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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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APROBACIÓN DEL DIRECTOR DE TRABAJO DE FIN DE TITULACIÓN

Doctora

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De mi consideración:

Que el presente trabajo, denominado: "Factors that influence the English language teaching-learning process in Ecuadorian private high schools" realizado por la profesional en formación: Mendoza Vivanco Flor Susana; cumple con los requisitos establecidos en las normas generales para la Graduación en la Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja, tanto en el aspecto de forma como de contenido, por lo cual me permito autorizar su presentación para los fines pertinentes.

Loja, marzo de 2015

f) . . . .

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"Yo, Mendoza Vivanco Flor Susana declaro ser autora del presente trabajo de fin de titulación: Factors that influence the English language teaching-learning process in Ecuadorian private high schools, de la Titulación de Ciencias de la Educación mención Inglés, siendo Dra. Ana Lucía Quiñónez Beltrán directora del presente trabajo; y eximo expresamente a la Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja y a sus representantes legales de posibles reclamos o acciones legales. Además certifico que las ideas, conceptos, procedimientos y resultados vertidos en el presente trabajo investigativo, son de mi exclusiva responsabilidad.

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Autora: Mendoza Vivanco Flor Susana

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DEDICATION

Specially, I dedicate this work to God who has given me strength and has enlightened my thoughts allowing me to reach this special moment of my life.

To my dear husband Juan Carlos, for his love and unconditional support; but above all, for sharing with me good and bad times.

To my dear parents Amable and Elida, my sisters Edith, Astrid and Yuri, and my brothers Fausto and Guilber in appreciation of their support and advice that has guided me for obtaining the English Bachelors' degree.

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CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

Factors that influence the English language teaching-learning process in Ecuadorian private high schools is a research that was carried out in order to identify if factors related to students, teachers, classrooms, and institutions influence the English language teaching-learning process.

This research was developed in six private high schools in the city of Loja; there, during the process, an interview and a survey were applied to fifteen teachers. In addition, one of their classes was observed and one student from each class was selected randomly to answer a questionnaire.

The gathered results were analyzed through quantitative and qualitative methods and represented in graphical charts.

As a general conclusion, it was found that factors such as students with low level of English language proficiency and lack of institutional monitoring affect the English language teaching-learning process in the observed educational establishments.

KEYWORDS: EFL teaching, private high schools, factors.

RESUMEN EJECUTIVO

Factors that influence the English language teaching-learning process in Ecuadorian private high schools es una investigación que se llevó a cabo con el fin de identificar si factores relacionados con los estudiantes, los profesores, las aulas y las instituciones influyen en el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje del idioma Inglés.

Esta investigación se desarrolló en seis colegios ecuatorianos privados en la ciudad de Loja; ahí, durante el proceso, una entrevista y una encuesta se aplicaron a quince profesores. Además, una de sus clases fue observada y un estudiante de cada clase fue seleccionado al azar para responder a un cuestionario.

Los resultados obtenidos fueron analizados a través de los métodos cuantitativo y cualitativo y representados en cuadros gráficos.

Como conclusión general, se encontró que factores tales como estudiantes con bajo nivel de dominio del idioma Inglés y la falta de supervisión institucional afectan el proceso de enseñanza - aprendizaje del idioma Inglés en los establecimientos educativos observados.

PALABRAS CLAVE: EFL enseñanza, colegios privados, factores.

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, English is the most commonly used language for acquiring and exchanging information especially in work and educational areas, so students with a high English level have plenty opportunities to succeed. In Ecuador the study of English as a foreign language is an obligatory assignment in secondary education; even so, few students finish high school with an appropriate level of English and the majority of them enter to the university with little or no English knowledge.

This investigation was elaborated with the following specific objectives: to identify students' English level and their needs in the classroom; to determine the classroom conditions in which English lessons take place; to identify the characteristics of in-service English teachers; and to determine institutional facilities and norms regarding quality education.

About the factors that affect the English language teaching-learning process several studies were carried out before in different countries, some of them had been reviewed and included as theoretical reference in this research. Starting with the study conducted by Aduwa-Ogiegbaen & Iyamu (2006) whose purpose is to investigate if teachers use methods appropriately in their classroom, the teachers use instructional resources to teach English and the level of influence classroom environment in students' learning. Their study found that teachers did not vary their teaching methods and they only used traditional resources such as textbooks, dictionaries, and chalkboards. Also, many schools have dilapidated buildings and these are used for classroom activities. As a result, these researchers concluded that poor teaching methods, lack of adequate resources, and inadequate classroom space affect students' language learning.

Next study about the indicated theme is the leaded by Khamkhien (2010) which has as purpose to determine whether gender, motivation, and additional experience affect the choices of language learning strategies in Thai and Vietnamese students. The results showed that the gender does not affect the choices of learning strategies while motivation has an important effect on the learner's choices of strategies and development of language tasks; finally, the students with experience in studying English applied more Cognitive and Memory strategies to obtain higher scores than those who had less experience. Limitations were the reduced number of participants and the use of other tools and techniques; likewise, the findings might have been influenced by other variables such as nationality, age, and field of study.

Another study is the one carried out by Malik & Singh (2012) whose purpose is to identify the factors that affect teaching and learning of English in schools. The results showed that parents, training of the teachers, students, physical factors, lack of teaching aids, inappropriate curriculum design and overcrowded classrooms were the main problems that teachers faced in the institutions where they worked. Finally, the researchers concluded that teaching and learning of English was affected by the factors mentioned previously. In this study, the authors did not find limitations.

During the development of the present research, some methodological limitations were found such as the small number of interviewed teachers; one student per class is not a representative sample and their opinions did not bring accurate information of the learning process in each observed class. Another difficulty was related to the attitudes of teachers and students during the process of observation; their behavior was not natural way in some classes. Finally, some teachers did not answer the questions that required additional information in order to explain better their responses.

On the other hand, the findings obtained in the present research are an important contribution and have as beneficiaries the teachers, students, selected institutions and researchers who will be able to redirect their efforts to improve their work in the English language teaching and learning process.

METHOD

Setting and Participants

This research was carried out in the city of Loja, fifteen teachers and fifteen students were selected from six private high schools in order to determine factors that influence the English language teaching-learning process.

Almost all teachers have English Bachelor's Degree and work five hours per week with each class. Their teaching experience varied between 2 to 15 years and their ages were ranged between 25 to 43 years old.

Regarding the group of the participant students, they were learners between 12 and 17 years old and who were selected randomly from basic education (eighth, ninth, and tenth years) and secondary education (first, second, and third years).

Procedures

This research began with a review of bibliographical information about topics and studies related to the researched theme. The information was gathered from books, journals, scientific articles, and web sites, which was organized in formats. Then, the collected information was edited for the literature review.

The next step was to carry out the field research. For this, the data was collected by applying instruments as note taking, class observation, questionnaires, surveys and the interview technique; following a quantitative and qualitative method.

The teachers' questionnaire had 20 questions written in English and the students' questionnaire had 14 items written in Spanish and were used to request more detailed information related to four variables: teachers, students, classroom and educational institutions which included aspects as class size, classroom space, seating arrangement, classroom and teaching resources, class observation, lesson design monitoring, teachers' level of education and language proficiency, teaching

methods and techniques, use of English language in class, lesson design, managing learning, students' needs in the classroom, and students' English level.

Besides, teachers were interviewed in order to obtain information about their professional background and their opinions about the positive and negative aspects of teaching English in Ecuador and to identify teachers' level of language proficiency according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFRL).

In addition, one of their classes was observed to confirm the answered data in the teachers' questionnaires. The information gathered was tabulated, the percentages were calculated and presented graphically then they were contrasted and analyzed with the obtained data of the observation and the students' survey, also the theoretical framework was included in the relevant parts. Finally, some conclusions and recommendations were established based on this analysis.

DISCUSSION

Literature Review

In todays' global world learning English is very important because it is the most commonly used language to communicate among foreigners; besides, it gives people the opportunity to access and exchange information all over the world. In Ecuador Utreras (2010) mentions that there are several reasons to learn English such as applying for international scholarships, studying abroad and reading scientific and economical articles.

Smith (2012) explains that years ago authorities of Ecuador with cooperation and coordination of the British government developed Curriculum Reform and Development for the Learning of English (CRADLE) project in order to produce didactic material for English language learning and teaching to be used in public high schools; but now the project includes a 60% of private high schools.

Due to the importance of learning English language the Ecuadorian government prioritized its teaching throughout the Plan Decenal de Educación (2007) and the Ley Orgánica de Educación Intercultural (2011); the Secretaría Nacional de Educación Superior, Ciencia, Tecnología e Innovación, SENESCYT, evaluated to Ecuadorian teachers, between July 28th and August 17th 2012, the results showed that teachers had low language proficiency so students have not received appropriate input in the English language in the last few years, in response to this situation a project that offers international scholarships to teachers was created to help them improving their teaching skills and benefit students learning process.

Teaching Approaches and Methods

There is a wide range of important methods and approaches for teaching English; in this section were considered the point of view from diverse authors about

the Total Physical Response, Whole Language Approach, The Natural Approach, Cooperative Language Learning, The Task-Based Approach, Communicative Language Teaching.

James Asher developed a language teaching method called Total Physical Response (TPR), which is based on the coordination of speech and actions. Beltran et. al. (2011) state that this method is used for teaching language, which involves students responding to commands given by teachers, according the commands difficulty and over time learners acquire more language. In other words for working in TPR, instructors give commands or imperatives in the target language and students react with whole-body actions.

About Whole Language Approach Cohen & Cowen (2008) indicate that learning is not passive but active, so leaners create and their own language by recognizing words as whole pieces of language because it is a system of making meaning with words that function in relation to each other in context.

Richards & Rogers (2001, p.109) explain "whole language is said to be authentic, personalized, self-directed, collaborative and pluralistic. Such characteristics are believed to focus learner attention and to motivate mastery". Rigg (1991, p.521) comments "What began as holistic way to teach reading has become a movement for change, key aspects of which are respect for each student as a member of a culture and as a creator of knowledge, and respect for each teacher as a professional". These authors mention that Whole Language Approach emphasizes learning to read and write naturally with a focus on real communication and reading and writing for pleasure. Constructivist learners work as collaborators with their partners in mixed groups on common projects and teacher is an active participant that facilities learning by creating a collaborative environment in class.

The Whole Language Approach also uses a variety of activities, for example: individual and small group of students for reading and writing, upgrades dialogue journals, writing portfolios, writing conferences, student-made books and story writing; these activities are also common in Communicative Language Teaching, Content-Based Teaching and Task-Based Language Teaching.

