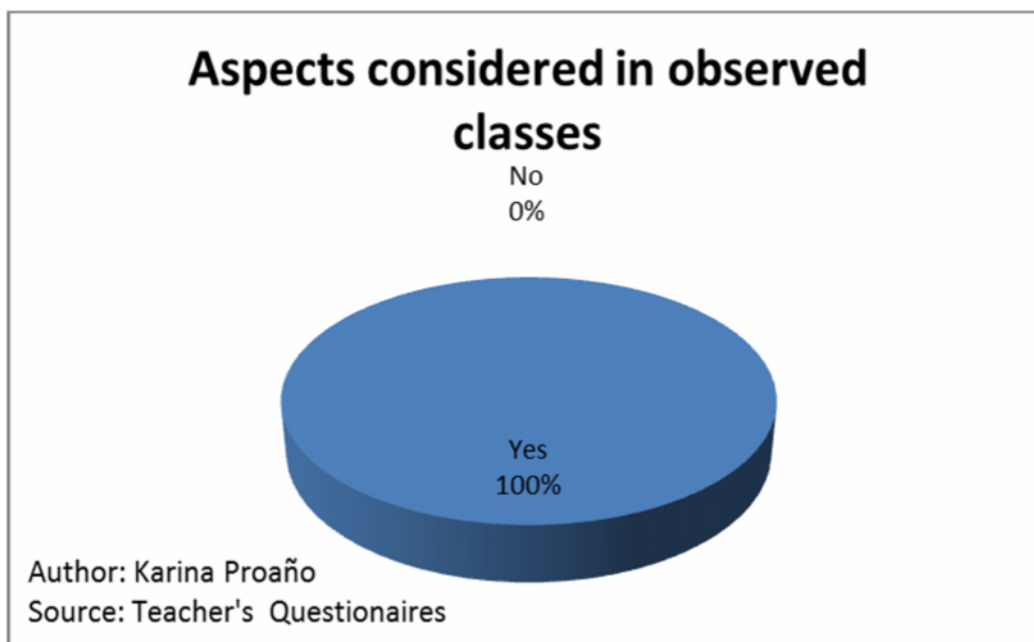
All 15 observed teachers claimed to plan their lesson before each class. Teachers gave different reasons for planning their lesson, but the most common reason was that a good lesson plan was useful to follow up the activities that have been done in previous lessons and to be aware of students' development during the scholar year. Lesson plans made things a lot easier and were imperative to be prepared before each class because the classes cannot be improvised.

Lesson plans also helped to prepare classes according to the level of the students and their needs so that the objectives of the lesson could be correctly reached. Nevertheless, while all the teachers said they planned their lesson and gave reasons why they did it, during the observations some teachers did not have a visible lesson plan. One teacher directly said that she had taught the same lesson over eight years so she did not need to have a printed paper to remind her of what she had to do. This claiming was validated by Spratt, Pulverness & Williams (2005, p. 91) who stated that the lesson plan could have different meanings depending on each teacher's experience and age, and that teachers could plan lessons only by thinking what they were going to teach without the need of a written plan.

On the other hand, most of the teachers presented printed lesson plans which usually contained the information requested by the institutions. There were lesson plans that included not only the activities that were going to be held during the lesson, but also had the timing for each activity and the homework that was going to be sent. Another format of planning was the weekly lesson plan which only included the topics and a quick description of the activities done in class.

Two teachers presented as a lesson plan the Module Annual Plan that was required by the Ministry of Education. They claimed that since it was a complete planning for the subject during the scholar year, it could be easily used as a day-by-day lesson plan.

Were aspects such as discipline, timing, feedback and instructions considered in observed classes?



All 15 observed teachers claimed they considered aspects such as discipline, timing, feedback and instructions in class. Teachers gave different reasons why they thought these aspects were important in class. One of them said that students needed to respect and follow classroom rules. Another teacher said that organization and timing were part of the lesson plan and helped to have a better control of classroom activities.

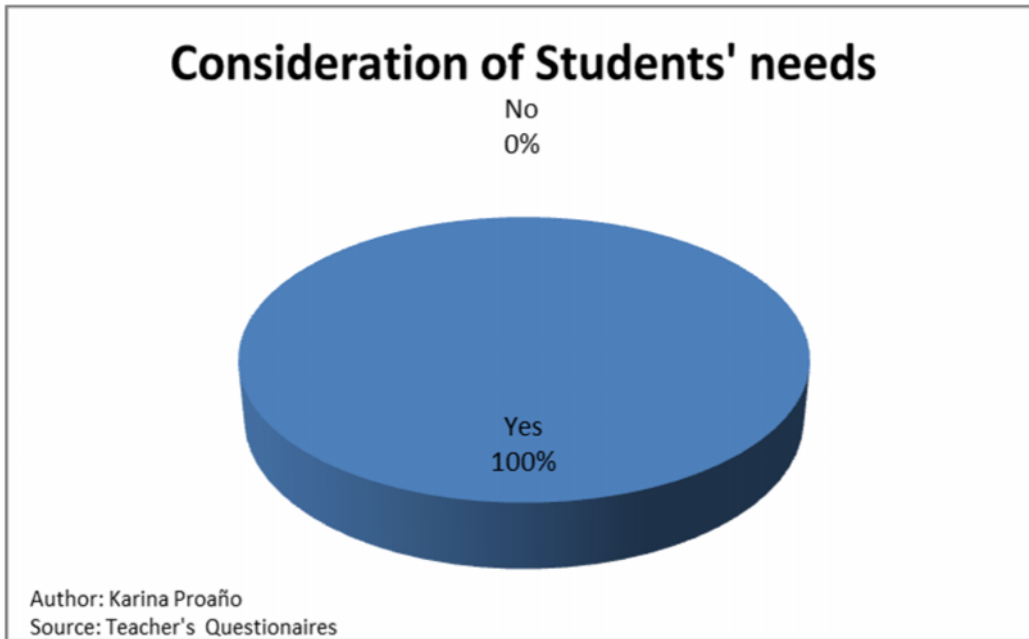
In their survival guide for teachers, Konza, Grainger & Bradshaw (2009, p. 49) mentioned that teachers needed a strategy for gaining students' attention and respect, so

maintaining discipline is of vital importance for effective classroom management. Related to this statement, one of the interviewed teachers accurately said that discipline and instruction comprehension were important to help students to be clear that the teacher is the person in control of the class and that they must respect him or her. Another teacher claimed that discipline and timing were essential to get things done according to the planning and were part of a successful class.

During the observations it was clear that all teachers had their particular way of controlling students' behavior and participation in class. Even when it was easier to control students in smaller classes than in big groups it was visible in the observed classrooms that learners' behavior was acceptable and, in general, teachers managed their groups in a satisfactory way

Factors Concerning Students

Do teachers consider student's needs to teach English successfully?

