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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 DEL TRABAJO DE FIN DE TITULACIÓN

Magister.

Alexandra Zúñiga Ojeda

DOCENTE DE LA TITULACIÓN

De mi consideración:

El presente trabajo de fin de titulación: Factors that influence the English language teaching-learning process in Ecuadorian private high schools realizado por Maria Alexandra Subia Ricaurte, ha sido orientado y revisado durante su ejecución, por cuanto se aprueba la presentación del mismo.

Loja, noviembre de 2014

f) .....

## DECLARACIÓN DE AUTORÍA Y CESIÓN DE DERECHOS

“Yo, María Alexandra Subía Ricaurte 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 Licenciada en Ciencias de la Educación mención Ingles, siendo la Magister Alexandra Zuñiga Ojeda 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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f. ....  
María Alexandra Subía Ricaurte  
CI # 0501694640

## DEDICATION

To my mother who has always encouraged me to continue with the development of my work.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I want to thank God because he gave me the strength and knowledge to complete this objective. At the same time, I would like to thank all the people that collaborated in this thesis development, especially to Mrs. Mercedes Vega and Engineer Dean Rule. God bless you.

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## ABSTRACT

The aim topic of this research is *Factors that influence the English language teaching-learning process in Ecuadorian private high schools*. Its main objective is to analyze the factors that influence this process.

The research has as its sample two private high schools located in the city of San Rafael, one in the town of Lasso and two high schools in the city of Latacunga. In these five institutions fifteen English teachers were observed while they were teaching their students during class time with the primary aim of observing the factors that influence teaching-learning process.

Questionnaires were filled out by fifteen students and fifteen teachers to identify what factors are affecting the English language teaching-learning process. Factors concerning students, teachers, classroom and educational institution were considered in the research and the data were analyzed using qualitative and quantitative methods.

Results revealed that not all in service English teachers have the level of education necessary to teach English in high school. It was also found that students have a low level of English.

**KEYWORDS:** EFL teaching, factors, private high schools

## RESUMEN EJECUTIVO

El tema de esta investigación es factores que influyen en los procesos de enseñanza-aprendizaje del idioma inglés en los colegios privados ecuatorianos. Su objetivo principal es analizar los factores que influyen en este proceso.

La investigación tiene como muestra dos colegios privados localizados en la ciudad de San Rafael, uno en la ciudad de Lasso y dos colegios en la ciudad de Latacunga. En estas cinco instituciones quince profesores de inglés fueron observados mientras enseñaban a sus estudiantes durante el tiempo de clase, con el objetivo principal de observar los factores que influyen en el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje.

Quince estudiantes y quince profesores llenaron encuestas para identificar qué factores afectan el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje del idioma Inglés. Factores relacionados a los estudiantes, profesores, salón de clases y la institución educativa fueron considerados en la investigación y los datos obtenidos fueron analizados usando métodos cuantitativos y cualitativos.

Los resultados revelaron que no todos los profesores de inglés tienen el nivel de educación necesaria para enseñar inglés en el colegio. También fue encontrado que los estudiantes tienen un nivel bajo de inglés.

**PALABRAS CLAVES:** Enseñanza del inglés como lengua extranjera, factores, colegios privados



## INTRODUCTION

English is the world's most universal language today. It is the international language of diplomacy, business, computing, medicine, science, and technology. It is often the language used to communicate among non-native speakers as their common language around the world. These are some reasons why it is very important to learn English.

The English Language is taught in Ecuador as part of its curriculum. However the majority of students in Ecuador have serious problems entering college due to the low level of English that they have when they graduate from high school. These problems are widely evidenced when they need to get a scholarship, apply for immersion programs or simply access to up-to-date English information. For these reasons it is important to investigate the factors that cause this knowledge deficit and find the solutions that help to improve the English level of students in Ecuador.

According to Saricoban & Sakisli (2006, p.1) "Teaching and learning a foreign language is a social process which requires the interaction of two important parts of the process, the teacher and the students, in a social environment."

The present research, "Factors that influence the English language teaching-learning process in Ecuadorian private high schools", has these specific objectives:

Identify student's English level and their needs in the classroom. Determine the classroom conditions in which English lessons take place. Identify the characteristics of in-service English teachers. Determine what institutions need in facilities and norms to insure a quality education.

Students, teachers, institutions and government have to work together to find the best mechanism to improve education in Ecuador and this study is part of this effort.

Fifteen teachers of five different private high schools located in three cities and their respective students were observed during one hour of English classes. It is not possible to assess everything in one hour of classes but important aspects as the level of education of the teachers, the methods and techniques that they use and their ability in the managing learning were observed. Also, in that time you can not precisely determine the levels that students have, since that could necessitate many more hours of research and observation. However, this study allows us to have an idea of the difficulties in the educational process and suggest possible solutions.

## METHOD

### *Setting and participants*

The present research was developed at Unidad Educativa Henry Dunant, and The Academia Militar del Valle of San Rafael in, the province of Pichincha, at Colegio Particular Técnico Industrial Hermano Miguel and at Unidad Educativa C.E.C in the city of Latacunga, and Unidad Educativa Fundacion Sierra Flor in the town of Lasso. These last three institutions are located in Cotopaxi Province.

15 teachers of these five private high schools were observed during class time while they taught English to students from the 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grades of high school.

### *Procedures*

Literature review was done by using books and information obtained in the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Ecuador, Escuela Politécnica del Ejército, Lincoln Information Resource Center of the United States Embassy in Quito – Ecuador, on-line and my own library.

Quantitative and qualitative methods were used to describe, analyze and interpret the information obtained during the research.

Three classes of each institution were randomly selected for the present study. Teachers and students were observed during forty to forty five minutes of class. Key observations included teacher's aptitudes and attitudes, student's performance, classroom facilities and learning environment. During each class an observation sheet was filled out and a note-taking method was applied with factors concerning teachers, students, classroom and educations institutions considered.

After the classes it was requested of teachers and students to fill out one questionnaire in order to get the necessary information about the different factors that influence the teaching-learning process of the English language and support this research with data. The questionnaires were quantified to determine the incidence of each factor, and using this information the data were tabulated and plotted to show the results. Additionally, teachers were interviewed to ascertain the teacher's language proficiency.

## DISCUSSION

### Literature Review

“The formation of the teachers that teach English in the elementary and high schools of the country is lacking. Those who should know and teach the language fail in oral expression and choose antiquated methods such as memorization and translation” El Comercio (2012).

If the English language teaching-learning process in Ecuador is observed, it is possible to see the difficulties with the teachers and students have to fight daily. After studying English for twelve years throughout their school program the students do not have a good level of English. Language is one of the principal obstacles for the Ecuadorians wanting to study in other countries and in international business in the future. The study of the different factors that affect the English language teaching-learning process in Ecuador will help us to find the solutions that permit us to improve of the level of students in our country.

In order to help with this process, this literature review took into account the following aspects: teaching approaches and methods, managing of learning, lesson plans, class size, classroom space and seating arrangement, classroom and /or teaching resources, classroom observation, learning styles and language aptitude. Additionally, the results of five previous studies related to the theme will be incorporated.

#### *Teaching Approaches and Methods*

During the class teachers apply different kinds of methods including Communicative Language Teaching. According to Harmer (2007) the focus of this method is to have students communicate real messages, live real experience through

communication and not just practice grammar. Communicative Language Teaching also requires the use of a language in types of communication that involve inviting, agreeing, and disagreeing, suggesting, etc. which students need to use to be able to be proficient in a language. Fluency is given priority along with integration of all language skills.

When the author spoke about another method he mentioned that tasks are the base of Task-Based Learning (TBL). The emphasis is on the Task Based Learning rather than the language. Students have to perform activities related with real-life that require complex use of language. Usually the task is done in groups involving real communication. In this way the language is useful and acquires meaning.

Richards & Rodgers (2001, p 173) complement what Harmer said when they mention that: “a task is an activity or goal that is carried out using language, such as finding a solution of a puzzle, reading a map and giving directions, making a telephone call, writing letters, or reading a set of instructions and assembling a toy”.

Harmer (2007) states that The Audio-lingual Method is centered in oral skills where dialogue and drills have an important role. Frequently, dialogues are used to practice repetition and memorization. The correct pronunciation, stress, rhythm, and intonation are part of the practice and are emphasized. The teaching of listening, comprehension, pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary are always considered as an instrument to develop oral fluency.

He went in more detail about this method when he stated:

Audio-lingualism marries this emphasis on grammatical patterns with behaviorist theories of learning. These theories suggested that much learning is the result of

habit-formation, where performing the correct response to a stimulus means that a reward is given; constant repetition of this reward makes the response automatic. This procedure is referred to as conditioning. (Harmer 2007, p. 49)

The objective of Grammar – translation method is to teach English using short grammar rules and word lists, and then translation exercises where students have to make use of the rules and words given at first. Another aspect is that students translate in their heads and compare foreign language with their mother tongue. This form of teaching English has some limitations due to the fact that constant translation does not give students the opportunity to activate their language knowledge and use the language in effective communication.

Harmer (2007) mentioned that In Presentation, Practice and Production (PPP) the objective is to present a situation and give the students some language teaching that corresponds to the situation and then permit those them to practice with the new language in a controlled way. Later the students are encouraged to use it in a more open way.

Woodward complements what Harmer said when he mentioned that:

In terms of our four basic ways of working, the presentation stage, with its setting up of the situation, is an opening stage in which the teacher makes the new language plain. The practice and production stages are chances for students to use comes up with the target language, then this student is using memory from last

learning encounters and may then be used as the person who makes the target items plain to the other students.

