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MENCIÓN INGLÉS

**"Academic Factors that Hinder the Use of Grammar for  
Communicative Purposes in Second Year Students of Public  
High schools in Loja"**

TRABAJO DE TITULACION

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## **DEDICATION**

First of all, I have to thank God for his blessings and because allowed me reach one more goal in my life. Second, this thesis is dedicated; especially to my mother who is not with me, but from heaven guided me.

Doris Elizabeth Sosoranga Gualan

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## ABSTRACT

The topic of this study focuses on the Academic Factors that hinder the Use of Grammar for Communicative Purposes in Second Year Students of Public High Schools in Loja by considering the importance of developing communicative competences. The current study attempts to identify the methodological aspects which influence the use of grammar for communicative purposes. For the purposes of this study, the current research was carried out in three public high schools in Loja; the samples selected included six English teachers and thirty male and female students. In order to undertake this research, it was necessary to carry out a literature review, and field research. It was therefore necessary to apply questionnaires to both teachers and students; as well as observing some classes.

In order to analyze the results obtained from the data gathered, both quantitative and qualitative methods of research were used. Through this analysis, it was possible to determine that the factors affecting the use of grammar for communicative purpose are the inadequate application of methods, strategies and activities in the teaching-learning process.

**Keywords:** EFL class, grammar, communicative competence, methods, strategies, activities.



## RESUMEN

Este estudio se enfoca en los factores académicos que dificulta el uso de la gramática para propósitos comunicativos en los estudiantes del segundo año de bachillerato de colegios públicos en Loja. Teniendo en cuenta la importancia del desarrollo de las competencias comunicativas, el presente estudio pretende identificar los aspectos metodológicos que influyen en el uso de la gramática para propósitos comunicativos. En este contexto, la presente investigación se llevó a cabo en tres colegios públicos de Loja. La muestra seleccionada fue seis profesores de inglés y treinta estudiantes entre hombres y mujeres. Por otra parte, para cumplir con la presente investigación, el presente trabajo realizó una investigación bibliográfica y una investigación de campo. Para la cual fue necesario la aplicación de cuestionarios a profesores y estudiantes a más de la observación de algunas las clases.

Finalmente, es importante mencionar que para el análisis de los resultados se utilizaron los métodos cuantitativo y cualitativo, los cuales hicieron posible determinar que los factores que afectan el uso de la gramática para el propósito comunicativo son: la inadecuada aplicación de métodos, estrategias y actividades en el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje.

**Palabras clave:** clases de inglés, gramática, competencias comunicativas, métodos, estrategias, actividades.

## INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, the English language is the international language used to communicate in many fields of: education, technology, business, and politics, among others. The acquisition of the English language allows people to gain better opportunities to improve their personal and academic knowledge; therefore, learning English in many countries around the world has become a major necessity.

However, the learning of English in Ecuador has not achieved the results expected by the current government. In fact, the majority of students who have finished secondary education have still not attained the basic academic purpose of developing communicative competence through the use of the four language skills. Despite the fact that learners attend English classes during the six years they attend school, they are not able to effectively communicate in real life situations. Consequently, it is important to consider the teaching methodologies currently in use, in order to attest if grammar is being taught in a structural form instead of being taught in a communicative form. Therefore, the government of Ecuador is attempting to make the teaching and learning of English in its schools more effective.

Considering that students do not use grammar for communicative purposes even though it is becoming more and more a necessity, the present research attempts to determine the “Academic factors that hinder the use of grammar for communicative purposes in second year students of public high schools in Loja”. The current study has as its main objective: to determine the effectiveness of teaching strategies, grammar activities, and teaching methods used by teachers to help students improve their communicative skills.

One previous investigation related to this research was carried out by Cordero and Pizarro (2012), their research was focused on the teaching of grammar and the implementation of communicative Language teaching as a tool to develop communicative skills. The purpose of this study was to help English teachers to improve their grammar lessons through an interactive and creative, classroom environment, as well as the use of the Communicative approach, which includes activities such as sitting students in circle to discuss, read a paragraph and ask questions, also write open and close questions, and description of pictures were used. The study was undertaken at Escuela de Literatura y Ciencias del Lenguaje at Universidad Nacional, in Costa Rica. The authors of this study discovered that some of the methods and activities used by teachers to develop communicative competences were not appropriate methods by which to increase communicative skills; as the development of communicative competences does depends not just on the type of method and activities used, but also on the teacher's ability to combine different methods and strategies in the process of teaching English.