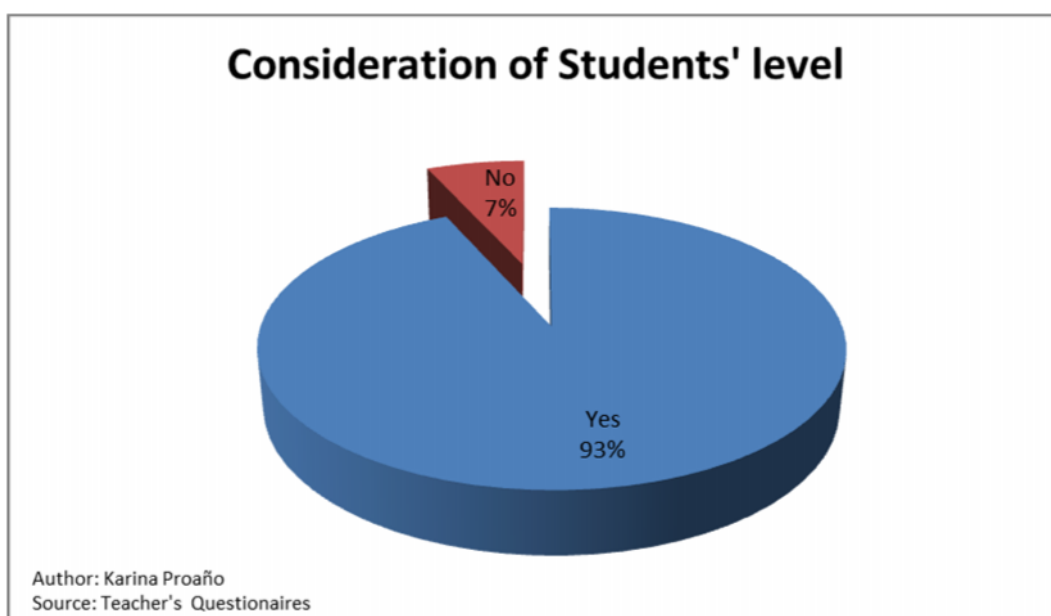


The graph shows that this question received a unanimous positive answer. All interviewed teachers claimed that they considered students' needs to teach English successfully. As they mentioned before, when they were asked about the amount of English that was spoken in class and about the lesson plans they remarked that considering students' needs was of vital importance for a successful class.

From 18 students who were asked to fill a questionnaire about their English classes, 17 of them felt comfortable with their classes and considered that the methodology and activities used by their teachers were appropriate.

One of them was not happy with English classes and the reason he gave was that if he had the opportunity to choose which foreign language he must learn, he would choose French over English. This opinion did not affect the development of the teacher in class and was only a matter of preference of the student; therefore, it could be said that teachers truly considered their students' needs while giving their classes.

Do teachers consider student's level to teach English successfully?



With respect to this question, 14 teachers said they DID consider students' level to teach English, they represent 93% of the sample. Meanwhile, one teacher said he DID NOT consider students' level to teach English successfully, he represents the 7% of the total sample.

As surprisingly as it may sound, the teacher who said he did not consider students' level when preparing his classes gave a reasonable explanation for not doing so. He

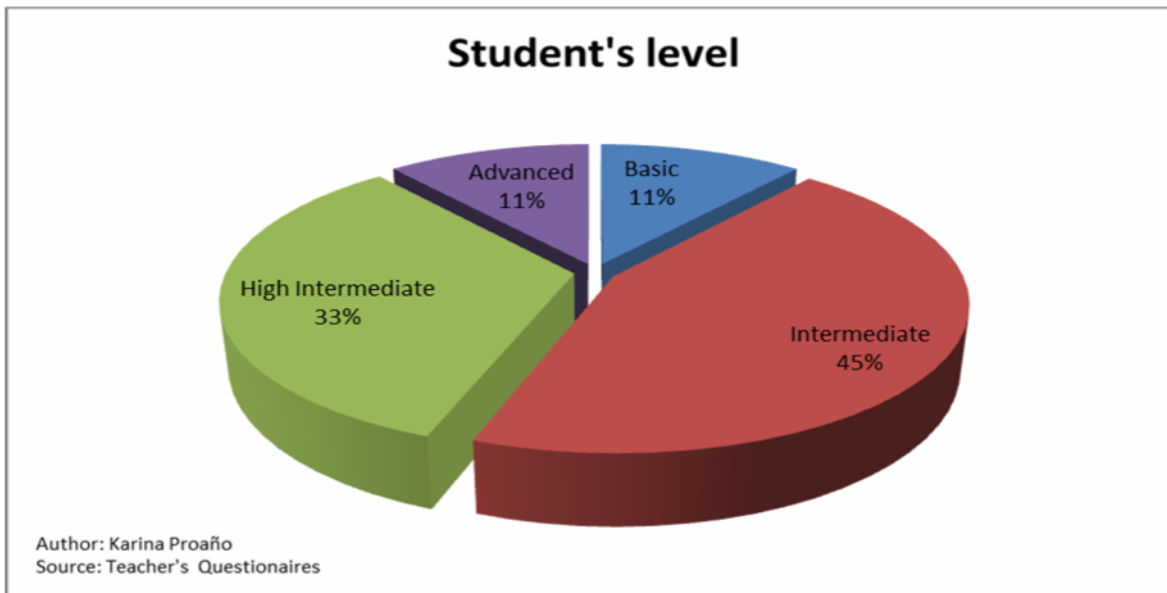
complained that he received a class with students with different levels; some were very advanced while others were at a basic level. He explained that high school authorities did not give a diagnostic test before assigning students to each class. As a result, he had to teach students at very different levels with a book program that corresponded to advance students and to complete the annual plan without delays.

One of the teachers, who said she considered students' level to teach her classes, clearly explained that due to the difference of levels of students in the same class, she planned her lessons considering the needs of students with lowest level so that everybody could take advantage of the class and students at a higher level had the opportunity to reinforce the previous knowledge.

When students were asked if they felt comfortable with the level of their English classes, 12 of them said that they found English classes easy and they were comfortable with the class and the teacher. On the other hand, three students said the English class was difficult because they did not understand the teacher, and their textbooks were boring.

To summarize, results related to the level of students showed that the complaining that teachers did about having difficulties with students at different levels in the same class were not visible only for teachers, but also for students who found English classes difficult or boring. However, it was hard to be perceived in observed classes if students completely understood the lesson or not because the presence of a stranger could have altered students' behavior and the level of cooperation in class.

Which level of English do students have?