(Woodward 2001, p.126)

### *Managing Learning*

Harmer (2007, p.37) states:

There are two general rules for giving instructions: they must be kept as simple as possible, and they must be logical. Before giving instructions, therefore, teachers must ask themselves the following questions: What is the important information I am trying to convey? What must the students know if they are to complete this activity successfully? What information do they need first? Which should come next?

Additionally Harmer (2007) suggested that whatever activity students have to do including working with the board, a tape recorder or a computer, the teacher needs to give thought to procedures to make the activity successful. The teacher has to know whether they should work in groups, in pairs or as a whole class, whether they have to stay on their desks, move around the class, or move the chairs into different arrangements. The time assigned for each activity has to also be regulated.

To complement what Harmer said, Ur (2002) states that the previous instructions that teachers give to the students before developing an activity during class are very important. When the explanations are done teachers have to check if the students understand the instructions. It is not enough to ask if students understand because students feel usually afraid to say that they do not understand.



Ur (2002, p.17) argue, “It is better to ask them to do something that will show their understanding: to paraphrase in their own words, or provide further illustrations of their own.”

### *Lesson Design*

Woodward (2001) reported that there are several reasons why understanding teachers have to plan a lesson or a course. To have a planned lesson reduces improvisation and the feelings of uncertainty or panic also gives teachers a sense of confidence and clarity. It can generate confidence in students too and a feeling of purpose, progression and coherence. Planning provides balance in the lessons because you consider the content and interaction types. When teachers prepare materials with time, it makes it easier to organize the time and activities. Sometimes it is important for students to participate in the planning, use their ideas and consider the things that they like. Planning can help teachers to develop a personal style where teacher reflects upon the different and particular aspects of a specific group of students and also time and place.

### *Class Size*

Dudley-Evans & Jo St John (2007) state that it is difficult to determine when a class is large; it depends on situation, purpose and experience of the teacher. There are some difficulties that large classes have such as the cost and shortages of paper and duplicating materials, learning names, assessment and feedbacks, etc. Some advantages that we find are that students can consult each other and they can work in pairs or groups.

Small classes can be one-to-one too. It is a real luxury, and here teachers work with just one student and education can be intensive and extensive depending upon students' necessities.

Woodward (2001) mentioned that large classes can present some difficulties. In general they are noisy and the discipline is difficult to control, the space is too small to develop the activities and the teacher is not able to respond to different students' needs. On the other hand small classes offer different challenges and opportunities for students and teachers as instructions are given to a small group and you can adjust to students pace and interest. Instruction is personalized.

#### *Classroom Space and Seating*

Gower, Phillips & Walters (2005) suggested that the position way you organize the positions of the students in your class is of great importance. Where the students sit in classroom can show different things as their attitudes to each other and to the teacher, how they interact, and the types of activity they can do.

Gower, Phillips & Walters (2005, p 29) state:

To consider the value of different seating arrangement, consider the following questions:

How is the relationship between the teacher and the students likely to vary in each case? How will affect the classroom atmosphere?

Which arrangements are the most conducive to the teacher maintaining effective control over the class?

In which situation will the teacher dominate most? What will the teacher's role be in each case?

Which arrangement is most suitable for the students to be able to talk each other?

Which arrangements allow the students to communicate without interference from the teacher?

How will the size of the group affect the arrangement?

What activities might be suitable for each arrangement?

Ur (2002) mentioned in this regard that there were several seating arrangements that teacher can use depending upon the kind of activity that they want to develop. Here are some of them:

Orderly rows are used by teachers when they need to work with the whole class, explain grammar points, watch videos / DVD or power point presentations because they have a clear view of all the students and they can see the teacher. It makes teaching easier.

Circle and horseshoes is used in small classes especially when teachers want to reduce the barriers between the teacher and students. Another advantage is that all students can see each other. The classroom is a more intimate place and students can share feelings and information through talking, eye contact or expressive body movements.

Separate tables are an appropriate seating arrangement when students work with computers or when they are listening to different audio tracks in a jigsaw listening exercise. It is easier for teachers to work at one table while the others continue with their own work.

### *Classroom and / or Teaching Resources*

Gower, Phillips & Walters (2005) state that teaching institutions have different numbers and kinds of resources available for teaching. In some we can find the basics including a chalk or marker board, a tape recorder, worksheets, work cards, etc. Others with more resources have an overhead projector, video equipment, video discs and CD-rooms, internet, photocopier, computers, books, posters, pictures, games, electronic mail, etc.

All these resources help the teacher at the moment of teaching, especially when dealing with big groups.

The board can be used to write permanent or reference material, material for the development of the lesson, impromptu work, notes and reminders. It is very important to clean the board before to starting a class, and to write legibly and neatly.

Visuals can take many forms but the most common are real objects (sometimes called realia) and pictures or photographs. Using visuals has a number of advantages: they often illustrate meaning more directly and quickly than through verbal explanation, these attract student's attention and they add variety and interest to a lesson.

The use of posters, charts, etc. can make the classroom a stimulating and attractive place in which to work.

The books used in a course may comprise a set of materials, student's workbook with material for supplementary classroom and homework, cd's, teacher's book and sometimes video. Using a coursebook has a number of advantages including providing a balanced diet of language work such as grammar, vocabulary,

pronunciation, and work on skills. It gives continuity and progression. It also provides a syllabus which is graded roughly to be at a level suitable for the students.

According to Richards (2002) video is an excellent source of authentic spoken language material; it is also attractive and motivating.

Posters, pictures and games are invaluable material especially for younger learners, and teachers of children, they constantly use them. You can get the material using magazines which are an excellent source of pictures.

Computers are seen as an important teaching aid. They enable individual work since learners can progress at their own pace and they are attractive and motivating for younger and adolescent learners. However, it takes time to train teachers and students in their use.

Overhead projectors are useful for presenting visual or written material to classes: they are vivid and students. The teacher needs to know when and how make it a work, and knowing how to study alone, in pairs or groups. Additional skills involve motivating yourself and improving your own confidence, asking questions, tolerating frustrations and difficulties, improving your memory, clarifying things, developing and organizing your own ideas, evaluating your own progress, learning materials and methods.

### *Language Aptitude*

Harmer (2007) said regarding about language aptitude that there are a variety of factors that can originate a desire to learn. It is possible that the learners really love the subject they have chosen or may have curiosity about it. When we desire something we want to get it and feel motivated. If this desire is strong enough and it can provoke a decision to act.

It is necessary to encourage students to take more responsibility for their own learning because their learning will be more successful. Some students believe that the learning process and their success is the teachers' responsibility but they have to accept that it is both teachers and students.

Woolfolk (2007, p.377) argue:

Self-determination theory suggests that we all need to feel competent and capable in our interactions in the world, to have some choices and a sense of control over our lives, and to be connected to others to belong to a social group.

Woolfolk (2007) said that when students make choices, it is easier for them to believe that work is important and that work is not fun. Thus, they tend to internalize educational goals and make take them their own.

To complement the development of this literature review, it is important consider some research done by different people around the world that can help us to understand the teaching-learning process of English and the factors that affect it.

Aduwa-Ogiegbaen & Iyamu (2006) made a study with the purpose to know if in secondary schools in Nigeria teachers used instructional resources in teaching English language, whether they used appropriate methods in teaching English language frequently and finally to determine if in secondary schools students learn English language in environment conducive to learning.

The principal instruments used for this study were a questionnaire and the observation of classroom and some classroom proceedings during the administration of the questionnaire noting the features or characteristics of the learning environment.

They found that chalkboards, English workbooks, posters, English textbooks and dictionaries were frequently used by teachers, charts were used occasionally and modern media resources such as audio and video tapes, language laboratories, programmed texts, flash cards, computers, magazines and newspaper were rarely used.

Concerning the appropriate use of methods in teaching English, Aduwa-Ogiegbaen and Iyamu concluded that the lecture method and intensive reading of textbooks were the only teaching techniques frequently used in public secondary schools in Nigeria for teaching English language.

Additionally they founded that mean scores and standard deviations for all items on environmental factors showed that secondary school students in Nigeria do not learn the English language in an environment conducive to learning. The students mentioned that their schools are overcrowded, that the furniture was not comfortable for proper sitting and that classrooms are without proper lighting and ventilation. They disagree that their schools have well stocked libraries, adequate chairs and tables, and adequate classrooms.

From this study he concluded that in Nigeria public secondary schools were not offer multiple ways for the teaching and learning English as a second language.

Another study conducted by Essounga-Njan (2010) had as its objective to present the results of data analyses unraveling those strategies instructors may use in the classroom in order to effectively help students learn in a manner to achieve goals set in the course by the students' own admission.

The process used for this study was the application of questionnaires.

The author of this study got some empirical results that showed if the strategies are conducive to effective learning, it is important to help students understand the basic concepts of the course as well as the environment and its impact on the concept to which they are being exposed. It is also necessary to use videos, debates, and case studies to achieve enhanced learning effectiveness and encouraging students to develop critical thinking.

However, he considered that helping the students to acquire mastery of the skills learned, and encouraging them to develop the ability to perform the skill on which the course was focused did not yield any conclusive results.

The study carried out by Ibrahim (2009) had as its purpose to determine the effects of learning styles on education and the teaching processes. This empirical research had two objectives: The first objective was to detect the impacts of the learning styles on teaching and learning methods and the second objective was to evaluate the key models in a variety of learning environments to better understand their merits and deficiencies. This study examined the conceptual and applied research that can explain the effects of learning styles on teaching and learning processes.

The author says that there are many studies about learning styles and that it is important that teachers and students can benefit from these. Teacher candidates have to be educated with consciousness of the importance of learning styles and students have to think wisely and be helped by teachers to apply their knowledge. They have to be critical and creative in learning how to learn.

Ibrahim (2009, p.92) concluded that:



To increase the efficiency of learning styles in the learning process, firstly, it may be beneficial to explain with illustrations how students benefit from learning styles. In addition, methods, techniques and materials that take the learning styles of students into consideration can be used by the teachers. Teachers can also guide the parents in providing learning conditions suitable for the students' learning styles.