Another study carried out by Boukhzar (2015), focused on the combination of both perspectives, namely focus-on-form instruction, in order to cater for the weaknesses of each approach of teaching communicative grammar. The objective of this research was to combine two teaching approaches "focus- on- form" and "meaning focused instruction" in order to develop communicative abilities on students. It was discovered that the successful implementation of "form-focused instruction" to "meaning-focused instruction" helped English students improve their communicative skills because the Focus on Form instruction yields many beneficial outcomes such as increasing the student's knowledge as well as the ability to encourage communicative skills in contexts of daily life situations.

An additional study carried out by Tanani (2011), had as its main objective, the investigation of the use of existing grammar teaching techniques in order to suggest a practical framework of effective and appropriate techniques for teaching grammar communicatively. The traditional practice of teaching grammar dominates the classrooms and this situation has negative effects on language learning. To counteract this, the researcher provides some grammar lesson plans in English, in order to measure the effectiveness and benefit of the suggested framework as well as the use of communicative approach in the teaching communicative grammar.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Grammar is the study of possible structures in the language. Traditional grammar deals with the rules that control how a phrase or sentence is formed. It attempts to explain why the sentences are acceptable in a specific context. In simple terms grammar is the part of speech which include nouns, verbs, adjectives, articles and so on (Harmer 2004).

Concerning grammar definition Zhang (2009), said that Grammar is the base of learning the English language as it provides learners with the structure that they need in order to organize ideas and give clear messages in written and oral communication. Grammar is the part of speech which focuses on structure and meaning of words and phrases in context. Burns (2009), claims that grammar is the essential part of the system of teaching and learning because it is considered as the basic knowledge that students have to acquire to develop different skills in order to combine word, phrases, and sentences to produce variety of logical meaning.

### *Importance of learning grammar*

According to Kumar (2013), Grammar is considered the essential part of written and oral communication, therefore the correct use of grammar rules and spelling in a text gives logical meaning to the context. Consequently, when the students use grammar accurately, they are able to communicate effectively in a written and oral manner because the wider knowledge of grammar rules facilitates students' use of language.

Furthermore, when learners write and speak using correct grammar rules, they are given credibility in the management and use of the language. Therefore, the person who studies grammar has an advantage because it helps them express ideas and opinions in an academic context. Widodo (2006), suggests that the teaching and learning of grammar needs to have an academic and social purpose. Academic in terms of providing students with opportunities to use

the language in a set of skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) in order acquire the ability of producing correct grammar utterances, and comprehend sentences, paragraphs and passages in the target language. Conversely, in a social context the learning of grammar gives students the chance to use the vocabulary in a social way, allowing them to combine phrases, omit words and make contractions in common conversation.

### *Strategies, activities and materials to teach grammar*

According to Wenden and Rubin (2013) cited in The Internet TESL (2000), strategies are any set of operations, steps routines used by the teachers in the classroom to facilitate students acquisition of knowledge and skills in the use of the English language. The use of strategies has to stimulate connections between the learning and the use of language in order to achieve a common goal.

One of the strategies that connect the use of grammar and communication is syntax surgery; this is a useful strategy that allows students to develop communicative competences; since it connects the grammatical rules and its structure which is often confusing to understand, but which is necessary to produce meaning in both written and oral contexts. Also, syntax surgery strategy helps students develop communicative skills whilst learning grammar because it enables learners to recognize the grammar patterns when writing and expressing ideas through two different ways: written, and oral.

Another useful strategy is Communication game: this strategy benefits English teachers in that it allows them to explain grammar because the strategy provides learners with the use of authentic grammar structures and verbal interactions since this strategy uses two different ways to teach grammar: communicative and structural. (Heller, Adriennel and Jordan 2012).