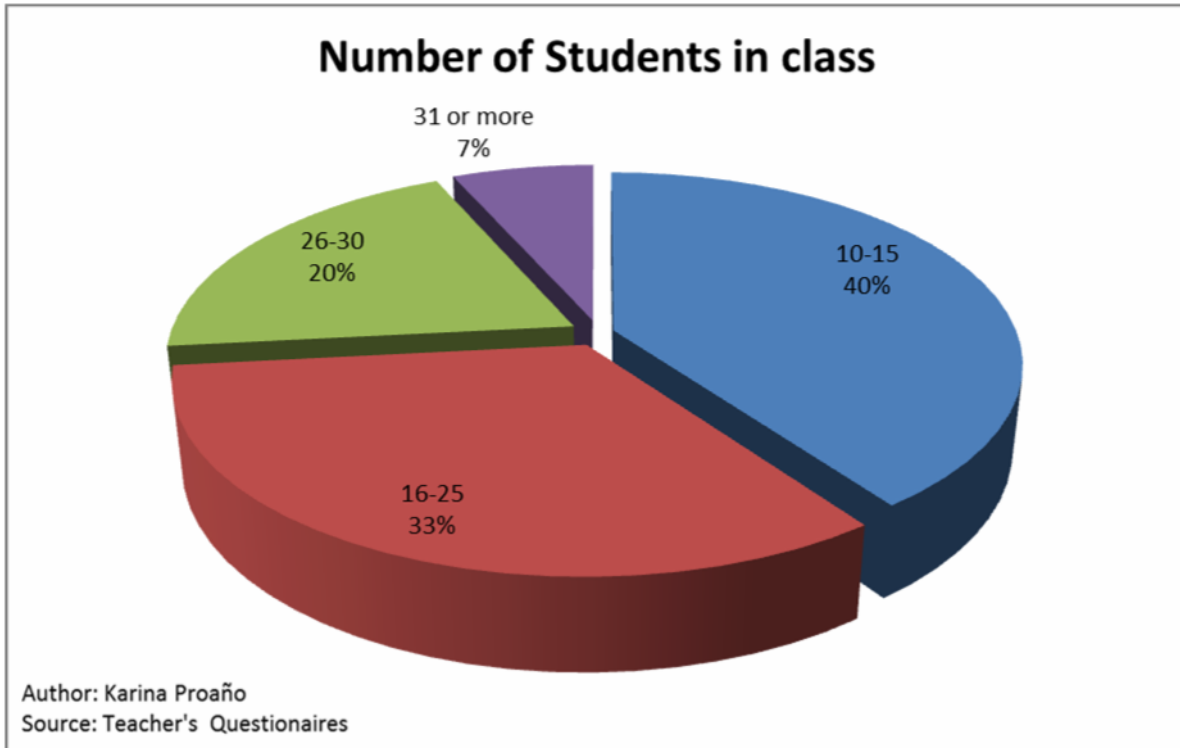
With respect to the level of English that students had in Ecuadorian private schools it was normal for teachers to have two or three different classes to teach and sometimes they were at different English levels. This graph shows the results of 15 classes that were observed.

About the level of students, it can be concluded that two classes that represent 11% were at basic level, six classes that represent 45% were at intermediate level, five classes that represent 33% were at high intermediate level, and two classes that represent the last 11% of the sample were at an advanced level.

During the research, it was observed that classes were held with text books assigned according to the corresponding level of each class. Despite the fact that not all the students in the class were at the same level, as it was mentioned in the previous question, teachers had to follow the corresponding annual plan.

Factors Concerning Classrooms

How many students are there per class?



There were big differences in number of students among the six educational institutions that were observed. The graph shows that six classrooms had from 10 to 15 students, five classrooms had from 16 to 25 students, three classrooms from 26 to 30 students, and finally one classroom had 33 students.

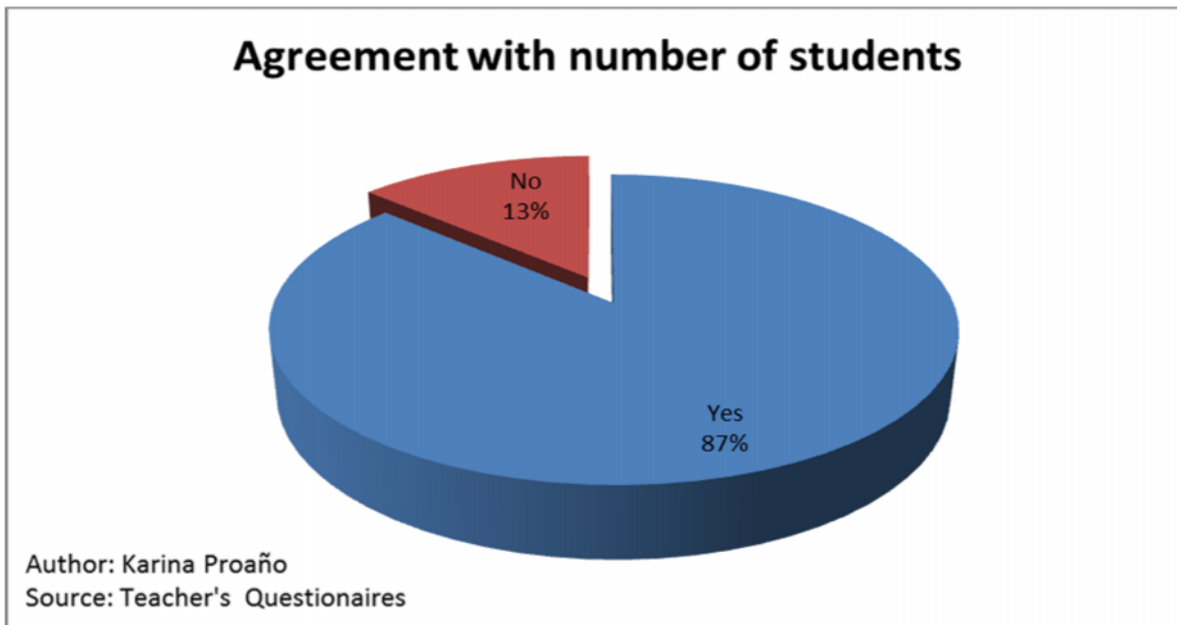
During the observations, the situation described above was witnessed by the researcher who initiated the investigation with the idea that in private schools there was not a large number of students per class. But she found out that despite being private schools and charging a monthly fee to students, four of these educational institutions had over 26

students per class. This fact belies the popular idea that private schools offer customized classes due to the high prices parents must pay each month.

Students were asked if they thought the number of students per class allows them to learn English in a satisfactory way. Nine of them gave a positive answer and mentioned that the reduced number of students helped the teacher to give more attention to each one. On the other hand, the other six students answered with a forthright NO. They were aware that discipline was difficult to manage in a large group and complained that the teacher was not able to solve their doubts about the lesson because he did not have enough time. These comments should be taken into consideration by teachers and authorities before assigning classes the next scholar year.

In conclusion, it is clear for teachers as well as for students that big classes are not effective when teaching and learning English. As a matter of fact, there are plenty of studies that support the idea that smaller classes are better. For example, Finn & Wang (2002) found out that smaller classes, besides providing a more supportive classroom environment, also give a greater opportunity to learn and allow the teacher to decide to teach the whole class, groups, or individuals as needed without any worries.

Do teachers feel comfortable with the number of students?