Krashen and Terrell developed the Natural Approach in the 80s, this communicative approach aims to foster naturalistic language acquisition in classroom; designed to develop oral and writing skills not by learning grammatical rules, but step by step by listening and understanding. Coady & Huckin (1997) argue that it consists of five principles in order that a beginning pupil can reach acceptable levels of oral communicative skill in classroom. In that sense, the target language is taught by exposing students to a great amount of structures, initially presented graphically then associated with words, so learners can associate forms and vocabulary meaning, then grammar and phonological structures are presented and taught as they are used in daily life.

Regarding the same topic, Richards & Rodger (2001, p.190) state "The Natural Approach belongs to a tradition of language teaching methods based on observation and interpretation how learners acquire both first and second languages in nonformal settings" and "In the Natural Approach, a focus on comprehension and meaningful communication as well as the provision of the right kinds of comprehensible input provide the necessary and sufficient conditions for successful classroom second and foreign language acquisition".

The next method is Cooperative Language Learning (CLL) which was created by John Dewey. He encouraged teachers the idea of building learning communities with democratic principles and productive work, grounded in respect and

cooperation. Woolfolk (2007) states the CLL is based on a constructive view, remarking the practice of elaborated and argumentative activities that help students to learn with a sense of cooperation as real communities. Also, he explains that CLL is very appreciated by educators for the value of group work and learners' students can through discussions and debates promote development of their knowledge.

Richards & Rodger (2001, p. 192) consider "cooperative learning is group learning activity organized so that learning is dependent on the socially structured exchange of information between learners in groups", CLL improves students' achievement and helps them to build positive relationships, besides it permits students to have healthy social, psychological and cognitive development. Moreover, CLL promotes cooperation in class rather than competition in learning. Students work together and determine what is to be learned, the role of the teacher is that of a facilitator and support. The teacher organizes the groups of students with different roles and materials, giving pupils the necessary time to finish their tasks. In this way, the students develop critical thinking skills through socially structured interaction activities.

Another method is Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT). Flowerdew & Miller (2005) mention that in TBLT students are asked to listen to what is described as "authentic" situations and perform a task with information such as completing a diagram or chart, filling in a table, or drawing a picture. In other words, the learners can make notes or diagrams while they listen. Each learner has different ways of recording the information and can report it in the form that he/she understood. Same authors remark that using TBLT includes real life activities and scripted texts.

Finally, the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), also known as the Communicative Approach that rose to prominence in the early 1980s. Harmer (2001,

p. 96) explains "CLT: communicative activities and task-based teaching offer real learning benefits, though neither tasks nor communicative activities on their own are sufficient for a whole language programme". Students should have the desire of communicating and be focused on the content of what they say or write using a variety of language. Typical Activities such as role-play and simulation are the very popular in CLT and sometimes puzzles solved by sharing information, as well as writing poems or constructing stories.

Managing Learning

A fundamental element in teaching English process is Managing Learning, it implies several factors such as correct explanation of instructions, appropriate use of time, and effective feedback. Gower, Phillips & Walters (2005) consider that accurate instructions require teachers to use simple language and short expressions to avoid confusion and uncertainty in students. Also, visual and written clues are of great value, especially with beginner learners, because they help the students to follow instructions better. Likewise, these authors recommend teachers to show the learners what they have to do for example break the instructions down if the activities require a series of steps and each has its own requirements, give a demonstration or an example. An important characteristic of a good instruction is that it allows educators to teach and check understanding at the same time.

Time is also a critical factor in managing learning, about this Jones (2007, p. 11) indicates "It's better for students to be given a time limit, so that they can pace themselves and deal with questions in more depth. Knowing how long they have, students will feel they can say more and share their ideas and opinions in a more relaxed way". Teachers should use a timer to warn students when time is almost up. However, there are groups who finish their activities before the time is up and they

are encouraged to switch roles or prepare questions for their teacher. The teacher should also be flexible with the students when they are enjoying an activity and allow them to prolong it, but if it doesn't go well it is fine to cut it.

Another important factor related to Managing Learning is giving feedback. Gower, Phillips & Walters (2005) explain this is given soon after students have finished their lesson or it can take place sometime later, for example the next day. In addition, the authors mention that the purpose of feedback is to achieve self-awareness and improvement, especially to check whether students were able to accomplish their goals of successful communication, accurate use of learned grammar and new vocabulary, pronunciation and intonation, appropriate styles and expressions, use of fluency strategies in conversation, handwriting, spelling and punctuation in written work. Feedback is essential because it motivates students to learn more and because of its immediacy lets students and teachers know their mistakes and take corrective measures. Feedback is also understood as giving praise and encouragement, correcting, setting regular tests, having discussions about how the group as a whole is doing, giving individual tutorials, among others.

Lesson Design

Teachers should carefully plan their classes in advance. Gower, Phillips & Walters (2005) and Woodward (2001) mention that beginning language teachers need help and orientation from their supervisor on what and how they plan; but over the time, teachers become more independent and develop and perfect their planning. The same authors remark that it is also necessary to keep in mind that planning lessons is very important and fundamental for the teachers because it allows them to retain their creativity and individual classroom style, select the appropriate materials,

aids and procedures needed at each stage as well as set the time required for each activity.

A well-organized lesson plan contains some elements that Gower, Phillips & Walters (2005) propose as follows: Aims, Procedure, Approach (es) and activities, Materials, aids and equipment, Information about the students and the classroom, and Anticipated problems.

An effective lesson plan provides a general outline of teaching goals, learning objectives and means to accomplish them; furthermore serves as a guide in helping students achieve intended learning outcomes. However, the lesson plan elements described above could vary depending student's needs/interests or requirements of the educative system; that's why Woodward (2001) remarks that teachers should examine their plans after class to determine whether all elements were correctly combined, materials were pertinent, and if interaction between students was successful.

Class Size

Class size is a measure of the average number of students in any course of the educational system; for many authors is a factor that influences students' achievement in language learning. The number of students in a classroom determines whether class is small or large, but Goslin (1965) considers that small classes with discussions are better than large classes with little or no discussion.

Also, Plank, Schneider & Sykes (2009) explain that small classes are beneficial because they help teachers provide individualized attention to their students and thus they learn more and minimize disruptive behavior. Regarding class size, Siann & Ugwuegbu (1988, p. 312) state that "most teachers feel that class size

is an important variable, for the amount of pupil participation tends to be limited in very large classes, when it comes to the amount of classroom interaction".

According the National Education Association (NEA), classes should have no more than 15 students. However, Plank, Schneider & Sykes (2009) state that "small" in some countries mean of 25 or 30 pupils, while in the United States it might mean 15 students. Even though the number of what defines a small class varies, ideally teachers should work in a good environment that allows them to do their best.

On the other hand, Hall & Hewings (2001) comment that large classes present multiple problems one of them is that teachers may feel overwhelmed and uncomfortable which limiting their performance. Another one is that discipline and maintaining order is a challenging task for teachers. Other problem is that it is difficult to evaluate oral and written work because of the quantity of assignments and their limited time to review each one. Finally, individual attention cannot be given in large classes so students are less apt to learn as they would in a smaller class.

Classroom Space and Seating Arrangement

Marzano, Gaddy & Foseid (2005) and Jeffrey & Walter (2004) agree that the physical space of the classroom should allow effective learning within an atmosphere of comfort where all the students can move around and the teachers have easy access to them without blocked pathways. It is also important that the materials have the adequate space and are easily assessable. In addition, every teaching space of the classroom should be a site of pure potential and possibility, a place where students can see clearly the actions performed by the teacher. However, the same authors explain that how the classroom is organized or arranged can contribute to or detract from learning in the classroom.

On the other hand, Lindberg, Kelley & Swick (2005) comment that students who are seated close to one another in a classroom may experience difficulty focusing on the lessons due to the noises caused by the proximity between them. In order to avoid students distraction and chatting teachers should vary the seating arrangement. Same authors state that students should be placed close to the teacher or next to a partner according to their needs and class activity, besides if the learners have bad behavior, they should be seated near someone who has good behavior because they learn from positive role models.

Gower & Walters (1983) and Harmer (2007) mention other types of seating arrangements such as horseshoe, circle, clusters and rows that can beneficial depending on the activities, the size of the classroom, and the furniture and if the work is individual, in pairs or in groups. According to these authors, the way teachers arrange seats has a great influence during the teaching-learning process because students tend to work better when teachers can monitor the class correctly.

Although there are many ways of arranging classroom seating the best one is that according classroom dimensions makes feel comfortable to teacher and students. A well-organized classroom permits the students to interact, participate actively, and share information which helps them to improve their knowledge and relationships with their peers.

Classroom and/or Teaching Resources

Dash & Dash (2007) refer to teaching resources as instructional materials that help in the teaching-learning process and make the class more interesting, motivating, concrete and effective; also, they help students to assimilate and remember the information. In addition, the mentioned authors consider that didactic

materials are important because they enhance students' sensorial experience, motivate learners and stimulate their imagination and ability for learning abstract concepts. For all these reasons, teaching resources should be attractive with colorful images and used at certain times during the class when the teacher thinks they will be most useful.

According to Ur (2009) there are some types of resources such as overhead projectors to present visual, written materials or other types of displays; video equipment, computers and posters, pictures and games. The same author expresses that video equipment and computers have a lot of advantages because they are very motivating, provide learners an excellent source of language input, are flexible and they allow students to review materials. However, frequent use of the same materials makes their value diminish because the students lose interest.

Realia is another type of teaching resource that Harmer (2001) recommends for teaching the meaning of words through active learning to children and young learners; for this the teacher uses real life objects that students can touch, feel and even smell. This author considers the board as the most versatile piece of teaching, and says it is very useful especially in whole group activities because it provides a motivating focal point for all the students.

Classroom Observation (Institution Monitoring)

Classroom observation is, for some authors, an important tool for evaluating teachers' performance. Gasskov (2006, p. 272) mentions "Observations should take into account course and lesson plans as well as student work" and "Monitoring the course delivery for compliance with the curriculum is intended to ensure that what

teachers actually teach is consistent with what they are expected to teach: the prescribed curriculum".

Wajnryb (1992) considers observation as an important element in teachers' development. He suggests that teachers can improve their own teaching through constantly monitoring and observing the lessons. Moreover, he says the process itself is not only related to the time that the observer spends in the classroom, but also involves preparation in order to set the dates and times of the observation in advance.

In addition, Wajnryb (1992, p. 34) states "observation may be initiated by the teachers themselves or by school, as a part of a school based support programmer for teaching staff", and it could take place to evaluate beginning teachers or as a learning tool to help experienced teacher improving their work.

Learning Styles

The term of individualized learning styles emerged in the mid of 1970s and has achieved recognition in recent years. Learning styles are the different abilities that students show in class. Wood (2008, p. 43) defines learning style as "the senses you use most frequently to absorb information about the world". Another definition is given by Cook (1996) who states that learning styles are individual to each student and helps them to learn in the way that suits them best.