Xiufag (2009, p.ii) states about their study:

This study investigated the process of tertiary English language teaching and learning as experienced by teachers of English as a foreign language (EFL) and English as a second language (ESL) and their Chinese EFL and ESL students in the two contexts: China and New Zealand. It explored classroom practice in terms of six key perspectives: instructional approaches, language pedagogy, use of textbooks, student modalities, error correction and classroom tasks by means of questionnaires, the Adapted Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching (COLT) Observation Scheme, stimulated recall interviews (SRIs) and interviews.

He based his study on qualitative paradigm of inquiry. Therefore, he used a qualitative research methodology and qualitative data collection techniques that

included stimulated recall interviews and group and individual interview, and then data were analyzed by a process of content analysis.

From this study he concluded that teaching methodology in Chinese EFL context is teacher-centered and textbook-oriented, that forms-focused instruction is used and is focused on language points, like grammar, vocabulary, sentence structure and so on. This study also shows that ELT in the Chinese EFL context does not embrace CLT in the way that many “absolutist” Chinese scholars expect.

He found out that New Zealand ESL were more teacher-centered than he expected. The data in this study indicated that all the teacher and student participants paid attention to both the accuracy and fluency of students’ speech in the language classroom. Teachers used textbooks but they not adhere closely to the textbook. Instead, they used it creatively and flexibly as a reference to support her teaching plans so as to develop their students’ English communicative competence. This study revealed that all the ESL and EFL teacher and student participants believed that group work plays an important role and well-designed tasks could enable students to develop their language communicative competence. They believed that most classroom tasks conducted in the classroom of the New Zealand were interesting, vivid, novel, which were helpful to Chinese ESL students’ language learning by means of making knowledge easier to remember, impressing students deeply and allowing full rein to their imagination.

Hiew (2012) had the following objectives in mind when make this study:  
To gather learners’ experience and views pertaining to issues on English language learning problems in secondary school, college or university, to gather learners’ views on English language teaching and learning in secondary school, college and

university and to gather learners' suggestions on ways to enhance English language learning and teaching.

He used a qualitative method to conduct the research by utilizing analysis of journal entries written by 46 private and public college and university students. A purposive sampling was used to select the 46 respondents who were former students of public secondary school in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah.

He concluded that learner's perceptions toward the teaching and learning process of English should be taken and reviewed seriously as it is a two-way process involving teachers and learners. Teachers should take the initiative to ensure their teaching plans are effective and involve all kind of teaching methods to be sure that consider a majority of the student's learning styles and preferences.

Hiew said that an empathetic teacher could motivate reluctant students to explore their maximum potential through consistent encouragement and self-assurance.

## Description, Analysis, and Interpretation of Results

The quantitative and qualitative analysis have been used to describe, analyze and interpret the results obtained through the surveys conducted with the teachers and students of the five private high schools studied in this research. The results have been presented in graphs to show the results more clearly.

Factors concerning the teachers, students, classrooms and educational institutions had been considered inside this analysis.

The teachers' questionnaire consisted of 20 questions related to the level of teachers' education, level of their students, methods used during the classes, number of students per class, lessons plans, kind of activities, class size, seating arrangements, teaching resources, review and monitor by part of the institution.

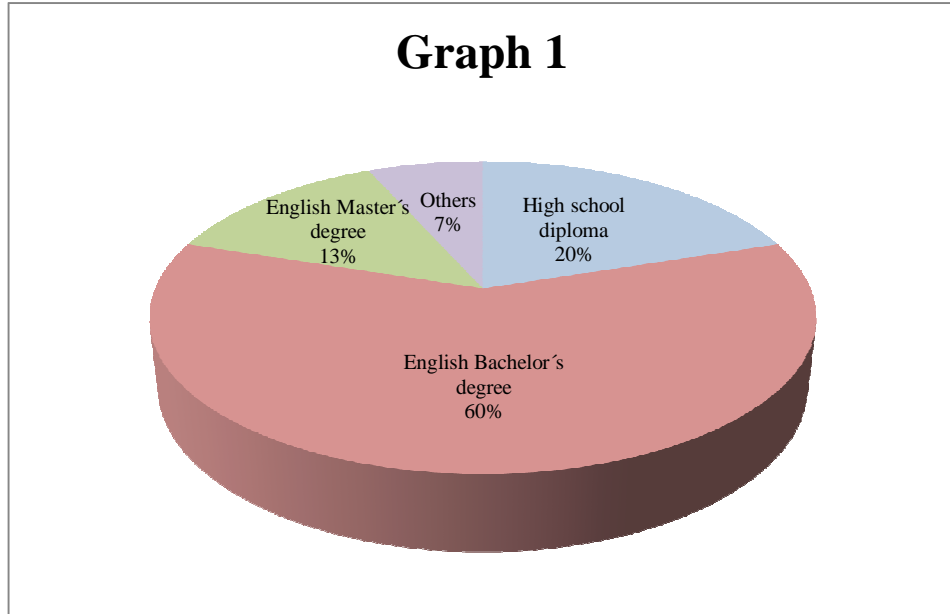
The students' questionnaire contain 14 questions about students preferences, kind of activities developed during the classes, teaching methods, class size, number of classmates, seating arrangements, teaching resources available in the classroom, feedback, discipline, clarity in the instructions and use of the language by part of the teachers.

The observation sheet has 11 questions and it was the instrument used to record the collected information. It allows for evaluation if teachers consider needs and level of the students, methods applied, kind of activities, aspect of the lesson plan, discipline, feedback, activities management, time management, number of students, space, seating arrangement, resources and percentage of English used by the teachers during the class.

*Quantitative Analysis*

*Factors Concerning Teachers*

*Which level of education do teachers have?*



Author: Subia Alexandra

Source: Private high schools in Quito, Lasso and Latacunga

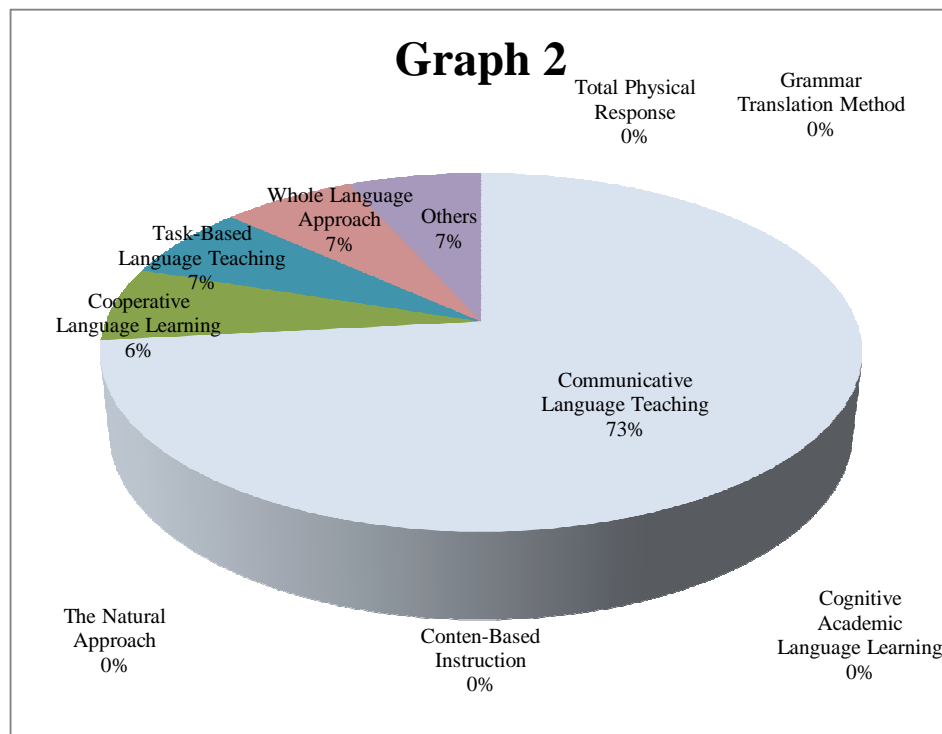
This graph shows that 60% of teachers have an English Bachelor's Degree, 20% a High School diploma and just 13% have an English Master's Degree. There is another 7% of teachers in different conditions, such as being in process to get one of these degrees, or having other kind of degrees.

One institution has a teacher who lived in a foreign country during a period of time and he knew the language and was actually teaching. Three teachers are foreigners living, helping and teaching English in our country.

Most of teachers have been teaching for years and their experience is evident while other teachers need to receive psychology, pedagogy and teaching techniques courses. It was possible to observe that they could neither manage the classes nor

control the discipline, students did not show any interest and the learning process is not the adequate. Language knowledge alone does not guarantee that a person can be a teacher.

*Which of the following methods were used in the observed classes?*



Author: Subia Alexandra

Source: Private high schools in Quito, Lasso and Latacunga

Communicative Language Teaching is the most widely used method with 73% of the total. Whole Language Approach and Task-Based Language Teaching are used by a 7% of the teachers and finally The Cooperative Language Learning is applied by the 6% of the teachers surveyed. The other methods, Total Physical Response, Content-Based Instruction, Cognitive Academic Language Learning, The Natural Approach, and Grammar Translation Method were not used by teachers. For some teachers these methods are unknown.