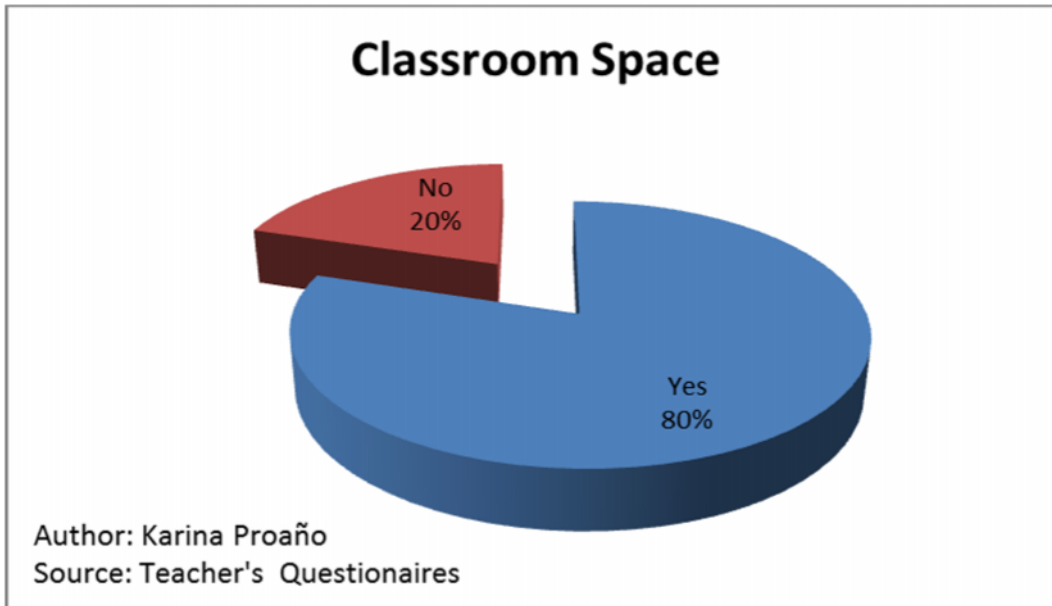


It is clearly shown in the graph that 13 teachers said they were comfortable working with the number of students they had in class; these teachers represent 87%. Two teachers that represent 13% of the sample did not feel comfortable with the number of students in their classes.

The teachers that were not comfortable with the number of students in their classes claimed that it was not possible to pay personalized attention to each student, and that they did not reach the objectives with all the students in the class.

Some of the teachers said they were comfortable but they wished they had fewer students in order to plan classes for each group better. As it has been mentioned before, a larger number of students' demands more work and dedication from the teacher and makes it more difficult to keep discipline, order and timing.

Was there enough space to work with the number of students?



The results show that twelve teachers that represent 80% of the sample confirmed having enough space to work with the number of students they had, while three teachers that represent 20% of the sample were not comfortable with the space they had compared to the amount of students that were assigned to their classes.

During the observations, it was possible to see which schools had classrooms that were big enough to allow a wide variety of activities with the number of students in each class. In most of the cases, the number of students was below 25 so the classrooms did not need to be significantly big to be comfortable. The space between students' chairs and teacher's desk allowed the teacher to walk through the whole class without any problems.

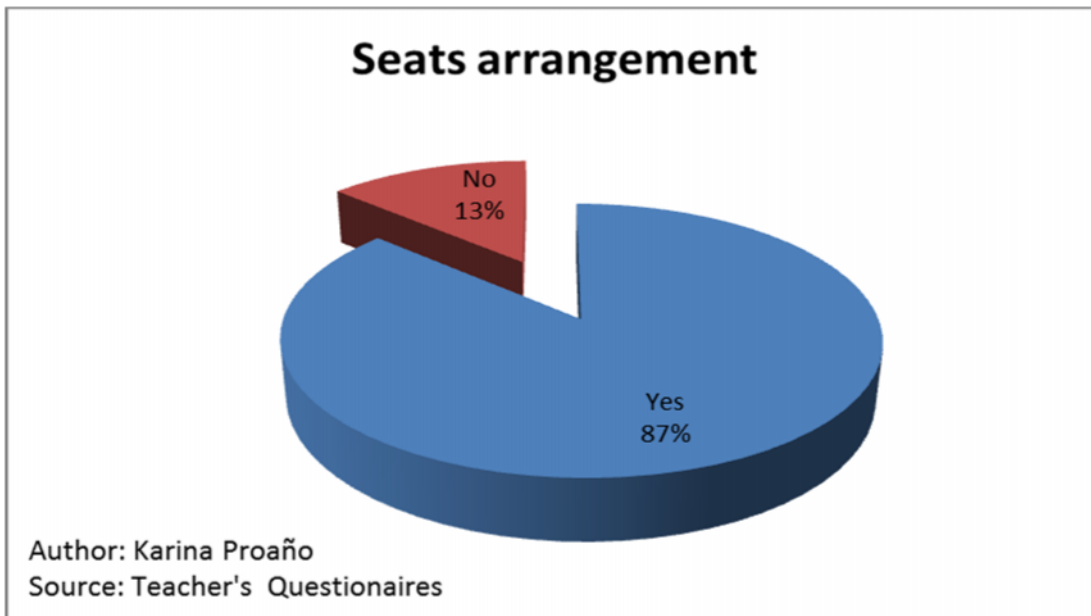
On the contrary, there were three classrooms that were not appropriate for the number of students that received classes there. One of the classrooms was so small that it

made going from one side to another impossible. The observer had to use the teachers chair during the observation because there wasn't enough space to place another chair. The most intriguing fact was that the class had only 12 students. This high school offered personalized education, with no more than 12 students in each class, but it did not have enough space to make them feel comfortable. Despite this fact the school kept the offer of a limited number of students per classroom; nevertheless, they were not meeting parents' expectations to have a personalized education for their children due to the limitations of space and the sense of discomfort their classrooms produced.

Another two classes had a big space, but it was the number of students what made them look small. One of these classrooms had 30 students. The other classroom had 34 students. The space between chairs was so small that it did not allow the teacher or the students to walk through the class, so the teacher could not track the work of students that were sitting in the back.

Students' opinions about the space in their classrooms reflect the reality that they live day by day. Nine of them considered the space of the classroom appropriate, while five of them were not comfortable and clearly expressed that more space was needed. Curiously, one student said that his class was too big that he could not see the board from the back of the classroom. This is a fact that should be considered by teachers when they plan the use of the space they have available. Not only considering the level of students but also their special needs, visual problems, and even their height.