Lowes & Target (1998) and Cook (1996) classify learners according to their leaning styles in visual, auditory and kinesthetic. Visual students learn through sight sense, pictures, pieces of written work, or books; meanwhile, auditory students learn best by hearing information from the teacher or tapes; and Kinesthetic learners enjoy learning with practical activities such as acting, miming and using their hands to create or build. The same authors agree that learning activities must have a purpose

related to students' most preferred way of learning; only in that way learning will be meaningful for them.

Lightbown & Spada (1999) mention in spite of different learning styles of learners, teachers should encourage students to use methods they consider less familiar in order to help them learn another language.

Language Aptitude

There is evidence that language learning occurs for a variety of factors and it is not the same for all learners. Brown (2007, p. 105) claims that "some people are indeed able to learn languages faster and more efficiently than others". Brown (2007) and Lightbown & Spada (1999) mention that prospective learners show aptitude for different tasks such as discriminating sounds, recognizing grammatical patterns, memorizing words, etc.; also, Robinson (2005) suggests that aptitude is a complex of abilities such as processing speed, short and long-terms memory, rote memory, planning time, interactional intelligence, emotional intelligence and self-efficacy.

Several authors explain that teachers knowing students' aptitude may help them to plan appropriate learning activities, and recommend that teachers identify students' abilities at early stages and that by monitoring and guiding learners in the appropriate strategies, the students will be successful in language learning. Brown (2007, p. 106) states "Anecdotal evidence would suggest that, for a variety of casual factors, some people are indeed able to learn languages faster and more efficiently than others"; he mentions that historical research on language aptitude suggests that learners need to demonstrate or posses certain kind of characteristics such as discriminating sounds, identifying spelling signs, internalizing meanings, etc. Moreover, Lightbown and Spada (2006) argue that intelligence can be closed related

to specific aptitudes of language learners and different assessment systems may favor different learner's personalities and learning styles.

However, Brown (2007) considers that aptitude tests applied by institutions for measuring students' ability in foreign language learning are not quite effective, because tend to place students under wrong categories and bias students and teachers. Instead, the author recommends monitoring students and identifying the type of strategies and styles they show progress in language learning.

So far, the most relevant theories about different themes of the English teaching learning process have been exposed, and with what is analyzed five studies related to factors that influence the English language teaching-learning process that support the information described previously.

The first study was done by Aduwa-Ogiegbaen & Iyamu (2006) whose purpose is to investigate if the teachers use instructional resources to teach English, if the teachers use methods appropriately in their classroom and the level of influence classroom environment in students' learning. The research was carried out in 3000 high schools in Nigeria, in which the researchers applied instruments such as questionnaires, observation checklists, interviews and field notes; the methods of analysis were descriptive/inferential statistics and thematic content analysis. Research assistants observed each classroom and some classroom proceedings during administrations of the questionnaire. Their study found that teachers used traditional resources such as textbooks and chalkboards instead of more effective resources such as computers and audio labs. In addition, teachers did not vary their teaching methods and they always used the lecture method in their classes. The study also showed that a poor classroom environment decreased the students' learning progress due to overcrowding and deteriorated classrooms. As a result, these researchers

concluded that poor teaching methods, lack of adequate resources, and inadequate classroom space affect students' language learning.

Secondly, Sakizli &Sariçoban (2006) carried out a research in order to analyze the factors that influence successful classroom management and introduce possible solutions to the problems. For that purpose, 30 teachers and students were interviewed and observed randomly, researchers observed the classroom management skills of the teachers, and applied a questionnaire covering the subject areas included during the training programs. The results showed that students responded well in learning environments where teachers assumed a friendly attitude and motivated them to learn. On the other hand, teachers who only focused on discipline and demonstrated an authoritative role were not able to encourage their pupils to learn positively. In sum, the researchers stated that classroom management is composed of different factors such as students' needs, lesson design, motivation and discipline that affect positively or negatively the teaching-learning process.

The third study that was conducted by Khamkhien (2010) whose objectives were to determine how factors such as gender, motivation, and experience in studying English affect the choices of language learning strategies; and to compare the roles of these factors and the pattern of language learning strategy used by Thai and Vietnamese students. For gathering information, participants were evaluated with a SILL test designed by Oxford and they also answered some questionnaires in order to know their English background. The results showed that gender was not a variable affecting in the choices of language learning strategies while motivation had a noteworthy effect on the learner's choices of strategies and development of language tasks, but particularly Thai students used English language out of the classroom more frequently than Vietnamese ones while Vietnamese students showed

more interest to learn English; about experience in studying, it had great influence in both students groups specially on Thai students because they used more Cognitive and Memory strategies than those without additional experience. The result of this study indicates that most of Thai learners relatively had high extrinsic motivation in learning English, but many of them showed inhibitions, hindering their success in mastering their English speaking competence. Limitations were the reduced number of participants and the use of other tools and techniques; likewise, the findings might have been influenced by other variables such as nationality, age, and field of study.

The fourth study was conducted by Malik & Singh (2012) which has as purpose to identify the factors affecting teaching and learning of English in schools. The teachers were interviewed to learn their opinion about the topic of the research. The results showed that teachers viewed that factors related to parents, training of the teachers, physical factors, lack of teaching aids, inappropriate curriculum design, and overcrowded classrooms were the main problems that teachers faced in the institutions where they worked. Finally, the researchers concluded that teaching and learning of English was affected by the factors mentioned previously. In this study, the authors did not find limitations.

The fifth and final research study was performed by Molavi & Tabatabaei (2012) whose purpose is to identify the demotives affecting in EFL learning of Iranian Islamic seminary students, and to distinguish the motivated and demotivated EFL learners in terms of their learning as the major focus of the study. The research used a quantitative and qualitative method and participants were randomly interviewed to determine the demotivating factors from the student's point of view, then the Interchange Objective Placement test was administered to measure general proficiency of the subjects under study. The results showed that frequency of English

classes, shortage of time, and lack of English usage in students' daily lives affect their motivation for learning this language. For that reason, the researcher concluded that demotivation is a relevant phenomenon and complex issue that should concern every classroom practitioner, and learners lose motivation and interest for learning the target language if they do not use it regularly. Finally, the researchers consider that development of motivational techniques is an essential factor to teaching effectiveness.

Description, Analysis, and Interpretation of Results

The answers of the teachers' questionnaire were grouped according to factors related to teachers, students, classroom, and institutions; and then the information was contrasted. The results of the tabulation are presented in this section through statistical charts. The data was processed and represented through statistical graphics comparing with data collected on observation class, students' survey and teachers' interview. This analysis helps to determine the most relevant factors that influence the English teaching-learning process in classrooms.

Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis

Factors concerning teachers

Which level of education do teachers have?

Graph 1

- High School diploma
- English Bachelor's degree
- English Master's degree
- others
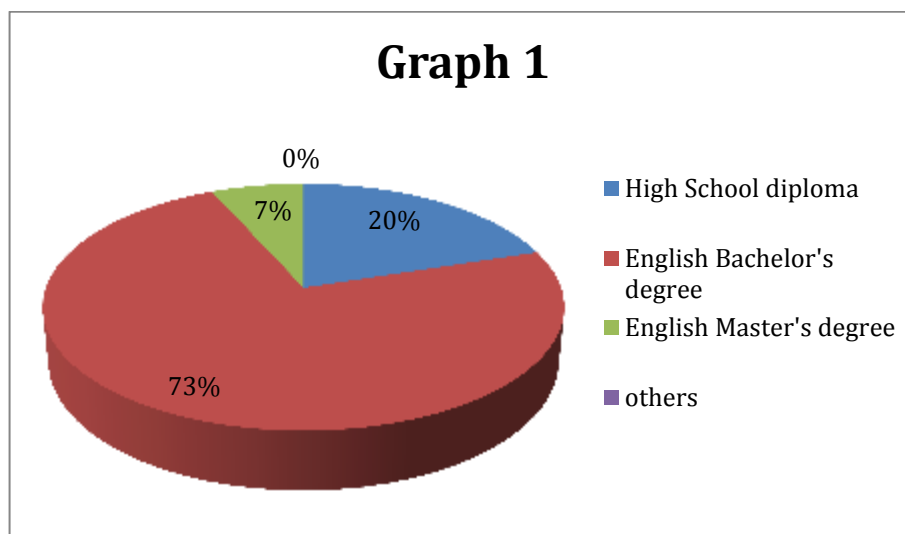
Author: Flor Mendoza Vivanco

Source: Teachers' questionnaire

The information about the level education of teachers in Graph 1 shows that: 11 out of 15 teachers, which represent 73% of the sample, have an English Bachelors' degree; 3 out of 15 teachers, this is 20% of the participants, have a High

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School Diploma and 1 out of 15 teachers, this is 7% of the sample, have English Master's degree.

Results of the interviews showed that all the participant teachers have 2 to 15 years of experience in the field; some of them gained it by working in the same educational institution and others in different institutions. This means that teachers have a wide professional experience.

Some teachers learned English in Ecuador and others in London and in the United States; they commented that speaking, reading and writing are the easier skills to teach and encourage their students to learn English in class, especially when they have several students with a low interest for learning English language.

All teachers pointed out that the motivation, lack of people to interact or to practice the English outside of class, students' low language level or interest are some disadvantages of teaching English in a non-English speaking country. Besides, cultural differences, lack of technology material, a not very developed English curriculum design, students' low language level and discipline are among others main problems that teachers face when teaching English in Ecuador.
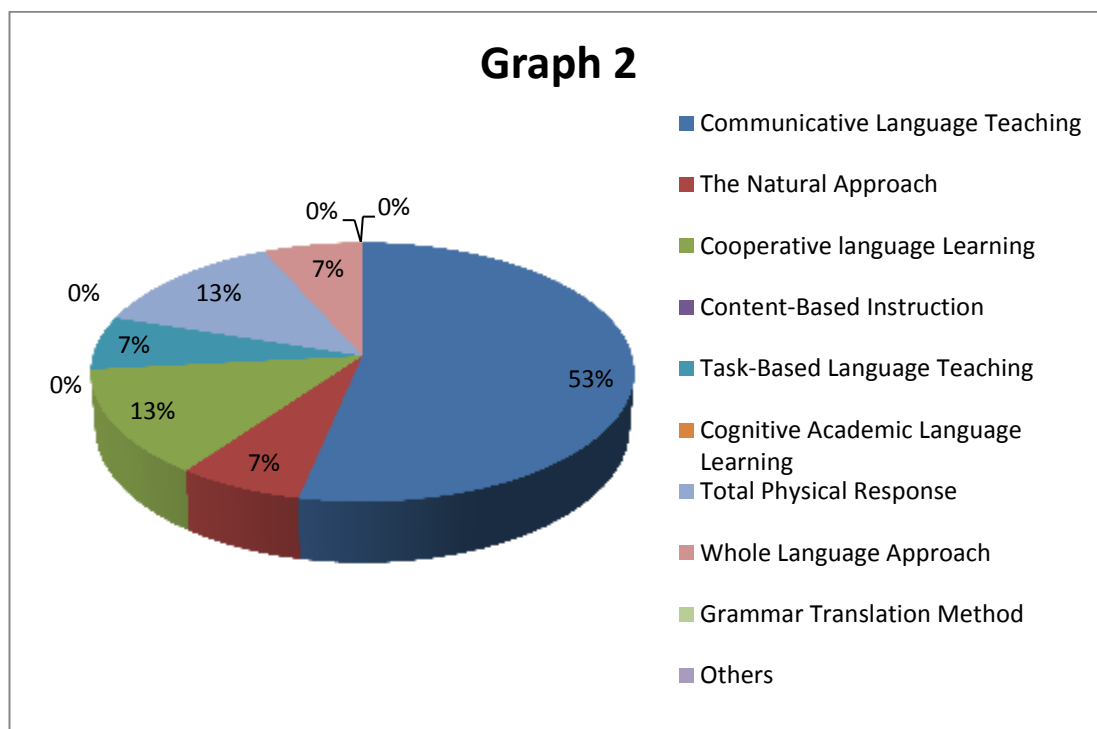
On the other hand, the interviewed teachers consider that job opportunities, scholarships abroad, communication with the target language, interaction with students and knowledge acquisition are positive aspects derived from learning English and they are also a reward of the profession.