Regarding activities used to teach grammar interactively, Pölzleitner (3013), claims that Language classes should be communicative, therefore we should make sure to include enough communicative activities in our lessons in order to use grammar in a communicative context. But how to do it? The key to communicative grammar is presenting language in a manner which allows students to make relationships in real situations allowing their brains to process and encode the language. Additionally, academic activities should provide students with the opportunities for verbal interaction in order for learners to explore all their academic knowledge and skills not only in written but in oral ways as well.

Some of the activities which contribute to communicative grammar are memorization of dialogs and drills, the use of pair work activities, role plays, group work activities and project work. These activities help students to improve their communicative skills because they provide them with opportunities to explore and practice the language in an exhaustive way (Richards 2006).

Regarding to resources of teaching communicative grammar, The National Capital Language Resources Center (2004) mentions textbooks as one of the resources which provides students with different types of language based on mechanical drills. The first one is drilling activities; these activities are based on completing similar exercises several times following the structure without concentrating on the meaning; however, most of the time it is not very effective, especially when teachers teach grammar focused on communicative skills. The second one is meaningful drills, in this activity students emphasize their learning the use of grammar structures previously explained by the teachers. In this activity students need to know the meaning of the grammar structure in order to complete the task. The third is based on Communicative drilling activities; this activity requires students to understand the relationships

between form, meaning, and use of the grammar, since a communicative drilling activity combines all the previous learning in order to develop communicative abilities through repetition and communication.

Similarly, Howard and Major (2015), mention that there are a lot of materials available, but not all of these are appropriate for the teaching objective. For that reason, they mention that the material used to teach English should be chosen according to the objective of teaching, students' needs, levels and ages in order to facilitate students learning. Effective materials to teach English have to be applicable and relevant to the curriculum being taught. Therefore, the materials selected to the teaching of communicative English grammar needs to be suitable and be related to real experiences of both the first and second language; additionally, the materials should stimulate student interaction and participation; as well as encouraging learners to develop communicative skills in both form and function.

Marshall (2004), argues that the materials should be as authentic as possible in order to link the previous learning with the new learning. Also it needs to be attractive, applicable and easy to use. Hence, when teachers select materials such as videos, DVDs, and internet resources they have to consider two important aspects of the curriculum, "student's needs and the objective" in order to engage learners in active learning.

Additionally, the use of teaching resources needs to provide some benefits such as involving students in the use of authentic, academic, and social English expressions; as well as providing different types of contents. However, in some cases this type of resource does not contribute to the improvement of grammar for communicative purposes even though it provides learners with opportunities to hear the different kinds of authentic English expressions that are used in everyday conversation.



### *Communicative language teaching*

According to Kamiya (n.d.), Communicative language teaching has been used for over three decades as the first method used in the field of second language acquisition (SLA). In various institutes and colleges, the communicative language teaching method was adopted as an effective way of improving communication skills in order to replace the traditional teaching of grammar. The communicative language teaching method (CLT) was approved by educators in the classroom as a model of communicative competence because it is linked with phonology and lexical learning in an L2 scenario as it enables students to learn grammar expressions, manners of communication, and other linguistic aspects of the target language. The communicative language teaching approach is based on the theory that the primary function of language is communication. Therefore, the primary goal of this approach is developing communicative competences in learners or simply communicative abilities to use in real life situations which requires communication. The idea of communicative competence is originally derived from Chomsky's distinction between competence and performance.

Djigunović (2007), has stated that “communicative competences are not just inherent in grammatical competence which is focused on how to use the language, but also in the ability to promote grammatical expressions in a variety of communicative situations”. Communicative competence as the ability to use the language, in a variety of contexts such as changing ideas in a dynamic communicative setting in which the linguistics are adapted to themselves and to the total input, and output. Jack (2006), adds that communicative competence has four modes of application in the teaching of grammar. The first is grammatical competence which is focused on the knowledge of the language, vocabulary, rules, pronunciation and spelling. The second is sociolinguistic competence- the mastery of the sociocultural code of the language which is used

in the application of vocabulary, register, politeness and style in which a situation is given. The third is discourse competence; this is the ability to combine different types of grammatical structures into different kinds of text (academic and social). The final, is strategic competence, which refers to the knowledge of verbal and non-verbal communications, enhancing the efficiency of communication and overcoming its difficulties.