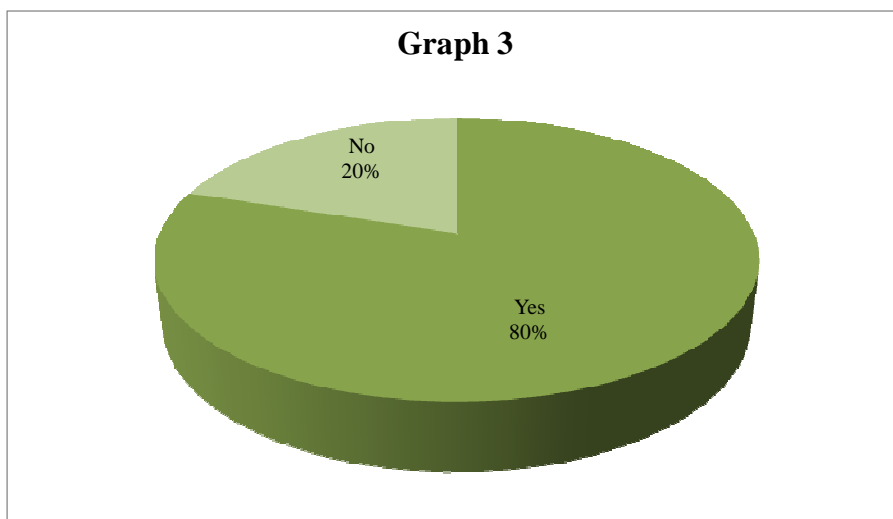
During the observation process was possible to see that the use of Communicative Language Teaching allows greater interaction between teachers and students. Communication is the principal goal and most students participate during the class, exchanging ideas, stories, experiences and knowledge.

Teachers seek to integrate all language skills through different kinds of exercises and individual and group activities.

Other methods as Task-Based Language Teaching, Cooperative Language Learning and Whole Language Learning are used by teachers in different activities during the class but with lower frequency.

Methods as Total Physical Response, Grammar Translation Method, The Natural Approach, Content-Based Instruction and Cognitive Academic Language Learning are not used by teachers.

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

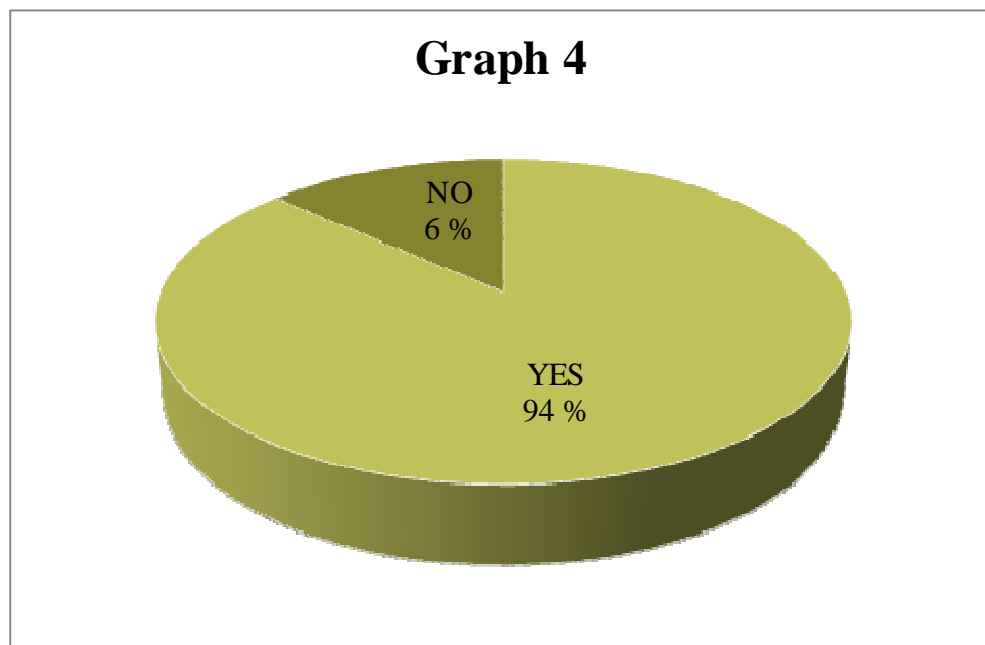


Author: Subia Alexandra

Source: Private high schools in Quito, Lasso and Latacunga

Eighty percent of teachers use whole group activities. The use of these activities depends on the theme of the class, which permits that students can interact and practice vocabulary. It may help the students to work in groups and share ideas, generating skills that allow students progress in learning, helping teachers to develop their class to obtain the best results from acceptance and reception of language. The other 20% prefer not to use whole group activities because students do not work and start to speak in Spanish. The result is that part of the class not being included and does produce the expected progress in learning.

*Do teachers use individual activities to teach their lessons?*



Author: Subia Alexandra

Source: Private high schools in Quito, Lasso and Latacunga

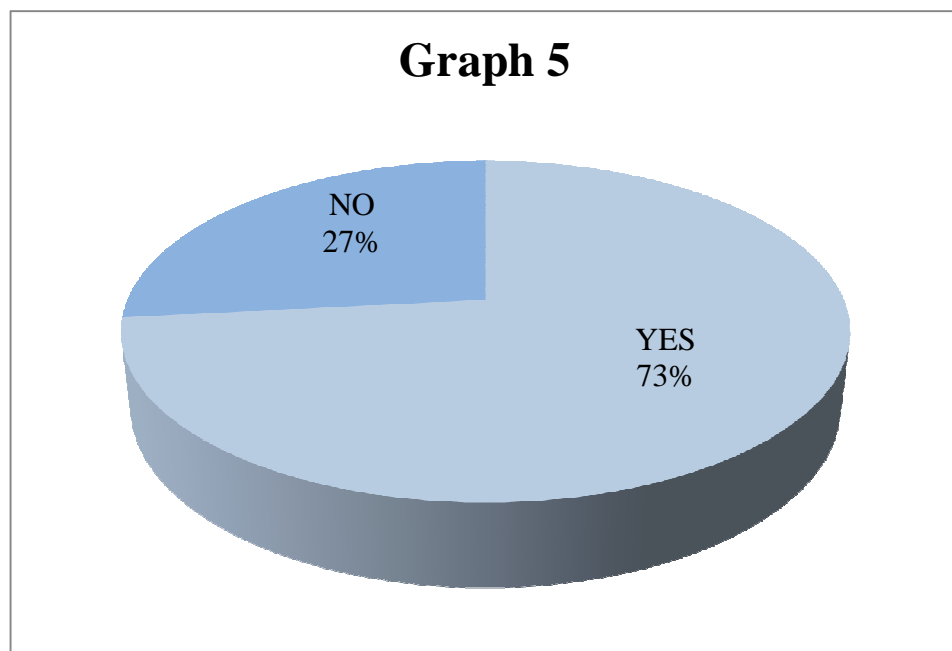
Ninety four percent of the teachers answered yes to this question. Individual activities reinforce the learning of advanced students and help to improve the learning of ones with a more basic level. There are students who need special and personalized attention and individual activities give teacher the opportunity to devote



more time to these students, helping them to think by themselves, improving their concentration and learning. This type of activity also allows teachers to evaluate the performance and learning of their students in a way that is more direct and effective.

Just 6 % do not use individual activities during their classes. The teachers prefer group and whole group activities. The daily lessons are short and it is better to explain the exercise to the whole group of students and then the teachers can help the students who need extra assistance

*Do teachers use group work activities to teach their lessons?*



Author: Subia Alexandra

Source: Private high schools in Quito, Lasso and Latacunga

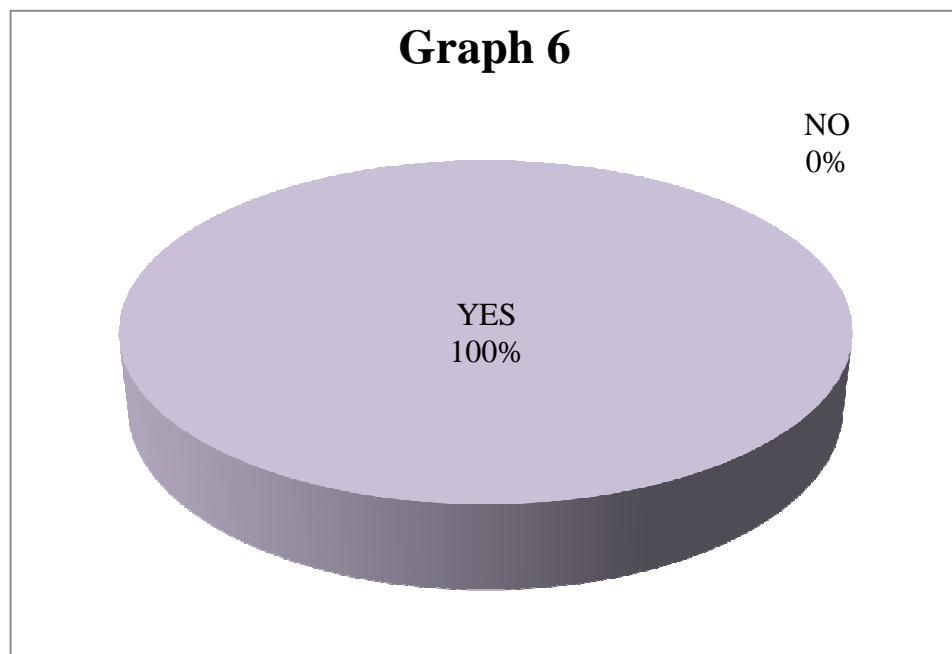
Seventy three percent of teachers answered yes, since this type of activity provides keeping the interaction in the learning process and promoting the constructivism, encourages team work and cooperation among students making class more fun and more interesting. Students feel comfortable when they can work

together and they can choose their peers to development pairs or groups activities planned by teachers.

Twenty seven percent of teachers do not use group work activities because they consider that the classroom is too small and they prefer individual activities.

Through the observations in schools it was possible verify that classroom physical space is a constraint to the development of this type of activity. Lack of space prevents teachers from organizing their students and the classroom to facilitate learning in a comfortable and an interesting environment.