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



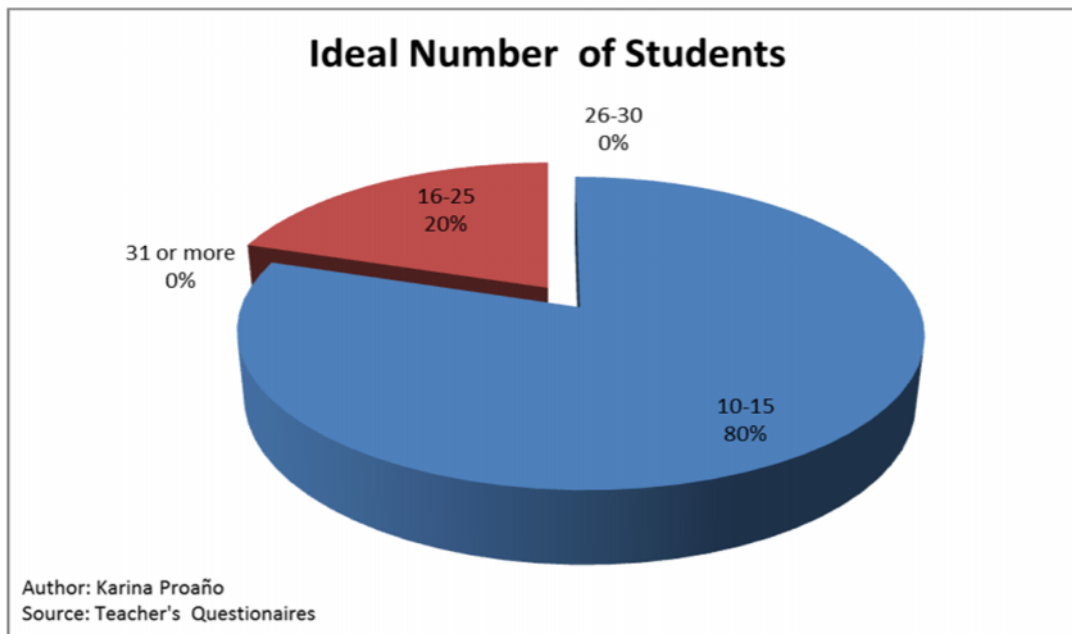
Results from this question show that 13 teachers that represent 87% of the sample claim to arrange students' seats in relation to the activities planned for the classes while two teachers that represent 13% of the sample said they did not.

From the classes that were observed it was found out that most of the teachers did change the arrangement of the seats with regards to the activities. When they did group work activities, students were asked to move the chairs so that they could work in pairs or in groups. Teachers with the Abeka method had already arranged seats in a different way from the traditional one. In these classrooms, seats were arranged in a U-shape, and the teacher's desk was in the middle, in a place that allowed the teacher to see every child's face. Konza, Grainger & Bradshaw (2009) mentioned in their survival guide for teachers that "the fact that the teacher can see the faces of all the students has been associated with

increase of academic time” (p. 156). Academic time is the amount of time that students are actively involved in the learning process. Findings in the present study are consistent with what Konza, et al. (2009) stated because it was clearly demonstrated that in classrooms where the teacher maintained students’ attention during the complete lesson, they were able to constantly see all their faces.

Regarding students’ opinion about their seating arrangement, eight of them said they liked the way the English teacher arranged their seats because they changed the usual way from the rest of the subjects, and they enjoyed the dynamics, role plays and group work. Another four students did not give comments about the question, while the last three students said they did not like the seating arrangement but did not give a particular reason.

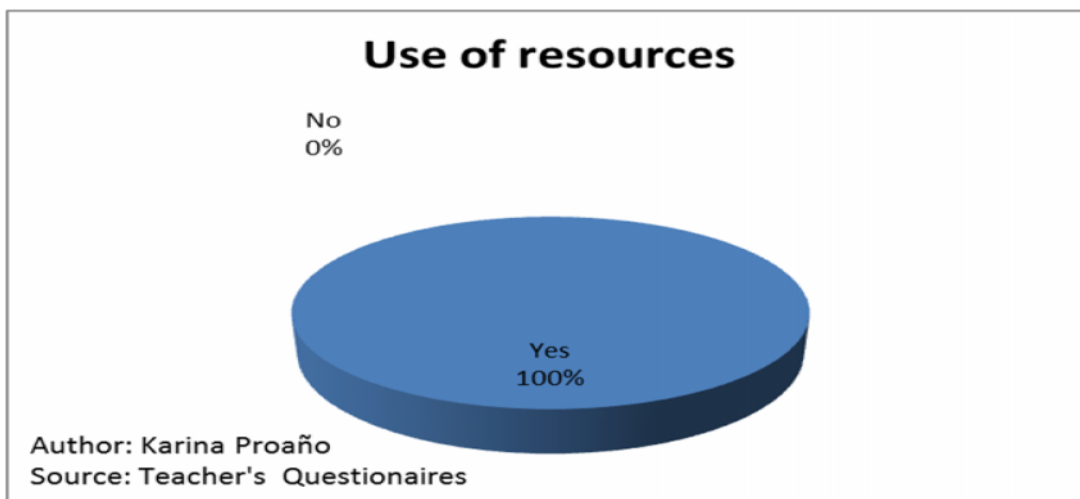
How many students do teachers consider to be an appropriate number to teach English?

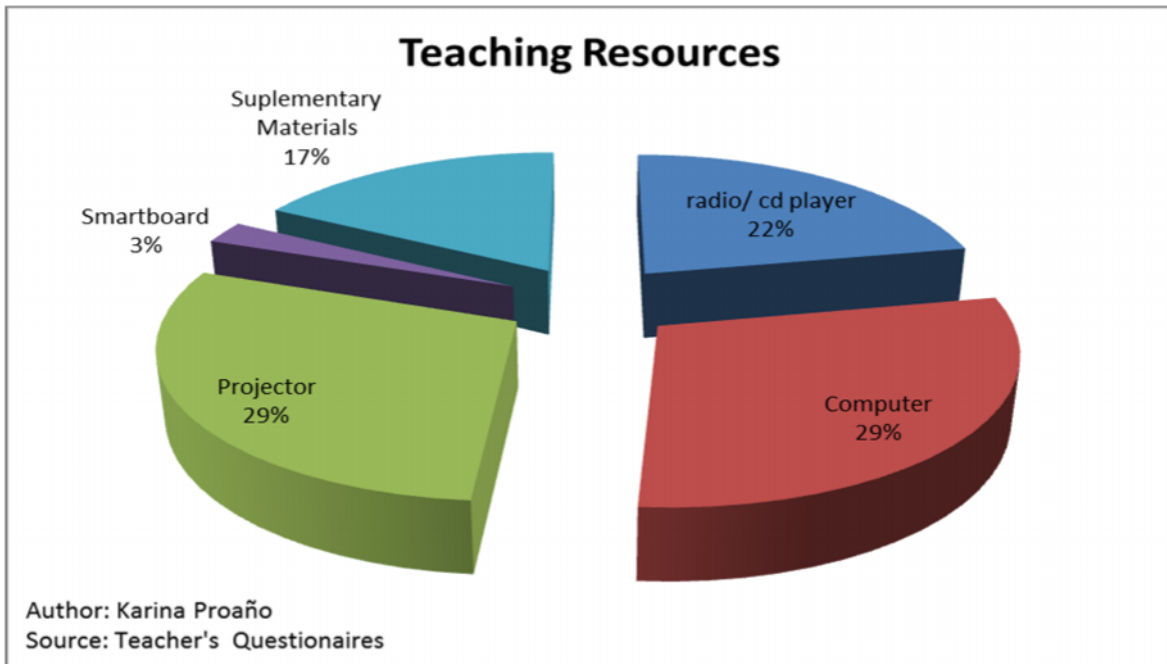


Based on the previous questions and answers, it was predictable that none of the teachers chose the range from 26 to 31 as an appropriate number of students for an English class. Results show that 12 teachers who represent 80% of the sample thought that between 10 to 15 students was an appropriate number for an English class while three teachers that represent 20% considered an appropriate number to be from 16 to 25 students.