Harmer (2012), argues that communicative language teaching is focused on two important aspects: first of all, language is not just based on grammatical structures and vocabulary but it also connects language functions to agree and disagree, petition and suggestion. The second aspect of Communicative Language Teaching states that if students are confronted with a language, they will have the opportunity to apply communicative language through real conversations. Savignon (2015), states that Communicative language teaching derives from a multidisciplinary perspective which includes linguistics, psychology, philosophy, sociology, and educational research. Communicative language teaching emphasizes the development and implementation of programs and methods which promote the functional language ability through learners' participation in communicative events because students are able to combine diverse contexts to meet the main objective, promote communicative competence, and consider student's needs and learning styles.

An earlier study related to this topic was carried out by Cordero and Pizarro (2012), their research focused on teaching grammar and the implementation of communicative Language teaching as a tool to develop communicative skills. The purpose of this study was to help English teachers to improve their grammar lessons through various interactive communicative activities. The study was carried out at Universidad Nacional and it was discovered that some of the activities used by teachers to enhance communicative competences were not appropriate for

increasing their communicative skills. It is well known that the development of communicative competences does not depend on the type of activities used, but on the teacher's ability of combining different methods and strategies while teaching English.

#### *Methods, Approaches and procedures for teaching grammar*

According to Mart (2013) The Audio-Lingual Method is an approach which provides students with the necessary approaches they need in order to develop communicative competences, as the main objective of this method is to develop communicative skills through listening and speaking, dialogues and drilling activities. Learning through this method is presented through the spoken language rather than in a structural way. Trong, and Minh (2010), adds that The Audio-lingual method is the method which most helps students develop communicative abilities because it is an approach based on the teaching of oral skills. It utilises certain practical techniques such as mimicry, memorization, practice patterns, and use of drilling activities in which students have the chance to practice the use of grammar in order to produce the similar expressions using different words.

#### *Inductive Method*

According to Thornbury (2002), The *Inductive Method* is an approach which is based on the teaching of discovering the grammatical structure in any type of reading because this method goes from general to specific. Chalipa (2013), states that the inductive method is more appropriate for adult students than for children since adult learners have the ability of being able to explore their knowledge they have a wider range of vocabulary and grammar knowledge. Also adult learners are more open to the language. However, Walker and Elsworth (1987), mention that the Inductive method is appropriate for all levels of students because it is an approach which provides students with opportunities to explore the grammar rules in a text or audio rather than in

isolated sentences because their learning is experimental. Harmer (2012), says that the teaching of grammar through this method is more effective because students feel more confident as they enjoy working out, exploring grammar structures, and discovering activities by themselves.

In this sense, one activity that contributes to the Inductive Method is “Read for details”, this is an excellent activity because students are able discover and identify the various types of grammar structures in the text. The purpose of this activity is to give the students the opportunity to discover the grammatical rules in the text without previous teacher explanation (Kontozi and Kouratou, 2013).

Another type of activity which contributes to the Inductive approach is “Underline the word with the different sound”. This activity provides students with the appropriate development of listening and communicative skills because they have to pay attention to the pronunciation of specific words in different contexts (Perez and Sanchez, 2009).

An additional activity that contributes to the Inductive method in order to foster students’ communicative competence is the role-play. This activity gives students opportunities to interact while they learn grammar because students compare opinions, and share information in a communicative way (Herrell and Jordan, 2012).

### *Deductive method*

According to Bilash (2011), the *Deductive method* encourages students to “notice grammar rules”. Its approach moves from the specific to the general. Therefore, when teachers teach grammar through this method, they use some examples which emphasise the use of grammar structures and its rules. The objective of the deductive method is in developing writing skills more than communicative skills because this method is based on the traditional method of teaching

English. The deductive method does not promote the development of communicative skills because the majority of its activities are related to the teaching grammar structures.

Two of the most common activities used in the deductive approach are: “Filling in the blanks” and “memorization of the grammatical rules”. Activities in which students have to complete tasks based on the grammatical structures learned with a focus on writing ability, also this activity involves the learning of grammar rules and its structures to produce new sentences or contexts following a system of passive learning (Silvia, 2004).