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



Author: Subia Alexandra

Source: Private high schools in Quito, Lasso and Latacunga

One hundred percent of teachers said that they use English the majority of the time when they are teaching.

It is really important that teachers speak in English during the classes because the students have very few opportunities to use the language and they have to take

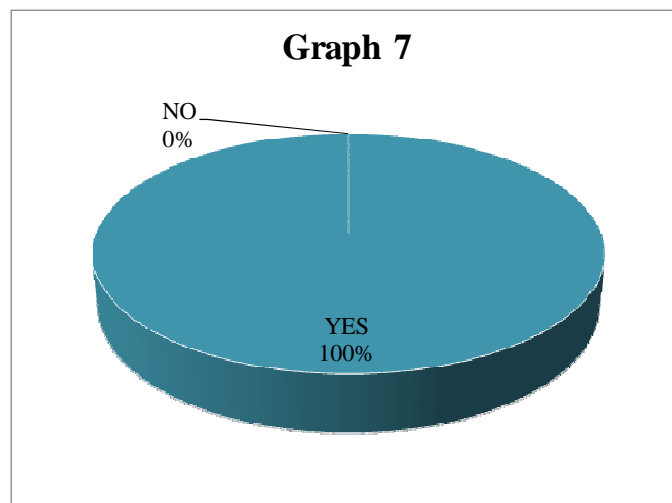
advantage of the class hour. In this way students can practice speaking and listening and they can be in contact with the English language for more time.

One of the problems, that the students in Ecuador have, is the minimal interaction with native English speakers and the few occasions when they can practice in real situations to awaken their interest in learning and so they can feel the necessity and usefulness of the English language.

During class observation it was possible to see that teachers try to speak in English most of the class time. Students are encouraged to ask and answer in English using the vocabulary that they know. However, the students had serious problems speaking in English. They used Spanish to ask questions and give answers, and it was evident that they did not have good English language skills.

It is necessary to understand that most communication in real life is oral. Pronunciation of English is not regular like pronunciation of Spanish. Many teachers who may read and write English may not have good oral English.

*Do teachers plan their lessons?*



Author: Subia Alexandra

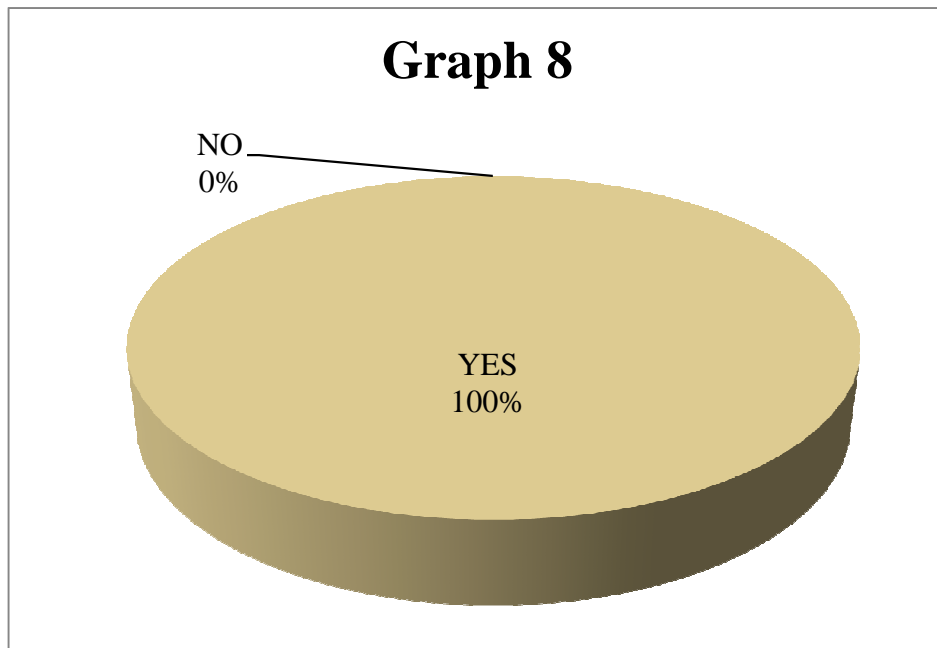
Source: Private high schools in Quito, Lasso and Latacunga

One hundred of teachers said that they plan their lessons.

This activity helps them to be organized, to follow the sequence of the topic, reach the goals, review contents, avoid improvisation and better manage the time.

During the observations it was possible to see that some high school teachers used a coursebook for their classes which they developed along with the students throughout the school year. This facilitates language learning and helps them in the development of the tasks. Teachers use material and additional activities prepared for them to reinforce the subject planned for individual class periods. However, it was not possible to confirm if teachers follow any specific plan or order.

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



Author: Subia Alexandra

Source: Private high schools in Quito, Lasso and Latacunga

These aspects are considered by 100% of teachers to teach their lessons. They believe that to have the control of the class permits them to teach better. They

consider these aspects as part of the teacher's responsibility and it gives the opportunity to work in an orderly way and reinforce student's knowledge.

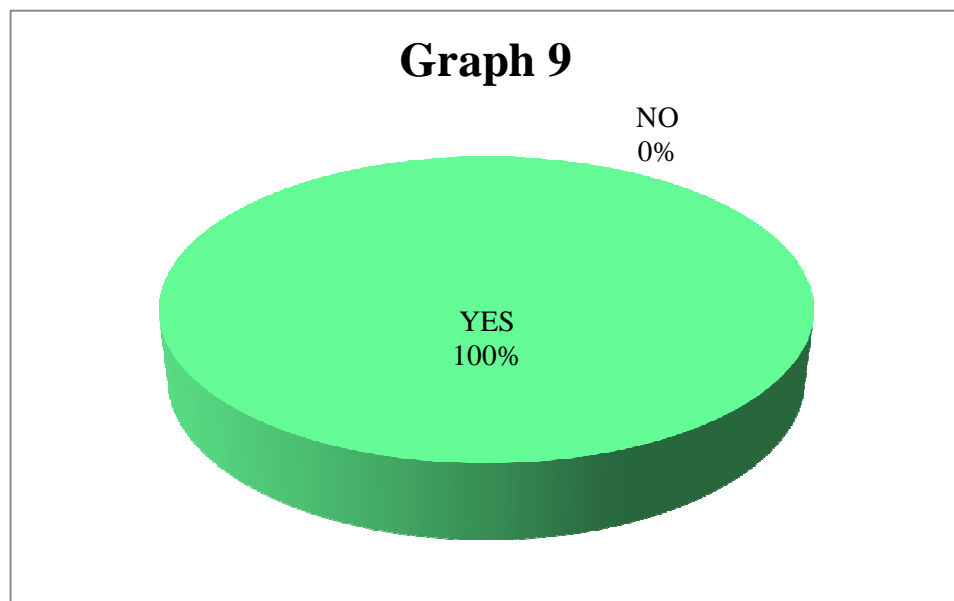
However, during the observation it was possible to see that in some cases teachers due to the lack of training and experience could not control the discipline, since students paid no attention to the teacher. In those cases the class may have not reached the objectives that were envisaged in the planning.

In some institutions the number of students per class is very big and it does not permit providing adequate feedback, since the teacher does not have sufficient time to meet the learning needs of each student.

#### *Factors Concerning Students*

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

*Students' Needs (age, personality, attitude, aptitude, motivation and learning styles)*



Author: Subia Alexandra

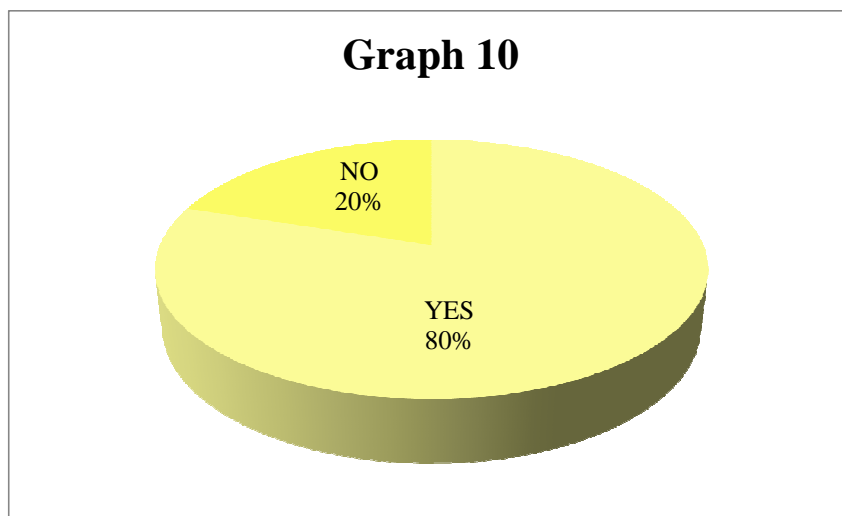
Source: Private high schools in Quito, Lasso and Latacunga

All teachers answered with “Yes” to this question which is equivalent to 100% of the responses. It is necessary to consider students’ needs because these needs affect the teaching-learning process. Each student is different and it is very important to consider these differences. Teachers have to motivate students every day to succeed. A motivated student learns more and faster and when teachers know students it is easier to work with them.

The textbooks used in all institutions that were the subject of this study, contain well prepared and planned lessons, where factors such as age, personality, learning styles and interests of the students are taken into account. This greatly facilitates language teaching.