Finally, almost all the participant teachers agreed that they gained professional experience by staying more time in the educational institution. It is also important to mention that teachers brought clear definitions of the difference between teaching English as foreign language (EFL) and teaching English as second language (ESL).

Their answers determined that teachers' level of language proficiency was between B2 and C1 according to the specifications described on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), according to the CEFR this is an appropriated level for teachers who are working in the English teaching field because they are able to communicate within academic contexts.

It was observed that teachers' knowledge and experience were positive aspects for teaching English because they could interact easily with their students using the target language. Besides, teachers with English Master's Degree and Bachelor's Degree have developed their ability for teaching English more than teachers with High School Diploma. On the other hand, SENECYT (2012) offers international scholarships to improve the language proficiency of Ecuadorian teachers.

Which of the following methods was used in the class?

Graph 2

- 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

Author: Flor Mendoza Vivanco

Source: Teachers' questionnaire

Regarding the results about methods used in the classes, Graph 2 shows that most of teachers (53%) preferred to practice the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) method, 13% of them applied Cooperative Language Learning; 13% utilized Total Physical Response, and the remaining 21% was divided (7% each one) between those used other methods such as the Natural Approach, Task Based Language Teaching and Whole Language Approach.

The results coincided with the information of direct observation because 8 out of 15 teachers used CLT method in the class, which implied they assigned activities to the students group work to interact with each other and exchange information related to the topic of the lesson. Harmer (2007, p. 69) considers that plentiful exposure to language in use and plenty of opportunities to use it are very important for a student's development of knowledge and skill; besides, he believes that CLT activities involve students in real or realistic communication, where the successful achievement of the communicative task they are performing is at least as essential as the accuracy of their language use.

On the other hand, 2 out of 15 teachers applied Total Physical Response method; one teacher applied mime role plays and other used commands and physical gestures in the target language to get students to make a vegetable salad. In both cases all pupils responded, they were concerned and collaborated in the activity, but some learners didn't use the target language. About TPR Richards & Rodgers (2001) suggest that for teaching language there should be coordination between speech and actions.

In addition 2 out of 15 teachers applied Cooperative Language Learning. After established the norms, time and issues the activity started; students worked in groups of four and selected a topic. Then one student per team explained to the others about

the corresponding theme. When the activity ended, the teacher asked the participants if they liked the activity or if they wanted groups working in another activity, so they answered they felt comfortable with the activity and they were very interested in learning English.

Besides, one teacher in 8th grade class preferred Natural Approach. The teacher presented grammar structures, language rules and vocabulary in the target language; learners were not required to say anything until they feel ready, they put a lot of attention and performed controlled writing tasks. Richards & Rodgers (2001) consider that a focus on comprehension and meaningful communication as well as the provision of the right kinds of comprehensible input provide the necessary and sufficient conditions for successful classroom second and foreign language acquisition.

Similarly, Task Based Language Teaching method was applied for one teacher. He did activities such as filling charts with details from texts or excerpts from audio materials. The students also were asked to find details on pictures or maps, and then they explained their findings to the class. Flowerdew & Miller (2005) state that in this method the students are asked to listen to what is described as "authentic" situations with information and then asked to use holistic inferential strategies such as completing a diagram or chart, filling in a table, or drawing a picture. In consequence, the type of activities performed by learners in the observed class was in accordance with the theory explained by the authors.

Finally, one teacher, who applied Whole Language Approach, integrated reading and writing into his classes. Students analyzed a text and they wrote a short essay to explain their opinions about the reading; then, they shared their points of view and discussed the topic. About activities used in this method Richards &

Rodgers (2001) consider they should be focused on real communication through reading and writing.

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

Graph 3

7%

93%

■ Yes
■ No
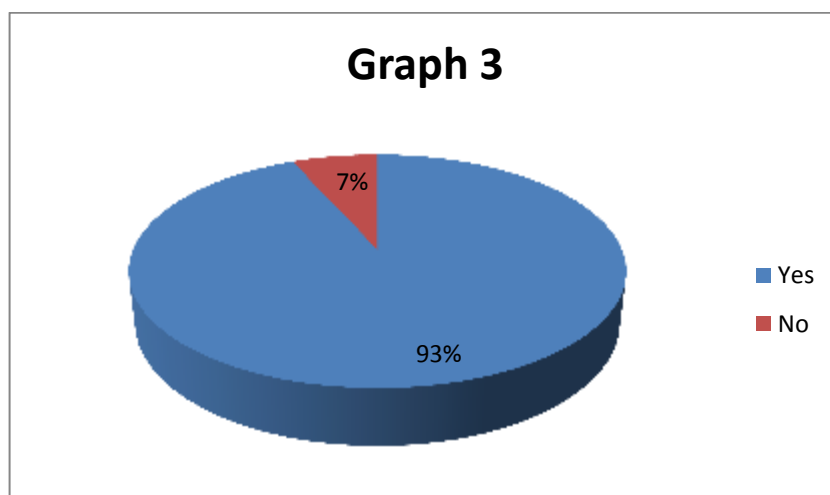
Author: Flor Mendoza Vivanco

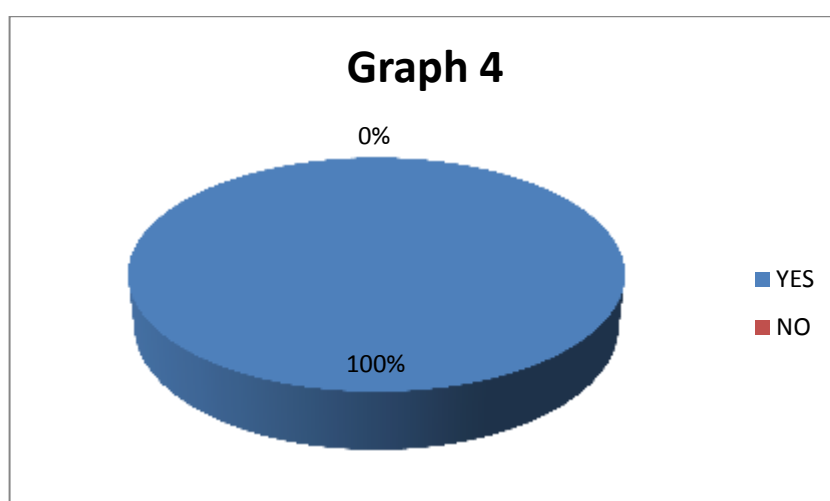Source: Teachers' questionnaire

In graph 3 can be observed that 93% of participant teachers answered that they use whole-group activities and only 7% do not apply them. Similarly, 93% of responses to the students' questionnaires ratified that teachers used this type of activities because they allow learners to interact with their peers.

Additionally, direct observation showed that most teachers involved the whole class by asking students questions about the topic of previous lessons and all the students participated dynamically. Also, students felt relaxed since they shared their ideas with their teacher and classmates. Teachers said that using whole group activities permit to provide feedback and students have the opportunity to practice the language used in recent lessons.

However, one teacher did not use whole-group activities since the class became too noisy, students do not put attention or interest in the activity and class time went by quickly.

According to Brown (2007) expresses that whole-group activities often give students a screen to hide behind. This is the perfect opportunity for the teacher to make all students to participate in the different activities of the class. Consequently, most of participant teachers used whole group activities providing students practical exercises to use the target language, and students express that group activities are very beneficial and integrative.

Do teachers use individual activities to teach their lessons?

Graph 4

0%

100%

YES
NO

Author: Flor Mendoza Vivanco

Source: Teachers' questionnaire

Graph 4 shows that 100% of the participant teachers used individual activities to teach lessons; it coincided with the 100% of student's answers and the results obtained through the direct observation because according to the topic all the 15 teachers assigned individual work to their students.

Surveyed teachers commented that individual work permits them to evaluate students' comprehension of the topics; besides, it is a good opportunity for pupils to develop their learning and perform tasks by themselves.

Participant teachers considered they prefer to practice that type of working activity because students do not have to change position of seats as usually happens

during group work; above all, the teachers can take advantage of the limited time with activities such as writing a short essay in class, written exercises, individual task and homework, etc., With respect to the time used for individual activities Jones (2007) thinks that it is better to give a time limit for each task in class, that is the reason why teachers use individual activities frequently.

Finally, teachers prefer individual activities because it is a good activity to evaluate the level of students' improvement of their skills and abilities in order to achieve the target language. Also these activities are necessary when the class has a large number of students.

Do teachers use group work activities to teach their lessons?