### *Integrative Grammar Teaching*

According to Sysoyev (1999), in order to provide students with opportunities to learn grammar in a communicative way, Integrative Grammar Teaching provides students with an adequate balance in the teaching of communicative grammar. Integrative Grammar Teaching is a method that helps students with their communicative abilities because this method combines the teaching of two different approaches: form and structure. Therefore, the use of the “Integrative grammar teaching method” in the teaching of grammar, allows students to learn grammar in a communicative way because the method is based on real examples in context. Integrative grammar teaching elicits student’s interactions whilst learning, this method is viewed as a cognitive process which reflects the sociocultural theory suggested by Vygotsky (1978), which states that though it combines form and meaning, students are more likely to have a wide knowledge of use and function of language termed: EEE approach: Exploration, Explanation and Expression. Additionally, Spada and Lightbown (1993), note that the form is focused on structure and meaning in communication which, with appropriate feedback, students develop communicative skills, allowing a positive contribution to the acquisition of a second language. Harmer (2012), proposes some of the activities that contribute positively to the integrative

grammar method, such as: Task-based learning, “Task Cycle”, “Task, Planning, and Report” these activities involve students in the use of authentic grammar learning through real activities such as dialogues, oral presentations, role-plays, pair or groups work, and discussions.

A study addressed by Boukhzar (2015), which had as an objective to improve the communicative skills through the combination of both perspectives, namely focus-on-form instruction, to cater for the weaknesses of each approach of teaching of communicative grammar. Focus on Form instruction tends to combine both positions through drawing students’ attention to grammatical forms in communicative contexts, because the implementation of form-focused instruction to meaning-focused instruction helps English students improve their communicative skills. Also the implementation of this approach yields many beneficial outcomes in communicative contexts in the students such as an increase in the student's knowledge as well as the ability to encourage communicative skills.

### *Interface Position*

According to Perez and Sanchez (2009), *the Interface Position* in Second Language Acquisition is the most appropriate approach in teaching grammar because this method refers to the way implicit and explicit knowledge can interact with each other in order for students to achieve linguistic competences. The interface position method makes reference to Chomsky’s theory, which states that the implicit knowledge normally is the knowledge that is acquired unconsciously, and automatically without certain conditions. Hence, implicit knowledge is typically the result of the exposition of the language with regard to the process of learning, based on the knowledge of the natural environment. Therefore, the aim of the interface position is to socialize the fluent use of the language and grammar in communication as native speakers do, but based on the knowledge of natural environment.

Krashen cited in Perez and Sanchez (2009), react against this stating that explicit knowledge does not combine or interact with implicit knowledge because learners can know a lot about the language, but they may not be able to use grammar structure in oral communication or in writing. Therefore, the non-interface position which is associated with Krashen's view on second language acquisition argues that explicit and implicit knowledge do not have an inter-relationship; since this method utilizes two different approaches in the teaching of grammar. Krashen extended his work and makes a distinction between acquiring and learning a language. He states that the acquisition of a language is a subconscious process dealing with implicit knowledge which is built up from natural exposition. Consequently, the learning of a language is a conscious process which results from the explicit knowledge of the language and its grammatical rules. In a study carried out by Perez and Sanchez in (2009) at the University of Murcia they explain that there is a possible relationship between implicit and explicit knowledge in teaching grammar, as when teachers combine implicit and explicit knowledge, English students tend to become more well developed in oral production tasks. Furthermore, Explicitness and Implicitness may appear as complementary to each other, and, if one thinks of activities related to implicit learning, one also has to design an activity related to explicit learning in order to link implicit and explicit knowledge and allow one be aligned to the other. In this model, each activity should be designed with absolute values in order to allow students to develop communicative competencies through possible interaction of explicit and implicit features.

### *Communicative Approach*

According to Plocková (2010), the *Communicative Approach*, is a method of teaching grammar which emphasizes its teaching on developing communicative competence because this approach is seen as the overall underlying knowledge of the ability of using and processing the

language of speaker-listener. Basta (2011), describes the communicative approach as an attractive method for students to learn grammar because this style bases its teaching on the interaction and the dialogue between students. Therefore, the role of teachers in this case is to provide students with the necessary teaching resources and instructions in order for students to achieve the goal of the teaching. Furthermore, the communicative approach considers language as a tool to communicate. It does not just consider the development of the four skills, but also the correlation between them; enabling students to use interactive academic activities to master communicative competences.