*Do teachers consider student’s level to teach English successfully?*

*Student’s level (Basic, Intermediate, High Intermediate, and Advanced)*



Author: Subia Alexandra

Source: Private high schools in Quito, Lasso and Latacunga

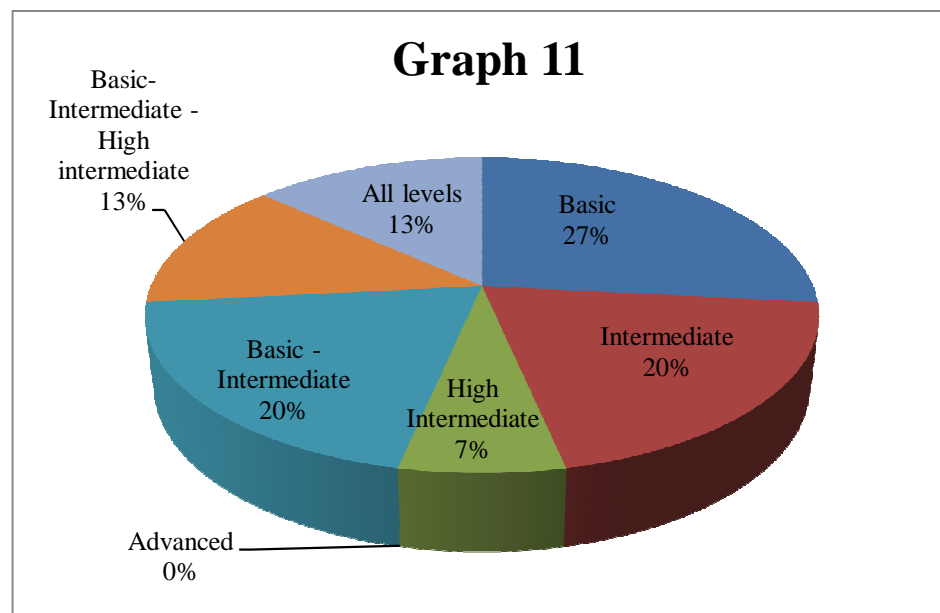
Eighty percent of teachers consider student’s level to be able to teach English successfully. The use of different methods to teach depends on student’s English

knowledge. It is necessary to integrate all students in spite of the fact that most of the classes are multi-level. Students with low level English require more attention. It is important to use classroom language according to that since not everyone has the same skills. The level is relevant to adapting the content too.

The difference with the student's level is higher in the students that come from other institutions. These differences generate learning delays in more advanced students because the teacher must devote more time to these students.

According to the survey 20% of teachers do not consider the level of knowledge of students important for the success of the teaching of the language because they consider that in any level they have to adapt the knowledge.

*Which is the level of the students?*



Author: Subia Alexandra

Source: Private high schools in Quito, Lasso and Latacunga

Most of the classes are multi-level. We can see in the graph that 27% are in Basic Level, 20% in Intermediate Level, 7% have a High Intermediate Level. There

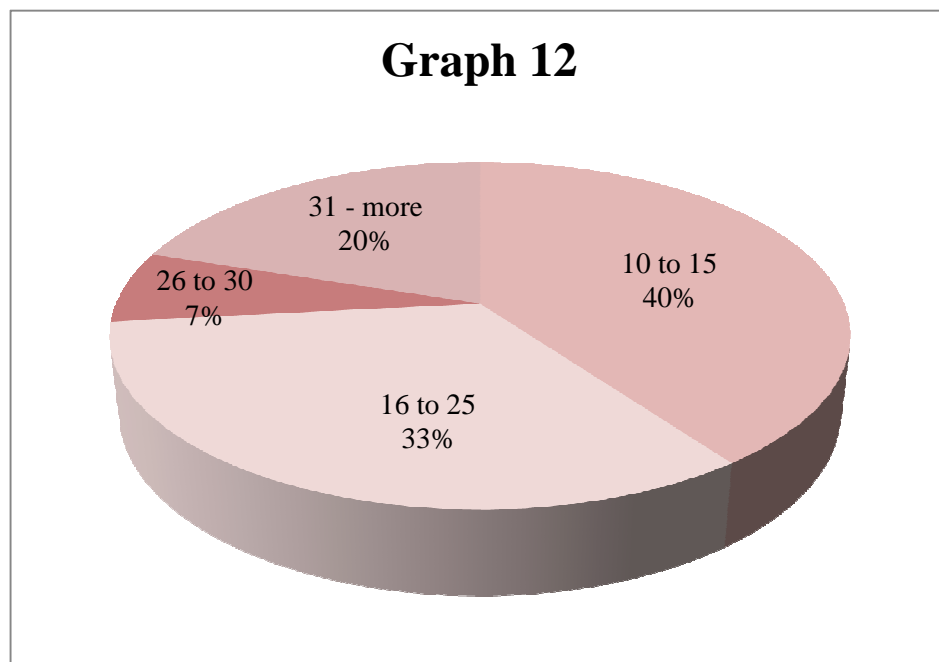
are 20% of classes with students in Basic and Intermediate Levels and another 13% with students in three different levels; Basic, Intermediate and High Intermediate. Finally 13% have students in four different levels: Basic, Intermediate, High intermediate and Advanced.

Teachers are concerned about multi-levels because it is a big problem that is common in their high schools as shown in this graphic.

The difference in the levels found are due to several factors as the excessive number of students in the classes, the education level of teachers, poor placement strategies, passing studies from one grade to the next who have not mastered the needed skills, etc.

#### *Factors Concerning Classroom*

*How many students do teachers have in their class?*



Author: Subia Alexandra

Source: Private high schools in Quito, Lasso and Latacunga



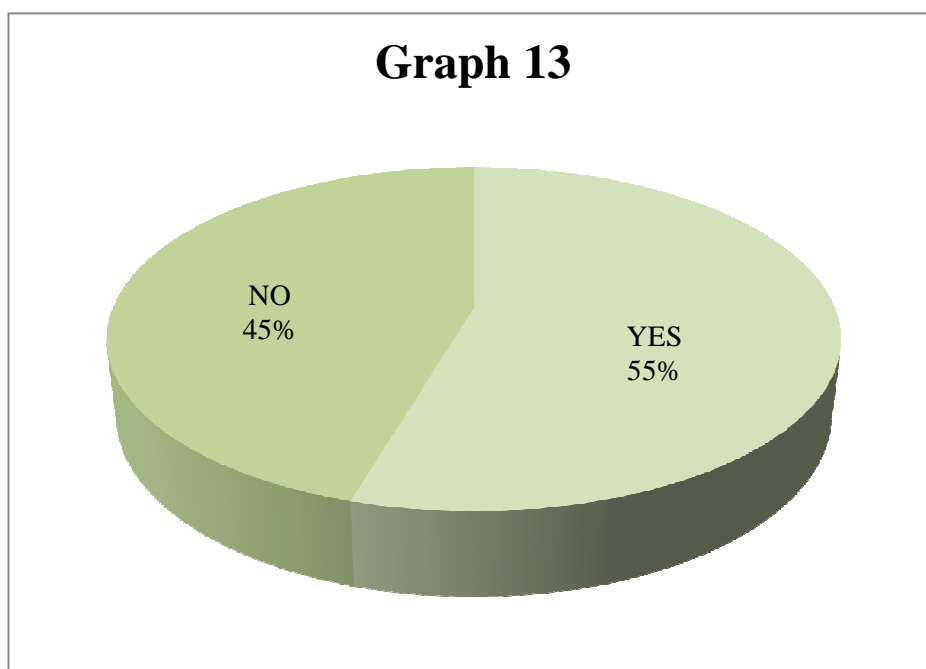
The graph shows that 40% of the classes have between 10 and 15 students, 33% have 16 to 25 students, 7% have 26 to 30 students and 20% have more than 31 students per class.

There are high schools with big student's groups. These institutions have large classrooms, good visual resources and language laboratories.

Other institutions do not have enough space and the visual resources are limited.

Some institutions have small student groups in each grade and when they have to receive English classes by joining two or three grades for one class and it is extremely difficult to teach students with different knowledge level.

*Do teachers feel comfortable working with this number of students?*



Author: Subia Alexandra

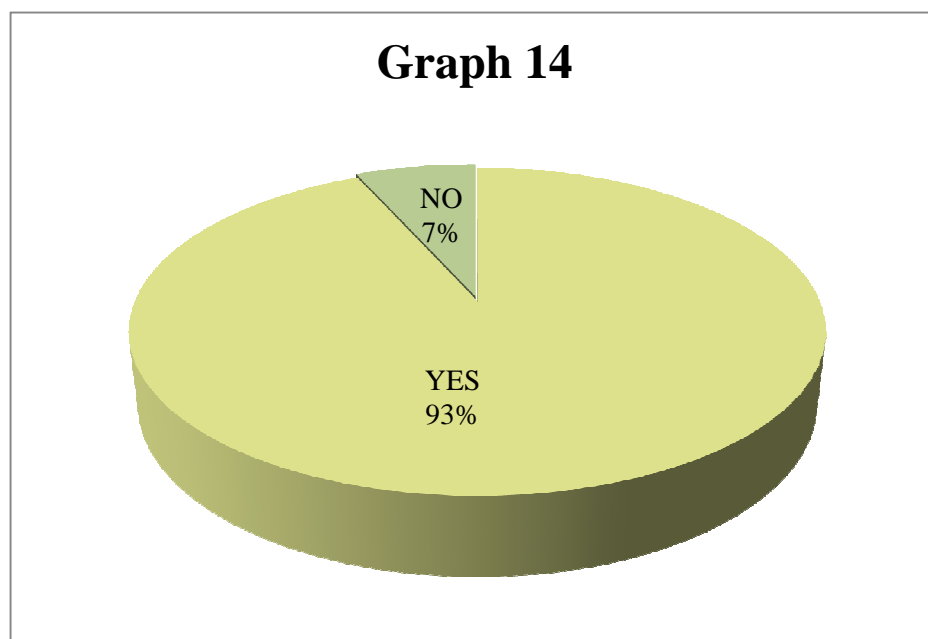
Source: Private high schools in Quito, Lasso and Latacunga

Fifty five percent of teachers feel comfortable with the number of students that they have in their classes. These teachers have between 10 and 25 students in class. Small groups are more manageable and easier to teach and permit teachers to

work individually with everyone, especially with students that have lower levels of knowledge of the language. Students can also participate more frequently during the class.