Graph 5

7%

93%

■ YES
■ NO
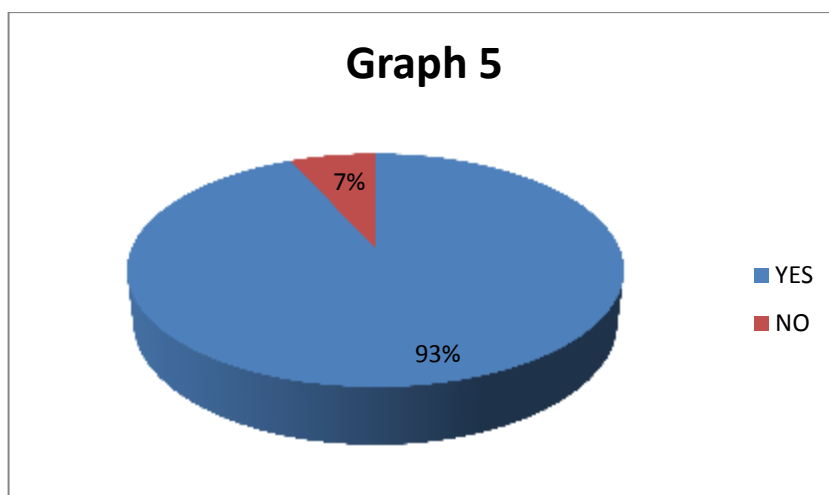
Author: Flor Mendoza Vivanco
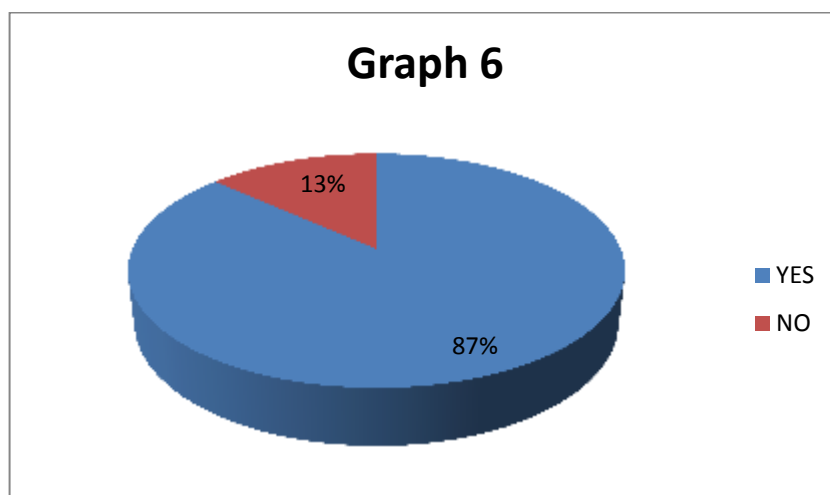
Source: Teachers' questionnaire

Graph 5 shows that 93% of teachers indicated that they use group work activities to teach their lessons, and only 7% expressed the opposite. Similarly, almost all students indicated in the questionnaire that their teachers use a variety of activities that allow them to interact with other students in the classes.

Direct observation showed that 11 teachers asked students to work in groups; those teachers considered that group work helps them to learn better, promotes

interaction, is easy to use, and allows students to work collaboratively. About group work Harmer (2001) explains that students get pleasure from working in groups and successfully do a good job as they acquire experience through group work.

Besides, Killen (2006) opines the effective teaching strategies and the accent on group work activities as a technique can improve student's oral communication skills at the same time as they learn the curriculum content. Benefits mentioned by teachers were evident in the observed class because students showed a better attitude when they worked together.

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

Graph 6

- YES
- NO

13%

87%

Author: Flor Mendoza Vivanco

Source: Teachers' questionnaire

Graph 6 shows that 87% of teaches indicated that they use English most of the time in their classes and 13% of them did not do it. The majority of students corroborated this because they answered that their teachers speak English in class frequently.

In addition, it was observed that 13 out of 15 teachers used the target language in class more than half of the time. This is a very positive aspect because students have a good source of language input that benefits their learning process; Dixie &

Bell (2009) recommend the use of simple and clear instructions according to students' language level for helping them to comprehend what teachers had said.

However, direct observation showed that though teachers spoke English fluently and regularly in class, the students used the target language only to interact with the teachers and not among themselves.

On the other hand, it was stated that 2 out of 15 teachers did not use English in their class most of the time, because they considered that some lessons have a high level of difficulty for students and it was necessary to provide mother language guidance to explain grammar and give instructions. Also, it was verified that some students asked the teacher to speak Spanish to understand the assigned tasks, which according to Richards & Rogers (2001) is an old fashioned method not recommended teaching English.

Do teachers plan their lessons?

Graph 7

0%

100%

YES
NO
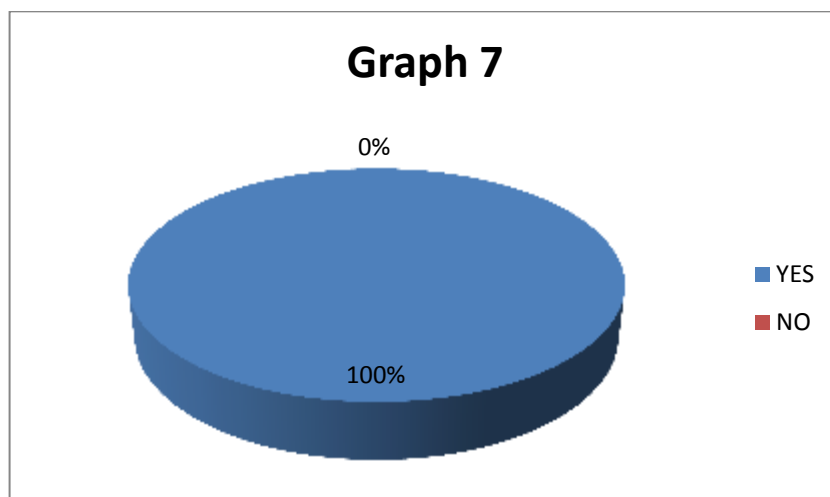
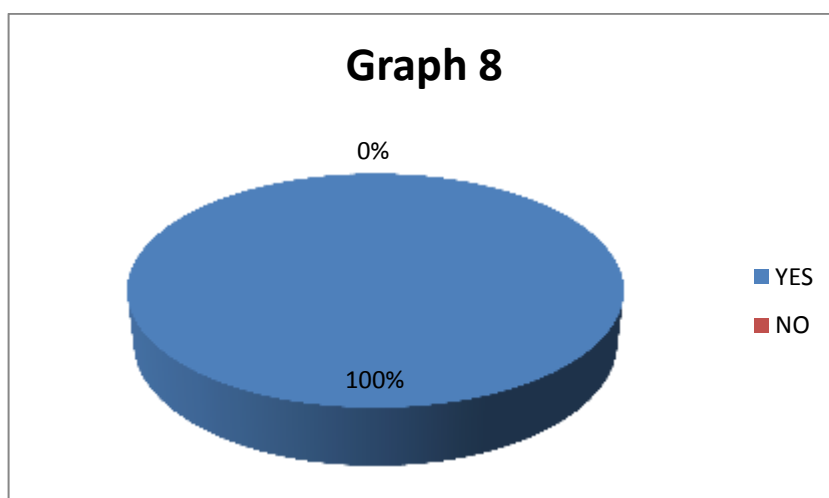Author: Flor Mendoza Vivanco

Source: Teachers' questionnaire

It can be seen in graph 7 that 100% of teachers agreed saying that they plan their lessons. However, direct observation showed that during the class some

elements of a lesson plan were not taken into account by the teachers in the planning, this could have been because they were previously introduced in an earlier class. For example, it is possible that the objectives, warm-up activities, or the introduction of the new topic were already explained.

Participant teachers agreed that it is very important to plan their lesson correctly because it helps to achieve the lessons objectives. According to Kizlik (2009), lesson plans are created to communicate teachers' instructional activities, practically all lesson plans developed by teachers contain students' learning objectives, instructional procedures, required materials and the written description of how pupils will be evaluated.

Also, it was observed that all the teachers had a record of students' activities and kept a list of materials elaborated by them. Finally, teachers who applied the important aspects of lesson plans in the observed classes were able to achieve some of the planned objectives to benefit students' learning process.

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

Graph 8

0%

100%

■ YES
■ NO

Author: Flor Mendoza Vivanco

Source: Teachers' questionnaire

About aspects of managing learning applied in class, 100% of teachers indicated that they do consider aspects such as discipline, timing, feedback, and instruction to teach their lessons; results that coincide with students' answers.

Regarding to time management, 10 out of 15 teachers controlled activities very strictly so that students finish the tasks punctual, and 5 teachers supervised that learning activities were well understood by the students.

Additionally, direct observation showed that all teachers have good skills in managing learning; however, they were focused about controlling discipline and providing feedback in order to evaluate the students' success and progress in learning English.

It was observed that teachers were able to give clear directions, assign the correct time for class activities, and provide accurate feedback. According to Gower, Phillips & Walters (2005) instructions should be given using clear language and by modeling exercises or giving examples on the board to ensure learners' comprehension. Besides, Jones (2007) reports that it is better to give a time limit for each task in class so the learners can deal with questions in more depth and they can say more and share their ideas and opinions. In this sense, the students who were assigned time to develop the activities worked more effectively than those with no controlled time.

In sum, the majority of observed teachers were able to manage learning and this benefit students' learning process.

Factors concerning students

Do teachers consider students' needs to teach English successfully?

Graph 9

0%

100%

- Yes
- No
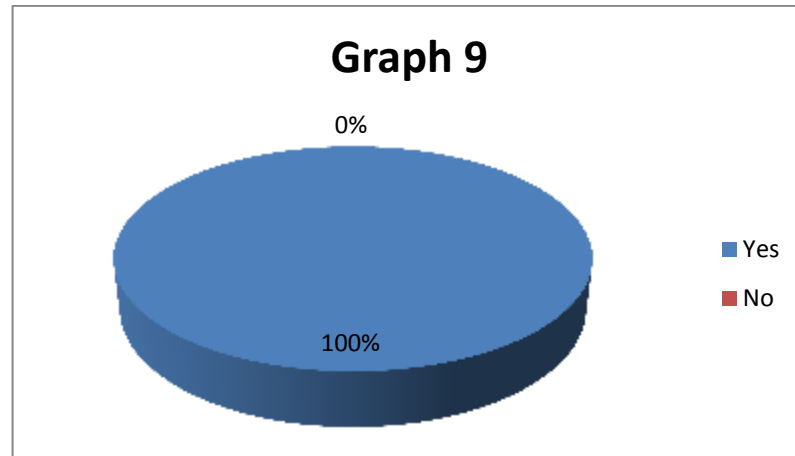
Author: Flor Mendoza Vivanco

Source: Teachers' questionnaire

Graph 9 demonstrates that 100% of the participant teachers considered students' needs to teach English successfully, students confirmed these results because they indicated that the activities assigned in class motivate them to participate and to improve their comprehension of the target language.

Moreover, direct observation showed that teachers used different types of teaching resources such as audio and visuals for providing students sensory experiences that allowed them to acquire knowledge according to their learning styles, in this sense, Wood (2008, p. 43) defines, "The senses you use most frequently to absorb information about the world, and to thereby understand it, are called by some researchers as learning style".

Likewise, to provide rich and sensory experience during the learning process, teachers used songs, dialogues, flashcards, pictures, and multimedia software that addressed different students´ needs such as auditory and visual. In this sense, teachers applied what Lightbown & Spada (1999, p. 58) argue, "we (teachers) should

encourage them to use all means available to them they work to learn another language".

In conclusion, the observed teachers motivate students to use their senses in order to make learning meaningful for them.