The reason teachers gave for choosing a small number of students as the best for teaching English is that English as a Foreign Language is a subject that needs individual counseling to be fully completed and understood. Besides, some teachers considered that their role was to teach not only the language, but also the culture of English speaking countries and this process was more difficult with a large number of students. One teacher said it was easier to make English enjoyable and funny with the lowest possible number of students. Another teacher mentioned that with a small number of students it was easier to monitor and check students' progress.

Do teachers use teaching resources?





In order to present in a better way the findings about the use of resources in class, different graphs were used. The first graph clearly indicates that 100% of the teachers declared using some kind of supplementary material in their classes. In the second graph are evident the supplementary materials most used by teachers.

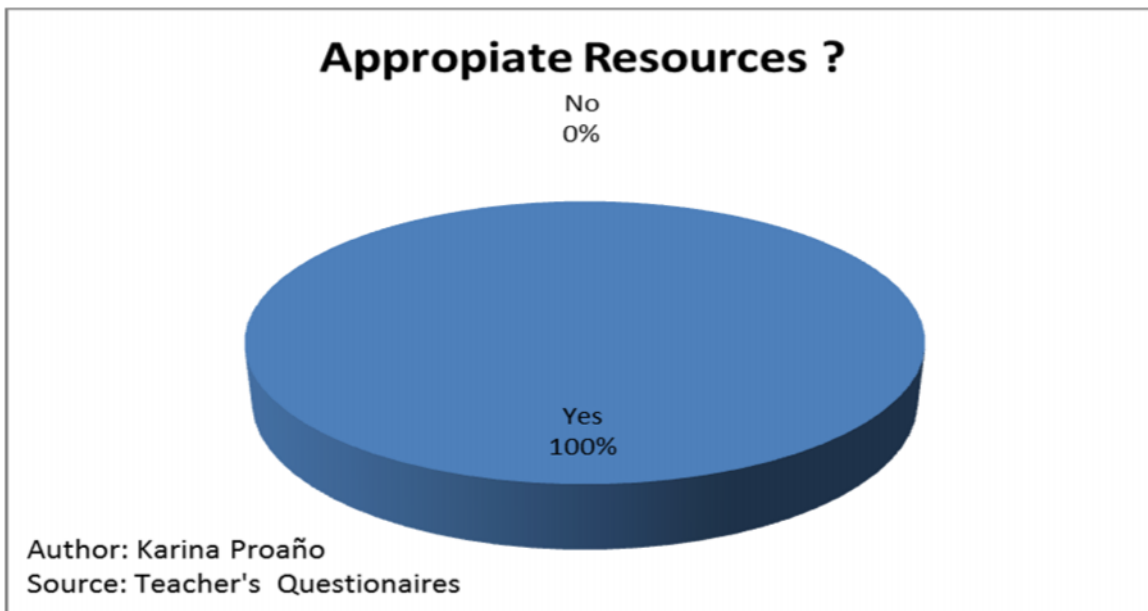
In the first place we can see that the most used resources were the projector and the computer with 29% each that represent 12 teachers who confirmed they used both instruments in their classes. In the second place there was radio or CD player with 22% that is the equivalent to nine teachers who admitted using it in their classes. Then, there is the supplementary materials option, which shows that 17% of teachers claimed to have used some kind of supplementary material, for instance, flashcards, posters, or cut outs. Finally, there was one teacher who used a smart board, he represents 3% of total the sample.

This finding indicates that all teachers used supplementary materials that were appropriate for the lesson and were meeting students' needs. But contrary to the results obtained from the questionnaire, the material mostly used during the observed classes was a CD player because the books contained listenings and songs that required the use of a CD player. Teachers used computers and projectors to show videos, stories, and movies. In one of the educational institutions were smart boards available so that teachers could prepare interactive classes. The use of smart boards was part of the institution's curriculum aiming to introduce technological resources into the classrooms.

When students were asked if their teacher used supplementary materials in their classes, most of them gave a positive answer. Three of them gave a negative answer, despite the fact that their teachers did use at least CD player during the class. From this answer it can be inferred that these three students were not paying attention in class or did not want to cooperate with the survey.

As a final point of this topic, the findings indicate that all the educational institutions that participated in the research provided the teachers with suitable and useful resources. Some of them were traditional such as CD player and others were really modern such as smart board. It was up to the teachers to be creative and take advantage of the resources available in each class.

Do teachers consider appropriate the resources they have in class?