The other 45% do not feel comfortable because they have to work with very small groups and they can not make a big variety of activities. On the other hand, other teachers have very big groups and they can not personalize the teaching.

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



Author: Subia Alexandra

Source: Private high schools in Quito, Lasso and Latacunga

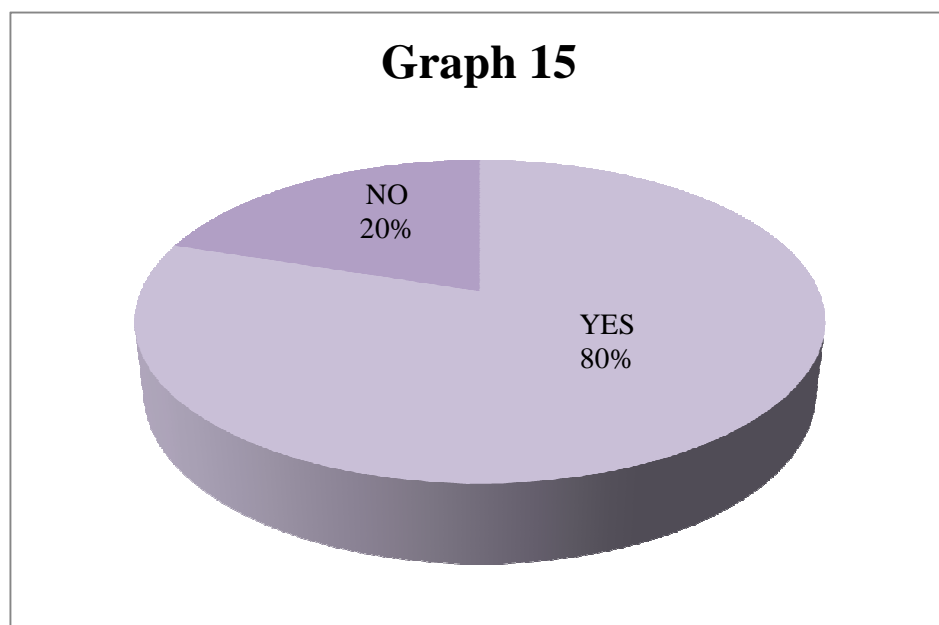
This graph shows that 93% of the teachers have enough space to work with their students and 7% have problems with space in their high schools.

Teachers said that they have big classrooms where they can develop different kind of activities especially group activities. Students feel comfortable and work better. The classrooms are well equipped with good illumination, sufficient number of desks and materials for all students.

However during the observation was possible to see high schools with classrooms poorly ventilated and illuminated, with narrow corridors where student's belongings are on the floor and it is difficult to walk. There are classrooms where it is possible to listen to the teacher and students of a nearby classroom.

These are some problems that teachers and students have to face daily.

*Do teachers arrange student's seats in relation to the activities planned for their classes?*



Author: Subia Alexandra

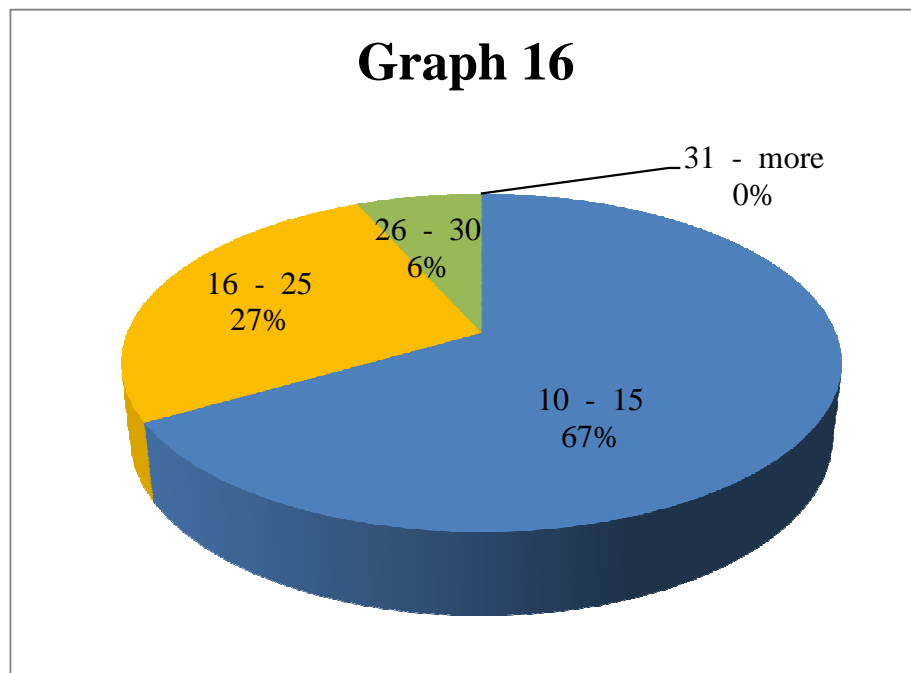
Source: Private high schools in Quito, Lasso and Latacunga

Eighty percent of teachers control the seating arrangement when they do different kinds of activities. Twenty percent do not have too much possibilities of arranging the seats, especially because the classrooms are small.

The teachers used orderly rows, circle and horseshoes, separate tables seating arrangements, depending upon the kind of activity that they had planned. During the observation when teacher changed the order of the seats, it took too much time and

the time available was very short. Usually teachers do not change seating arrangement for this reason.

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

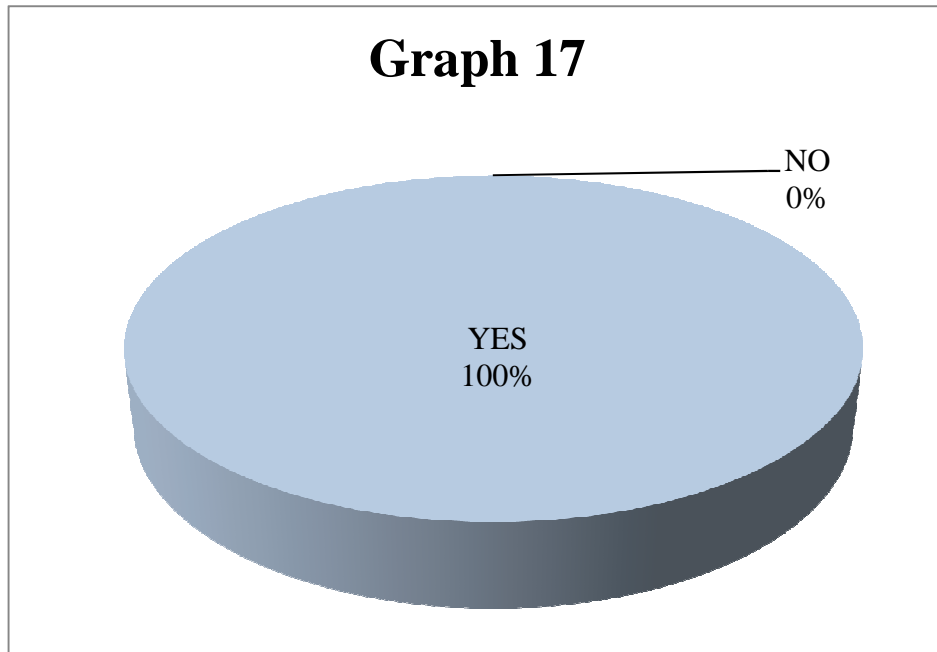


Author: Subia Alexandra

Source: Private high schools in Quito, Lasso and Latacunga

The appropriate number of students to teach English is very important if teachers want to get the best results. Sixty seven percent of teachers think that the correct number of students in a class is between 10 and 15. It permits more interaction, teachers can control discipline, the time and give instructions and assess the students. Other teachers consider that the best number of students is 16 to 25 because students can talk between themselves. The last 6 % consider the correct number between 26 to 30 students because they can do a big variety of activities.

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



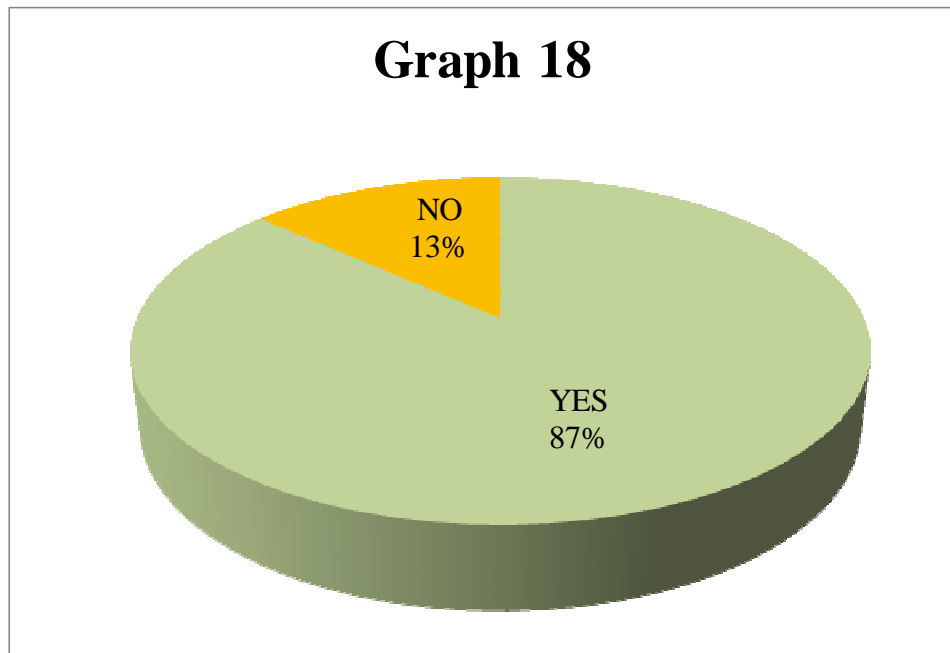
Author: Subia Alexandra

Source: Private high schools in Quito, Lasso and Latacunga

Different kinds of resources as computers, worksheets, projectors, DVDs, TVs, tapes, supplementary materials, CD recorders and Internet are used by the teachers to impart their lessons. Each resource is used according to the kind of activity that the teachers have programmed for the day.