Do teachers consider students' level to teach English successfully?

Graph 10

7%

93%

Yes
No
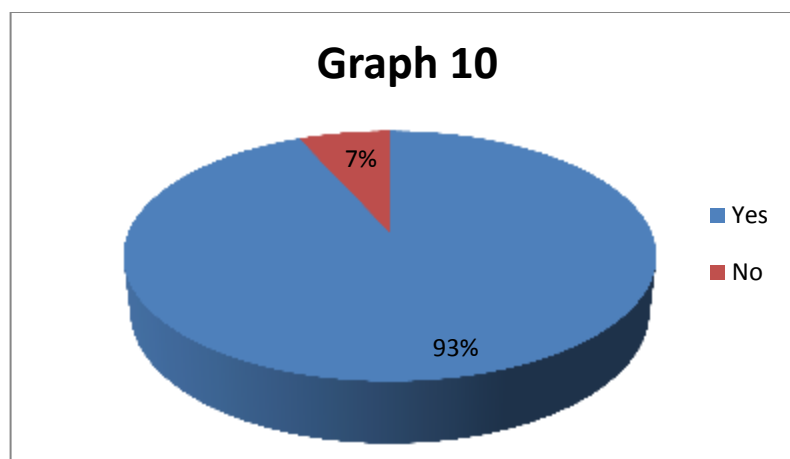
Author: Flor Mendoza Vivanco

Source: Teachers' questionnaire

The results in graph 10 show that 93% of teachers indicated that they do consider students' level to teach English, and 7% of them do not take into account this aspect. These results coincided with the answers given by students who mentioned that class activities are easy and interesting. Also, direct observation confirmed that the types of activities assigned by teachers were based on the textbook used in each course.

Besides, it was observed that the majority of teachers assigned to their pupils different tasks, such as answering questions, filling charts using information from texts, inferring conclusions from given facts, organizing sequence of stories, etc., all activities were correctly explained; students comprehended instructions and worked quite well. As a result, the type of learning activities assigned to students in the

observed classes suggests that teachers do consider students' level to design teaching and learning activities.

On the other hand, 1 out of 15 participant teachers answered that he does not consider student' level to teach English for the reason that when giving instructions and commands in class all students know how to proceed, this was verified during the observation because the class worked correctly without hesitation in all the activities.

According to this, Harmer (2001) suggests teachers adjust the classroom language to the level of the class they work with and use language materials of different level considering complexity, range of genre, and length because students' level is a crucial point to be considered to teach English. Also, Gower, Phillips & Walters (2005) consider that the information about students and anticipated problems provide to teachers of a general view of the results achieved in classrooms, and through determining the students' level of English it is possible to carry out some actions such as identifying the concepts and skills which need to be reinforced, planning class activities, etc.

Which is the level of the students?

Graph 11

- Basic 46%
- Intermediate 27%
- High intermediate 20%
- Advanced 7%
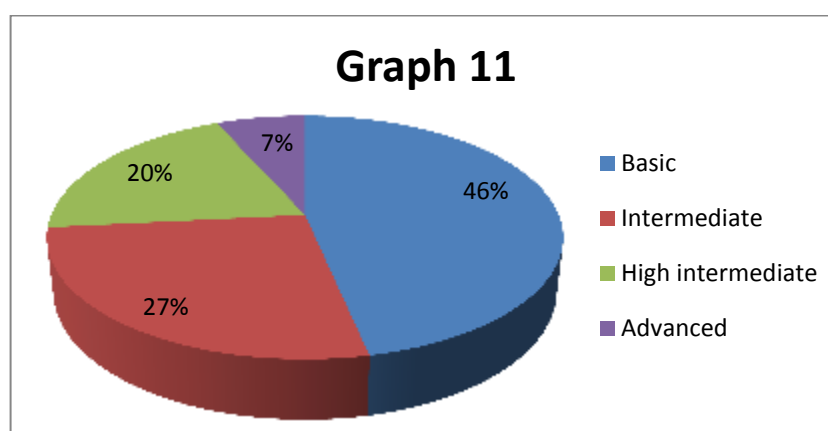
Author: Flor Mendoza Vivanco

Source: Teachers' questionnaire

To categorize the proficiency level that students have in the different institutions that collaborated through this research, was applied this question to participant teachers. The results in Graph 11 show that seven educators considered that 46% of their students have basic level, four teachers reported having 27% intermediate level students, three said they have 20% high intermediate level and only a 7% have an advanced level of English.

Besides, it was appreciated that six classes had basic level students because pupils could understand English in a very limited way; five classes were classified as intermediate level, since pupils could speak English with confidence; three classes were placed as high intermediate level because target language was used effectively by students; only one class was identified as advanced level because of pupils English fluency. During the direct observation were considered main factors such as command understanding given activities, class performance, writing, reading, and speaking.

Regarding the students who possess good level of English, they belong to a group of students that have been studying English since early ages. However, teachers should bear in mind Brown (2007, p. 106) about that sometimes aptitude tests place students under wrong categories, besides Gower, Phillips & Walters (2005) suggest that the term proficiency seems to fall into that category of words that are commonly used without conscious attention to exact meaning.

On the other hand, direct observation showed that despite the formulated goals, students' learning desire and efforts done for teaching English, material resources and class time are not enough.

Factors concerning classrooms

How many students there are in the observed classes?
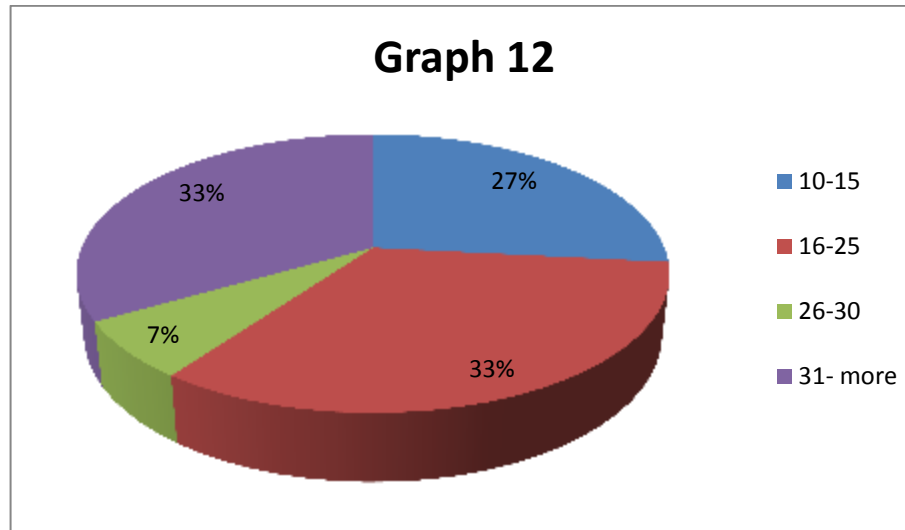
Author: Flor Mendoza Vivanco
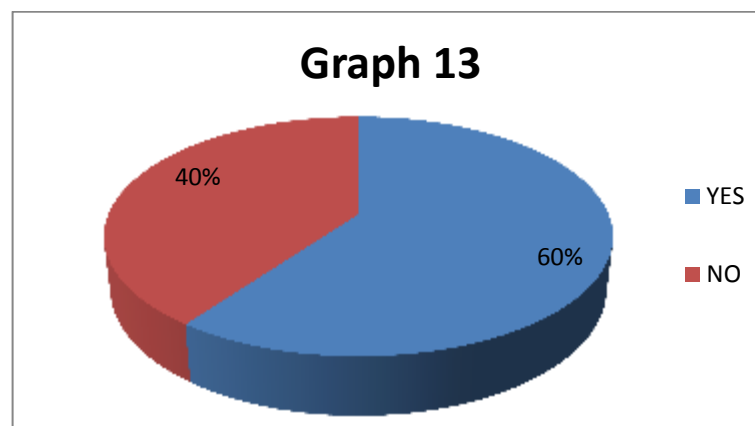
Source: Teachers' questionnaire

Results in graph 12 show that four surveyed teachers have 10 to15 students in the class 27%, five educators worked with 16 to 25 pupils 33%, one teacher 7% has 26 to 30 learners; finally, 33% of participant teachers report having 31 or more students per class.

The information provided by teachers coincides with direct observation since it was seen that 10 out of 15 classes had less 30 pupils according with Plank, Schneider & Sykes (2009) explanation they consider that "small" in some countries means of 25 or 30 pupils per class. Also, the authors mention that small classes are beneficial because they help teachers provide individualized attention to their students, and thus, the pupils learn more, enhance safety and minimize disruptive behavior. In fact, it was observed that the majority of teachers in the small classes did not have problems working with their students and controlling discipline. In these classes,

there was minimal disruptive behavior and students carried out learning activities appropriately.

On the other hand, it was observed that in the five classes with over 31 students the teacher could not address the learning process of each pupil. Besides, the students sitting at the back of the classroom had difficulties seeing written instruction and listening to teachers' directions. Hall & Hewings (2001) comment that large classes present some problems such as overwhelmed teachers, limited students' performance, problems with discipline, and difficulty for evaluating students' works. These characteristics of large classes given by the authors were perceived in four classes with 40 students who demonstrated disruptive behaviors frequently.

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

Graph 13

Author: Flor Mendoza Vivanco

Source: Teachers' questionnaire

Graph 13 shows that 60% or nine participant teachers answered they feel comfortable with the number of students they work with; while less than half of the sample 40% wasn't satisfied with the current number of students per class.

During the observation was stated that 9 out of 15 classes were small, classes looked more relaxed, organized, and collaborative than the classes with 31 or more students. Besides, when some students attempted to disturb the class, they were

controlled by asking them questions about the topic of the lesson or involving them in activities such as working on the board. Moreover, it was demonstrated that 6 out of 15 teachers did not feel comfortable with the quantity of students per classroom, because pupils did not follow instructions immediately and they usually are distracted; concerning to this Siann & Ugwuegbu (1988, p. 312) indicate that the amount of pupil participation tends to be limited in very large classes; also, Hall & Hewings (2001) comment that teachers may feel overwhelmed and uncomfortable because the classes are distracted and noisy. However, the same authors considered that it doesn't mean that large classes are necessarily impossible to manage.

In addition, students' behavior was acceptable, but sometimes teachers had to pay more attention to some learners because they disturbed their peers or did not work correctly. On the other hand, eleven out of fifteen students answered that they feel comfortable with their class size, and thirteen pupils considered the number of students favored English learning. Finally, small classes do not demand more effort and time to achieve the objectives of the lesson than large classes.