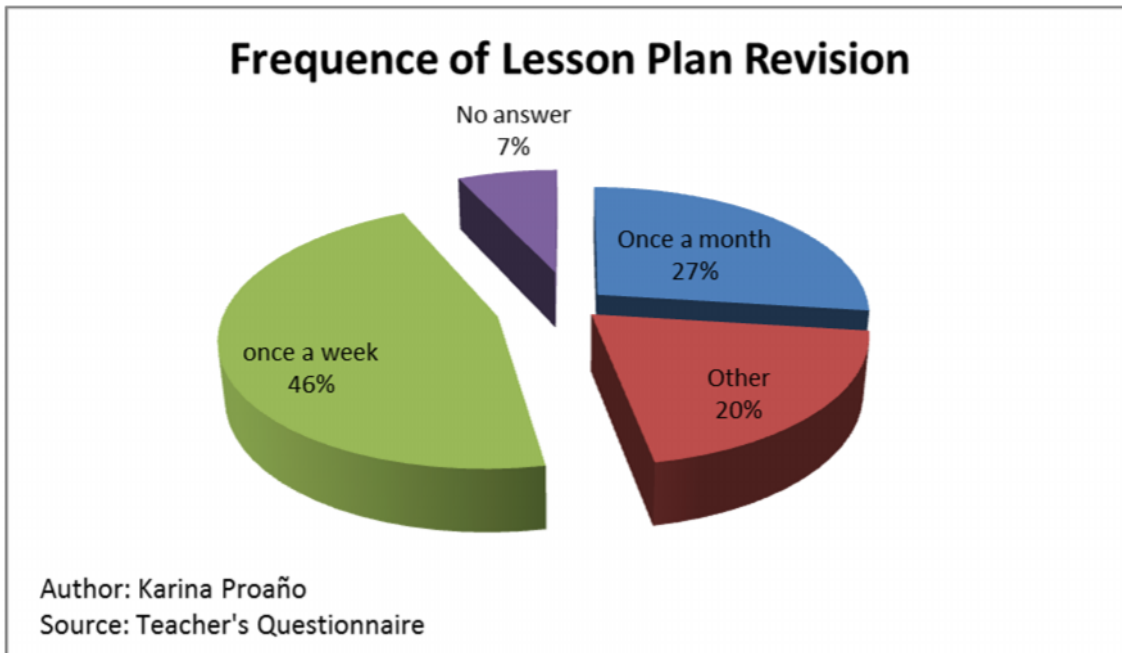
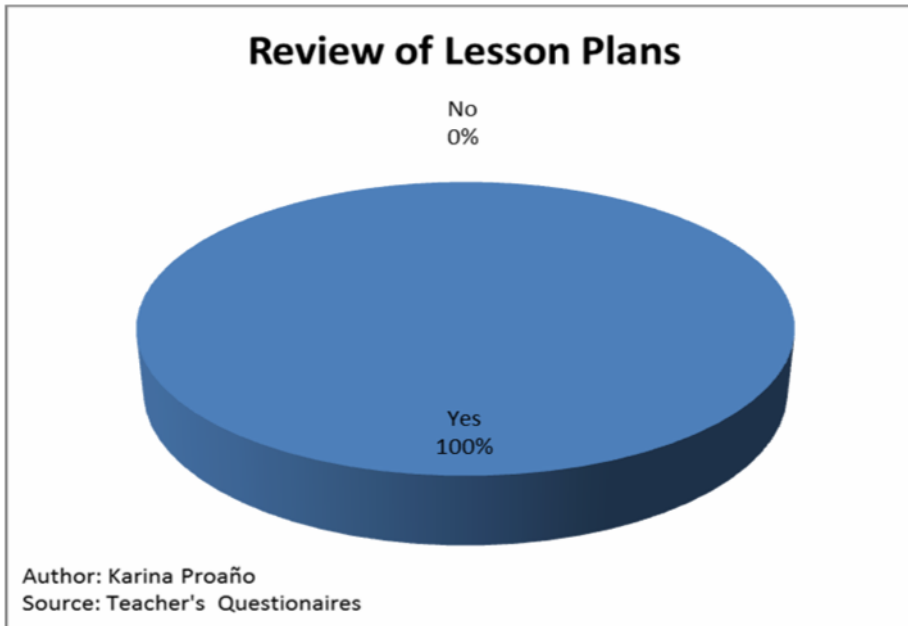


The results, as seen in the graph, indicate that 100% of interviewed teachers considered that the resources they had in the classroom were appropriate, but most of them did not give a complete answer to explain why they considered them appropriate.

An important issue emerging from these findings is that teachers really appreciated and cared about the resources they had available. This was evident when one teacher sincerely commented that the teachers had been asking the authorities to provide resources for many years and they finally received them one year ago. Another teacher said that resources were important instruments which helped to make classes more interesting and fun. As a matter of fact, foreign language teachers are challenged every day to stay up-to-date with students demands of classes full of significant knowledge. Resources are the best gadgets that English teachers have to satisfy learners' needs.

Factors Concerning Educational Institutions

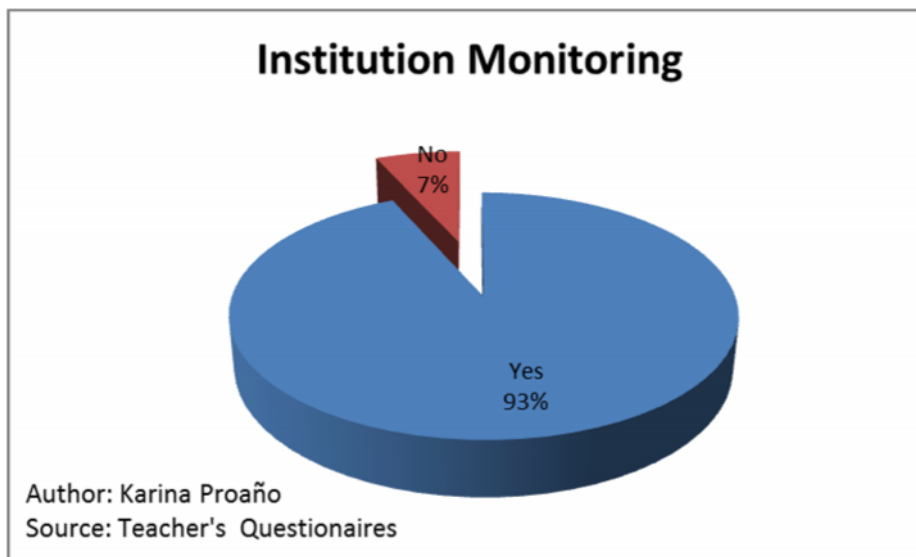
Does the institution review teachers' lesson plans?

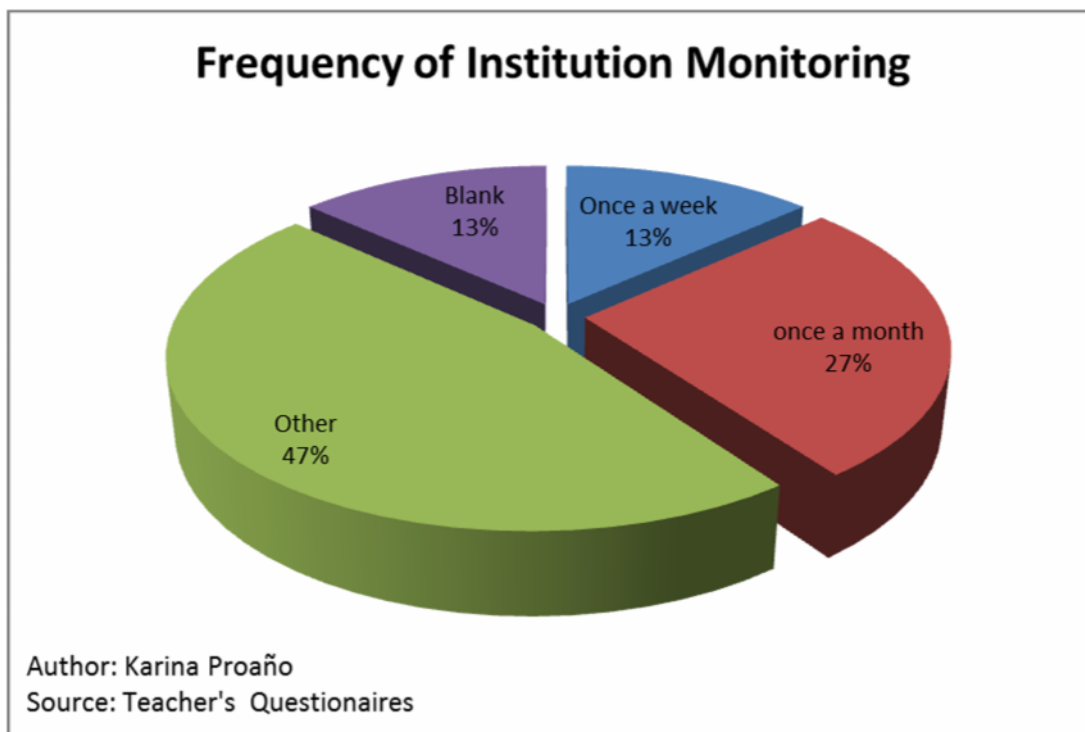


Since all the interviewed teachers said that the institutions reviewed their lesson plans, it seemed important to prepare a graph that shows the frequency with which lesson plans are reviewed.