Some institutions have language laboratories but they are not used with the regularity that they should be. The technology that laboratories have and all visual and hearing aids that they can give are not well used. Some teachers mentioned that they do not use the laboratory because they need too much time to mobilize students to the laboratory and because they have difficulties in using the computers.

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



Author: Subia Alexandra

Source: Private high schools in Quito, Lasso and Latacunga

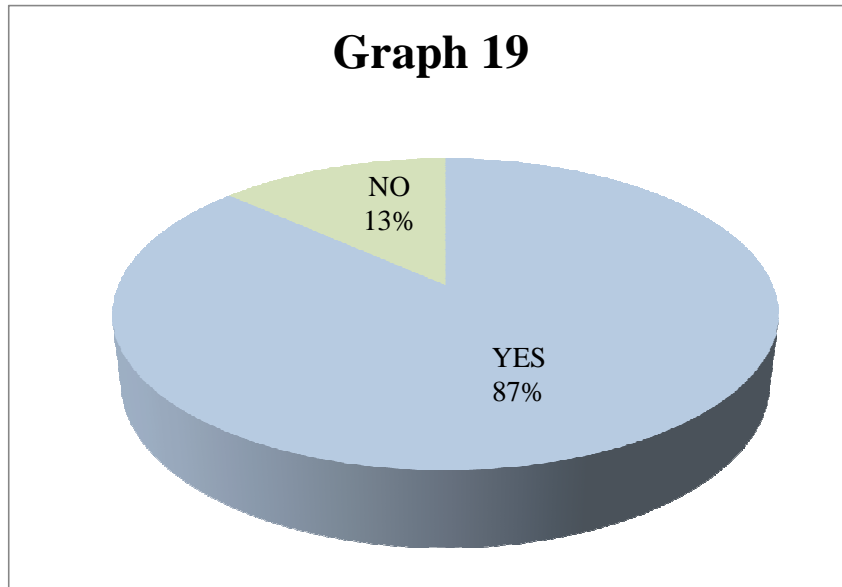
Eighty seven percent of teachers consider the resources they have in class to be appropriate. These teachers have language laboratories in their high school and use many resources for their classes. There are 13% of teachers that have only the basic resources and need to be more ingenious to take advantage of what they have.

All high schools observed during this study have resources as blackboard, excellent text books, a tape / cd recorder and supplementary materials. Some institutions are really very well equipped with projectors in each classroom, smart boards, computers and Internet. They have textbooks with additional visual and audio materials that help teachers in the teaching process.

It was possible to observe that some of these resources are not used by teachers during the classes with the frequency that they should be.

*Factors Concerning Educational Institution*

*Do the institution review teacher's lesson plans?*



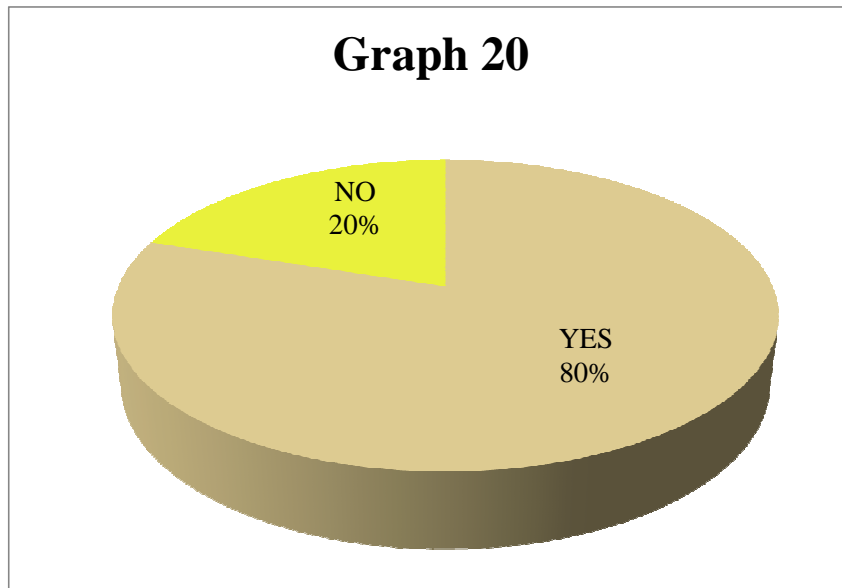
Author: Subia Alexandra

Source: Private high schools in Quito, Lasso and Latacunga

The graph shows that 87 % of the institutions review the teacher's plans and 13% do not review teacher's lessons plan. According to the questionnaires, in most of the institutions plans are reviewed once a month.

During this research it was possible to observe very well organized institutions, where the authorities control and monitor teachers teaching through the English Area Directors. They meet frequently to know the lesson plans progress and to give solutions to the problems that they have with their teaching activities.

*Do the institutions monitor teachers teaching?*



Author: Subia Alexandra

Source: Private high schools in Quito, Lasso and Latacunga

Eighty percent of the institutions review teacher's teaching and the other 20% do not review teacher's teaching. In most of the institutions this review is done once a month but in other it is done at the beginning of trimester and finally in some institutions there is no supervision.

During the research was not possible to see if the institutions monitored teaching. Teachers mentioned that there are English Area Teachers meetings to review the problems that they are having during their classes. In any institution teachers are observed by other teachers or supervisors to provide a feedback on teaching as well to identify possible problems.



## Conclusions

- The present research demonstrates that not all the teachers have English Bachelor's Degree or a superior degree. It is important that all teachers have at least this degree to teach English in Ecuadorian high schools.
- This research suggests that motivation is one of the factors that influence more significantly in the teaching process. Teachers have to work hard to keep student's motivation at a high level.
- Another of the important factor that influence in learning process is the few opportunities that students have to apply and practice the English language in real situations. Under these circumstances students do not feel the necessity or utility of learn this new language. They are not motivated and the learning process is slow and hard for them.
- The classrooms have students with different needs, interests, levels of knowledge and abilities; and different cognitive, affective and emotional levels. These classes with mixed-abilities cause a great difficulty for the teachers who have to teach them and even more so when the teachers do not have the necessary abilities and experience to work with them.
- There are classes that have a high number of students. This makes the control of discipline difficult for the teacher. Giving instructions to the students is complicated and in any case the education is personalized. In other institutions the number of students per level is so low that is necessary to unite in one class students of different levels having a multi-level class where teaching is difficult and even more so when the teachers do not have the necessary experience.

## Recommendations

- It is important to continue deepening the study of the factors related with students, teachers, classrooms and educational institutions, to know more about the reasons that affect learning process.
- It is urgent to train teachers. They need to have their English Bachelor's Degree and to receive psychology, pedagogy and teaching techniques courses before starting to work with students.
- It is important to promote Ecuadorian teachers exchange with teachers of English speaking countries to improve English language skills.
- It is necessary to have more control by part of the authorities because there are institutions where the level of education and experience of the teachers to teach and work with young people are not the appropriate.
- It is recommended more control on the part of the institution to the teachers, checking constantly the lesson plans, monitoring the classes and the use of the resources.
- It is imperative to create real situations where students can use the new language that they are learning. Internet interaction is a good alternative to learn English language.
- It is necessary to reduce the number of students per classroom.

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ANNEXES

Annex No.1



UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA PARTICULAR DE LOJA

*La Universidad Católica de Loja*

MODALIDA ABIERTA Y A DISTANCIA

CARRERA DE INGLES

TEACHER'S QUESTIONNAIRE

<b>EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION:</b>	
<b>DATE:</b>	
<b>YEAR:</b>	

**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?**

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

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

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

**4. Which is the level of your students?**

<b>*Students' Level</b>			
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 ( )
Why? _____	

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

YES ( )	NO ( )
Why? _____	

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

--	--	--	--

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

YES ( )	NO ( )
Why? _____	

**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 ( )
Why? _____	

**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 ( )
Why? - _____			

**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 _____

Annex No. 2



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

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION:	
DATE:	
YEAR:	

**21. ¿Te gusta aprender inglés?**

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

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

SI ( )	NO ( )
¿Por qué? _____	

**23. Consideras que las actividades realizadas en clase son:**

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

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

SI ( )	NO ( )
¿Por qué? _____	

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SI ( )	NO ( )
¿Por qué? _____	

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

SI ( )	NO ( )
¿Por qué? _____	

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

SI ( )	NO ( )

**34. ¿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**  
**OBSERVATION SHEET**

<b>EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION:</b>	
<b>DATE:</b>	
<b>YEAR</b> (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)**

<b>*Students' Level</b>			
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	( )
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**8. Do students have enough space to move and participate in dynamic activities?**

YES	( )	NO	( )
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**9. Is the seating arrangement appropriate for the teaching-learning process?**

YES	( )	NO	( )
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NOTES:

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

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

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

25 %	( )	50 %	( )	75 %	( )	100 %	( )
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### TEACHER'S INTERVIEW

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

<b>TEACHER'S LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY:</b>											
C2	( )	C1	( )	B2	( )	B1	( )	A2	( )	A1	( )