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

Graph 14

33% NO

67% YES
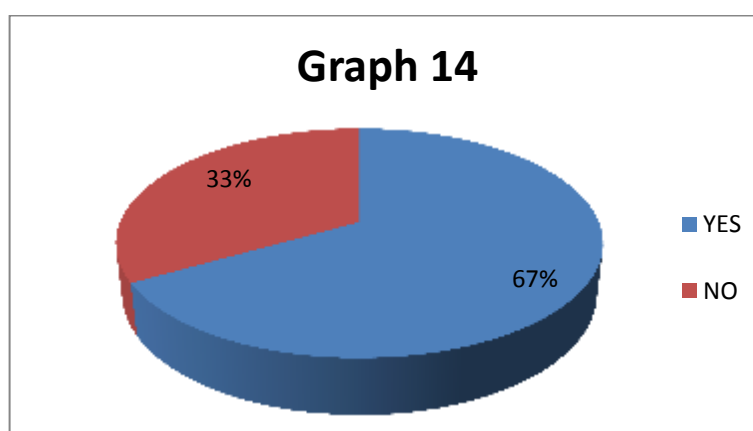
Author: Flor Mendoza Vivanco

Source: Teachers' questionnaire

Regarding the space in the classroom graph 14 reveals that the majority of teachers thought the classroom has an adequate size, this is the 67% of the sample that answered they have enough educational space to work with the group of students assigned, meanwhile 33% of teachers mentioned that the classroom space is not enough.

Direct observation permitted to confirm that in 10 out of 15 classes the space allowed to teachers to walk freely, monitor students' work and arrange seats. A similar percent of students indicated that they feel comfortable with physical size of the classroom, so this favored positively the learning process.

Additionally the results of graph 12 and 13 coincide with the percentage of teachers' answers because the majority of classes have less than 31 students and teachers feel comfortable with class size; this was supported with students' opinion who indicated in the questionnaire that they liked the way teachers taught their classes.

On the other hand, in 5 out of 15 observed classes, teachers worked with more than 31 students in reduced classroom space, which created difficulties to walk between rows and check students' work. Besides, four out of fifteen learners considered they could not work comfortable because of the class size.

About the mentioned facts observed Foseid, Gaddy & Marzano (2005) and Jeffrey & Walter (2004) explain that space should be regarded as a site of pure potential and effective learning where students can move around and see clearly the actions performed by the teacher; also, Lindberg, Kelley & Swick (2005) comment that the students may experience learning difficulties when there is not enough space in a classroom due to the noise caused by the proximity between partners. As a result

classroom space is a factor that may affect positively or negatively the teaching-learning process.

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

Graph 15

27%

73%

YES

NO
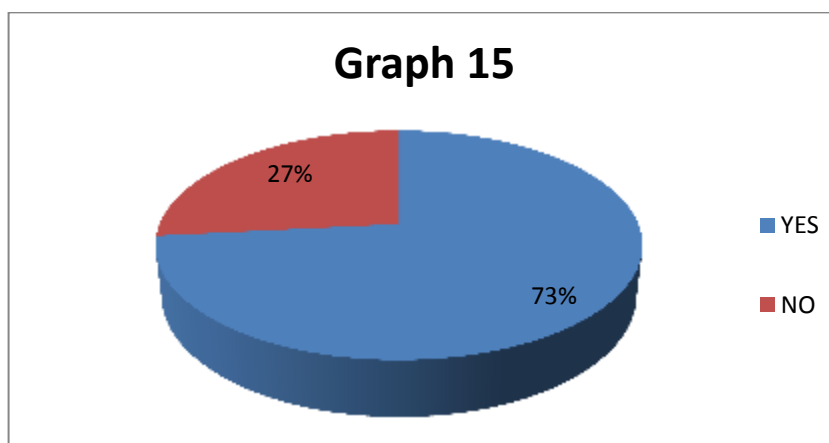
Author: Flor Mendoza Vivanco

Source: Teachers' questionnaire

Graph 15 shows that the 73% of the participant teachers arrange their students' seats depending on the activity planned for the class, while only 27% of the sample or four educators answered that they do not change their students' seats.

Direct observation coincides with the 11 out of 15 participant educators who gave affirmative answers, and with the results of students' questionnaires since the pupils liked the way teachers had organized seats to work in the classroom. Likewise, comparing with results of graphs 12 and 14, it was confirmed that small classes with enough space teachers could arrange seats in relation to teaching activities and seats were rearranged without any kind of physical limitation.

On the other hand, 4 out of 15 classes could not take full advantage of seating arrangement due to reduced space in the classroom, the observation also showed that

teachers and students do not move seats for working in groups and individual work was affected specially for the students who were sat far from the board.

In addition, the most common types of seating arrangement used in the observed classes were row and circles; rows were applied during individual work and circles were used for group work; both models were in accordance with the activities planned by teachers in their classes.

Gower & Walters (1983) and Harmer (2007) conclude that the teachers should vary the seating arrangement because students tend to work better when teachers can monitor the class correctly; also, the authors argue that the way teachers arrange seats should be an important part of lesson planning, but to avoid distraction and chatting.

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

Graph 16

0%

7%

40%

53%

- 10-15
- 16-25
- 26-30
- 31- more
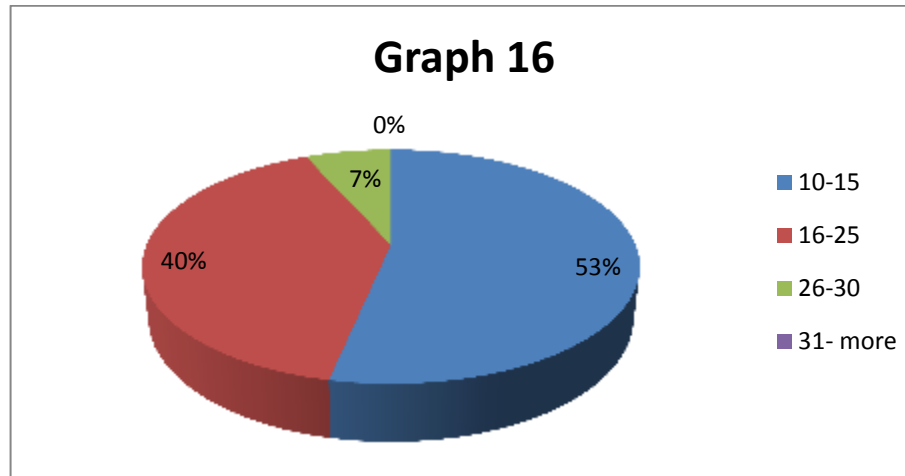
Author: Flor Mendoza Vivanco

Source: Teachers' questionnaire

Graph 16 demonstrates teachers' opinion about the appropriate number of students to teach in a classroom, which differed from their reality as it was observed in Graph 12. The results revealed that the majority of educators 53% prefer to work with a class of 10 to 15 students, a 40% of the sample said the ideal number per class

is 16 to 25 pupils while a 7% declared that the suitable number of students is 26 to 30 by classroom; finally, the option 31 or more didn't receive an answer.

Direct observation corroborated what teachers manifested, because in large classrooms students talked a lot amongst themselves or were doing other activities not related to the lesson such as drawing or doing assignments for other subjects; meanwhile in small classrooms educators could attend certain problems of learning and discipline was minimum. In fact, Hall & Hewings (2001) comment that controlling discipline and maintaining order is a challenging task for teachers with large classes.

On the other hand, Plank, Schneider & Sykes (2009) argue that "small" in some countries mean of 25 or 30 pupils, but the number of what defines a small class varies. It coincided with the surveyed teacher who considered a suitable number to teach English in a class is 26 to 30 students.

Certainly, a high percent of teachers considered small classes as the best option for teaching, since they demand less effort and it is easy to focus on each of the students' needs. For this reason, any teacher preferred the option 31 or more pupils. Do teachers use teaching resources?

Graph 17

0%

100%

■ YES
■ NO
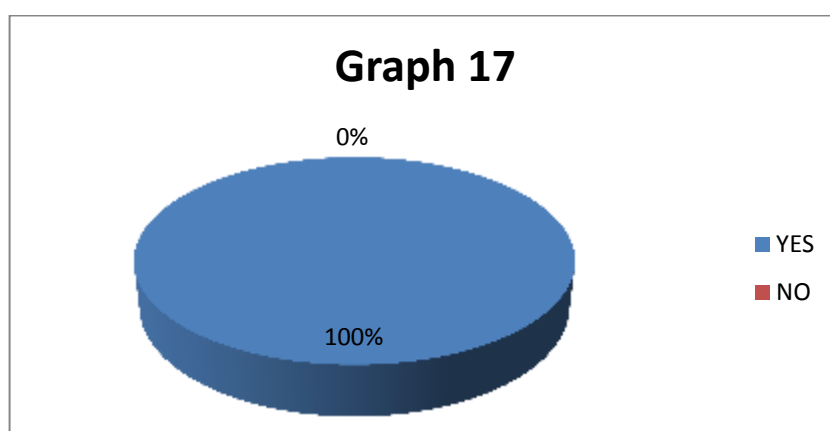
Author: Flor Mendoza Vivanco

Source: Teachers' questionnaire

Graph 17 shows that the 100% of surveyed teachers agreed indicating that they use teaching resources in their classes; however, students' responses indicate a discrepancy of opinions because 53% of students stated that teachers do use teaching resources, meanwhile 47% of pupils answered the opposite.

Direct observation revealed that the teaching resources which the teachers used in their classes consisted of the CD recorder, flashcards, worksheets and posters; computer and projector were just used in a class. Besides, other types of supplementary materials such as realia, TV and smart boards were used in some private high schools.

Almost all materials mentioned above were used correctly by the participant teachers. Also, it is important to mention that in an observed class the quality of audio material was poor because the CD recorder did not reproduce the dialogues with the adequate volume.

According to Ur (2009) explains that some types of teaching resources such as video equipment, audiovisuals and computers provide learners rich sight and auditory learning experiences; besides Gower, Phillips & Walters (2005) and Woodward (2001) recommend to think carefully before selecting materials, aids, equipment and the precise moment to apply them and the reasons why these particular materials will be useful.

Finally, teaching resources helped to teachers getting the objectives of the lessons because through visual representation of meaning learners were able to acquire the information easily. Also, teaching resources motivate learning and they need to be selected prudently according to learners' needs, interests and styles.

Do teachers consider appropriate the resources they have in class?