Seven teachers who represent 46 % of the sample presented lesson plans for revision once a week. Four teachers who represent 27% of the sample presented their lesson plans once a month. Three teachers that marked the option “other” represent 20% of the sample. One of them declared that his lesson plans were checked once every term, another teacher commented that his lesson plans were checked at the beginning of the curricular module and the last teacher said that her lesson plans were checked twice a month. Finally, one teacher did not mention the frequency with which his lesson plans were reviewed by the institution, he represented 7% of the total sample.

Does the institutions monitor teachers' classes?





In the precedent graphs we can see that 14 teachers that are equivalent to 93% said that the institutions monitor their classes while one teacher who only represents 7% said he did not know if he was going to be monitored by the institution because this was his first year working there.

It also seemed necessary to show the frequency with which teachers classes are monitored by the institution. Two teachers that represent 13% answered once a week, four teachers who represent 27% said once a month. Seven teachers who represent 47% chose the option 'other'. Only three teachers pointed out a specific frequency, two of them wrote twice a year, and the third teacher declared she did not know it because this was her first year in this institution and so far her classes had been monitored once. Finally, two teachers who represent 13% of the sample did not answer the question.

Considering that teachers do not usually feel comfortable with the observation of their classes, the institutions can choose different ways of tracking teachers' work without making them feel uncomfortable. For example, peer observation allows the teacher to see how someone else deals with many of the same problems teachers must face on a daily basis. (Richards and Farrel, 2005). If the observation is done by a coordinator or another authority, the monitoring should be planned so that the teachers could be aware of the observation. This is an important fact that should be considered by authorities since some of the observed teachers claimed, they did not know the frequency of the monitoring. This is the reason why they preferred not to answer.



Conclusions

The present study was designed to determine how different factors affect teaching and learning English as a Second Language in Ecuador. After studying and analyzing previous information in this field and once the previous studies were compared with the findings obtained from this investigation, the following conclusions can be drawn from this research:

- One of the more significant findings to emerge from this research is: Although English is a foreign language not all institutions employed well-educated teachers. Most of the teachers were not fluent in English and had not met the requirement from the Ministry of Education to obtain a required certificate. (FCE, TOEFL or IELTS) in order to work as an English teacher.
- Another important finding was that a considerable number of teachers had not gotten formal instruction in teaching methodology. Nevertheless, they were hired by institutions despite the fact that they did not submit a professional degree in educational sciences. This allows to cast doubt on the performance, skills and approaches used by these teachers in the classroom.
- Regarding students, it was confirmed that their level of English was not considered when assigning English classes. As a result, the heterogeneity of English levels among students hindered the effectiveness of the teacher while trying to meet the needs of all the students, leaving the weakest learners' needs unattended.
- The most important finding concerning the classroom was that studying in a private school did not guarantee that students received a high standard in education.

This was evident since the number of students dramatically differed from one institution to another and in some cases the number exceeded 30 students per classroom. Besides the excessive number of students, some schools had space problems too.

- On the other hand, the evidence from this study indicates that all the institutions had appropriate educational resources for teaching English which was a great help for teachers and for students who enjoyed being part of an educational institutions that offered classes with cutting edge technology resources such as computers, projectors and interactive whiteboards.
- All the educational institutions that were observed provided materials for teachers to develop their planning and schedules. Teachers prepared their classes and used a wide variety of methods and resources. They were constantly monitored.

Recommendations

This research does not intend to delve into all the issues affecting the teaching and learning of English but may be a proposal for future investigations. It could be used as a reference of the reality that teachers and students face every day in some private schools from Quito.

It is recommended to enlarge the sample of teachers and educational institutions for further research so that the results can be generalized to the society and used to propose actions to correct the aspects that need urgent changes in order to provide learners with a better environment for learning English.

Another important recommendation is to increase the number of observations to each teacher in different groups. It would be interesting to analyze how the same teacher works with different subjects (Science, Geography) or different ages (primary or high school). Finally, concerning the students, it would be useful to find a way to measure the effectiveness of teaching methods in learning and to keep track of students' progress. In such way the researcher will be able to compare the results obtained before and after the study, working with more reliable data that allows him or her to prepare an accurate analysis that is based on facts rather than opinions that could be biased.

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ANNEXES



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:	

1. ¿Te gusta aprender Inglés?

SI ()	NO ()
--------	--------

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

SI ()	NO ()
¿Por qué? _____	

3. Consideras que las actividades realizadas en clase son:

Muy fáciles ()	Fáciles ()	Difíciles ()	Muy difíciles ()
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4. ¿Te gusta la forma de enseñanza del idioma Inglés que usa tu profesor?

SI ()	NO ()
¿Por qué? _____	

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

SI ()	NO ()
--------	--------

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

SI ()	NO ()
--------	--------

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

SI () NO ()

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

SI () NO ()

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

SI () NO ()

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

SI () NO ()

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

SI () NO ()

¿Por qué?

12. **¿Consideras que el número de estudiantes te favorece para aprender de mejor manera el Inglés?**

SI () NO ()

¿Por qué?

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

SI () NO ()

¿Por qué?

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

SI () NO ()

GRACIAS!!!!



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:	

15. Which level of education do you have?

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

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

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

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

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

18. Which is the level of your students?

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

19. 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	()

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

YES ()	NO ()	
Why? _____		

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

YES ()	NO ()	
Why? _____		

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

YES ()	NO ()	
Why? _____		

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

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

24. Do you plan your lessons?

YES ()	NO ()
Why? _____ _____	

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

YES ()	NO ()
Why? _____	
—	

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

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

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

YES ()	NO ()
Why? _____	
—	

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

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

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

YES ()	NO ()
Why? _____	
—	

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

10 - 15 ()	16 - 25 ()	26 - 30 ()	31 - more ()
Why? - _____			
—			

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

YES ()	NO ()
Which ones? _____	

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

YES ()	NO ()
Why? _____	

33. Does the institution review your lesson plans?

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

34. 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

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 % ()
----------	----------	----------	-----------

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	()