Graph 18

20%

80%

■ YES

■ NO
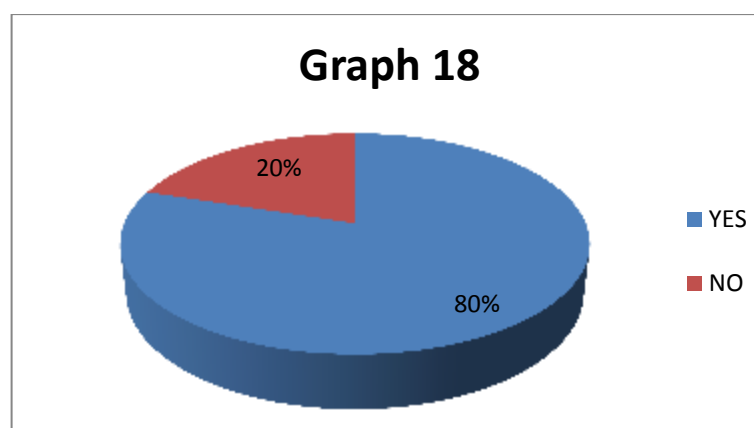
Author: Flor Mendoza Vivanco

Source: Teachers' questionnaire

The results revealed that almost all teachers considered appropriate the resources they have in class. Graph 18 shows that 12 out of 15 teachers 80% of the sample, answered positively indicating they have the necessary materials in class to work efficiently; and 3 out of 15 educators 20% of the participants, said that teaching resources are insufficient for improving teaching-learning process of English language.

Also, the most of the students indicated that their teachers use materials such as TV, CD recorder, or computers and this was corroborated with the previous results. Besides, teachers considered that the use of teaching material increased interest in learning. About teaching resources Dash & Dash (2007) comment that these are instructional materials that help in the teaching and learning process, making the class more interesting, motivating, concrete and effective; but teaching resources should be attractive with colorful images and used at certain times during the class when the teacher thinks they will be most useful.

Direct observation confirmed that teaching resources were diverse and easy to use, audio material was a component of the textbook assigned to teachers as well as

realia and flashcards. Additionally, teachers elaborated supplementary materials that consisted mainly of visuals such as posters, worksheets, and pictures; these were very interesting and facilitated the interaction. On the other hand, teachers who expressed don't have enough materials to work in classroom, felt it is a disadvantage since they don't count with resources such as computers or audio-visual equipment; however, they had designed and adapted language-teaching materials according to learners' needs.

In consequence, teaching resources helped the students' English learning process, because they increased interest in learning and assist interaction between teachers and students.

Factors concerning educational institutions

Does the institution review lesson plans?

Graph 19

33%

67%

■ YES

■ NO
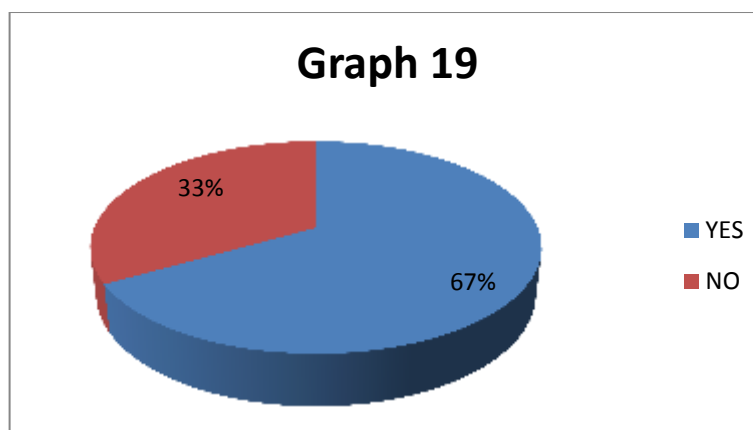
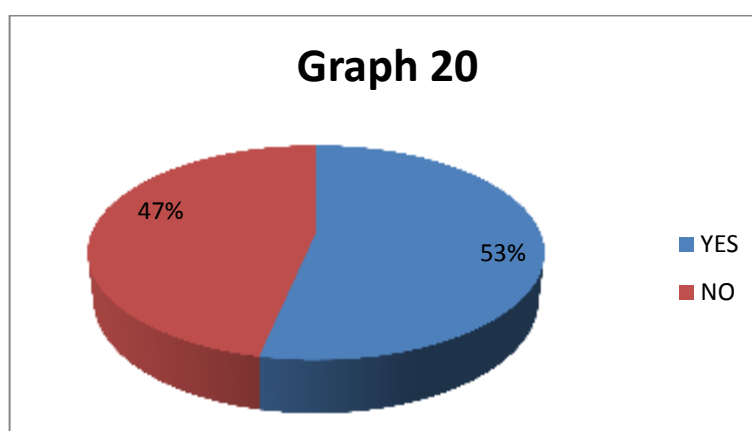Author: Flor Mendoza Vivanco

Source: Teachers' questionnaire

Graph 19 shows that 10 out of 15 participants 67% of the sample, answered that their institutions check their lesson plans, while that 5 out of 15 participant educators 33% responded the opposite.

According to the results the majority of the teachers from the observed private high school indicated that their lessons plans are usually reviewed by the English coordinator; this procedure takes place once a week or once a month. In addition, in direct observation the English coordinator checked aspects in lesson plan such as objectives, warm up or introductory activities, methodological components of the teaching process, practical application of learned content, and activities for reinforcing the acquired knowledge. Likewise, the use of teaching resources is another aspect that was also reviewed in order to meet students' needs.

Also, Bailey (2006) states a supervisor helps teachers to find better ways for improving their work, in general, it was observed that an important group of teachers had their plans checked by an authority to apply different aspects of their lesson plans in their classes.

In conclusion, revision of lesson plans is something that brings teachers important feedback of how they are doing with their lesson plans. In this sense, the observed teachers are able to reflect about their strengths and weaknesses during the process of lesson design and it allows them to improve their teaching.

Does the institution monitor teaching?

Graph 20

47% 53%

YES
NO

Author: Flor Mendoza Vivanco

Source: Teachers' questionnaire

Graph 20 shows that 8 out of 15 educators 53% of the sample is monitored by their institutions and 7 out of 15 corresponding to 47% of participant teachers are not monitored at all by authorities of their institutions.

About English teaching monitoring frequency, the participants answered: three out of eight teachers indicated that their classes are observed once a week and five supervised educators stated that institutions monitor their classes once a month. Besides, in both cases the direct observation showed that the English coordinator or supervisor visited a few classes and observed how teachers work in their classrooms to corroborate whether classes are taught according to what teachers specified in their lesson plans. Gasskov (2006, p. 272) mentions "monitoring the course delivery for compliance with the curriculum is intended to ensure what they are expected to teach: the prescribed curriculum". Also, Wajnryb (1992, p. 34) argues that observation can take place for evaluating teachers beginners or as a learning tool that helps experienced teachers to improve their work.

Finally, it is essential that the institution's authorities work in a plan to supervise the English teaching because the monitoring is necessary to improve teaching skills and focus in what should be corrected during classes in order to achieve professional progress of educators. Besides, by themselves is very difficult detect and prevent mistakes during the English teaching learning process.

Conclusions

✓ The most of English participant teachers (73%) have English Bachelor's Degree, the rest of educators have High School Diploma and just one teacher has English Master's Degree.

✓ Regarding to the methods used in classes, it has been established that 53% of the participant teachers prefer to use Communicative Language Teaching method (CLT) in class while the remaining 47% of the teachers applied different methods.

✓ Referring to the English level of the students, the most of the participant teachers (46%) agreed that their pupils have basic level which was noticed during the observed classes.

✓ The majority of surveyed teachers (60%) answered that they work with small classes with an average of 10 to 25 students; moreover, they feel comfortable with the quantity of pupils per classroom because achieve their teaching goals effectively.

✓ The majority of the teachers (80%) use teaching resources, such as CD recorders, computers, flashcards, posters, etc., which are available in the institution. Also, the most of materials used were posters and flashcards while the less used resource was computers.

✓ Regarding the monitoring, teachers (53%) expressed that they are monitored frequently; while almost half of the educators have answered that they are not supervised by institution's authorities.

Recommendations

✓ All the students with English basic level should stay in continuous training in order to improve their English knowledge through reinforcement classes focused in listening, speaking, reading and writing skills which are carry out by teacher.

✓ Educational institutions should try to offer more appropriate teaching resources in each English Lab to make the classes active and interesting; because in many private high schools there are not enough resources to work with necessary advanced technology such as smart boards, laptops, headphones, projectors, etc.

✓ It is advisable that institutions implement classes monitoring in order to benefit both teacher and student, this practice should be done at least once a month, since an effective monitoring could help to make instructional changes by the information collected.

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ANNEXES

ANNEX 1

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

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION:	
DATE:	
YEAR:	

1. Which level of education do you have?

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

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

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

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

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

4. Which is the level of your students?

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

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

Communicative Language Teaching	( )
The Natural Approach	( )
Cooperative Language Learning	( )
Content-Based Instruction	( )

Task-Based Language Teaching	( )
Cognitive Academic Language Learning	( )
Total Physical Response	( )
Whole Language Approach	( )
Grammar Translation Method	( )
Others _____	( )

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

YES ( )	NO ( )	
Why? _____		

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

YES ( )	NO ( )	
Why? _____		

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

YES ( )	NO ( )	
Why? _____		

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

YES ( )	NO ( )

10. Do you plan your lessons?

YES ( )	NO ( )

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

YES ( )	NO ( )

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

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

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

YES	( )	NO	( )

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

YES	( )	NO	( )

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

YES	( )	NO	( )

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

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

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

YES	( )	NO	( )
Which ones?			
_____			

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

YES	( )	NO	( )
Why?			
_____			

19. Does the institution review your lesson plans?

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

20. Does the institution monitor your teaching?

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

Thanks for your cooperation!!!!!!

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?

YES ( )	NO ( )

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

YES ( )	NO ( )

3. Consideras que las actividades realizadas en clase son:

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

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

YES ( )	NO ( )

¿Por qué?

_____
_____
_____

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

YES ( )	NO ( )

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

YES ( )	NO ( )

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

| YES ( ) | NO ( ) |

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

| YES ( ) | NO ( ) |

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

| YES ( ) | NO ( ) |

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

| YES ( ) | NO ( ) |

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

| YES ( ) | NO ( ) |

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

| YES ( ) | NO ( ) |

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

| YES ( ) | NO ( ) |

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

| YES ( ) | NO ( ) |

GRACIAS!!!!!

UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA PARTICULAR DE LOJA

La Universidad Católica de Loja

MODALIDA ABIERTA Y A DISTANCIA

CARRERA DE INGLES

OBSERVATION SHEET

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

3. Which of the following methods are used?

Communicative Language Teaching	( )
The Natural Approach	( )
Cooperative Language Learning	( )
Content-Based Instruction	( )
Task-Based Language Teaching	( )

Cognitive Academic Language Learning	( )
Total Physical Response	( )
Whole Language Approach	( )
Grammar Translation Method	( )
Others _____	( )

4. Which of the following activities are used?

Whole-group activities	( )
Individual activities	( )
Group work activities	( )

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

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

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

Discipline	( )
Feedback	( )
Activities management	( )

Time management	( )

7. How many students are there in the classroom?

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

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

YES	( )	NO	( )

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

YES	( )	NO	( )
NOTES: _____			

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

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

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

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

ANNEX 4

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 ( )