Bilash (2011), states that communicative activities are activities which provide interaction between students and that they need to practice the language because the purposes of this is to engage students with opportunities to use the language through different type of tasks. For example, a script, is a written text that contains a series of instructions or details of a specific topic that students need to revise before giving an oral presentation.

Another activity that contributes to the communicative approach is “reading aloud” or describing an “image”. These kinds of activities contribute to develop communicative skills because they promote the interaction and the active participation of reader or listener.

Richard (2006), said that Communicative Language Teaching is linked to the communicative approach; since both replace the traditional approach of teaching grammar because this method uses different items of grammar which are developed through practice and control of activities; such as memorization of dialogues and drills repetition, pair-work activities, role plays, group work activities, and project work in which students practice the language and the use of academic vocabulary.



### *Difficulties in teaching and learning grammar in an EFL context*

Learners often have various difficulties and problems in learning English however, Huang (2010), argues that the main limitations for developing communicative competences are: limited time for oral practice in the classroom and lack of English use both outside and inside the classroom. Also, he mentions that the lack of techniques, strategies and activities in teaching ensures students lose opportunities to practice the language.

Thi, Warren, and Fehring (2014), in a paper made by Hutech University indicate that the factors which hinder the quality of teaching are: slack teaching styles; insufficient time for communicative activities; unreasonable time-management; unclear instructions; large class sizes; teachers' limited ability, classroom organization; lack of English teachers at appropriate levels; lack of lesson plans; and limited use of teaching strategies and methods, amongst others.

Furthermore, a previous study carried out by Mohammed (2011), on students' and teachers' attitudes suggests that while students prefer learning grammar in a formal and explicit way, teachers prefer to use communicative activities focused on teaching grammar in communicative way, more than in a structured form. The difficulties that students and teachers face in the teaching-learning process are not only based on how students and teachers wish to teach and learn grammar, it also includes the difficulty in the use of grammatical tenses.

Another difficult that students face in the teaching-learning process is the amount the time that teachers and students should spend talking. Harmer (2012), said some classes are criticized because there is too much teacher talking time and not students talking time. However, there is not a specific time that teachers and students have to spend talk-time, thus it is appropriate that teachers reduce the talking time in order to give students more chance to practice the English

language since the percentage of teacher's talking time in class influences on the student's achievement and proficiency in communication

### *Mother Tongue*

Regarding the above mentioned issue, Radhika and Kala (2013), state that the interference of the *mother tongue* is another factor that affects the learning of grammar and communication because as many authors have stated: when children learn their mother tongue their minds are clean of any knowledge therefore, they can easily learn the first language, whereas when students try to learn a new language they have some difficulties because their minds keep previous knowledge of the first language, hence learners try to translate the first language into a foreign language and as a result they feel confused, and tend to make grammar mistakes in writing and oral communication.

### *Classroom management*

According to Marzano, Marzano, and Pickering, (2003), *Classroom management* is another concern that students present in class. Although, teachers play several functions, one of the most important is the management of the classroom. The effectiveness of the teaching learning process does not depend only on the excellent level that teachers may have; but also on the good skills to control student's discipline. Harmer (2007), said that to manage the class teachers need to be aware of what classroom management involves. Therefore, the English teachers have to know what they need to do in order to control student discipline, provide clear instructions in order to manage disrespect, chaos and a noise in a classroom.

In an article publish by Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages by (n.d.) in (2015), it was stated that giving and asking for clarification enables students to undertake any task in order to develop it as accurately as possible. Therefore, clarifying instructions makes learners

feel confident with the activities that they are going to do and say. That is why instructions have to be clear and objective.

It is also important to manage the classroom effectively, therefore teachers need to combine and organize their time and their activities. According to Jane, Hill, Kathleen and Flynn (2006), when teachers consider time, activities, and adequate feedback, the management of the class will be successful because the organization of these elements provides students with the adequate instructions that are required to carry out the teaching-learning process. Rollefson (1997), mentions that *managing time* is very important in English language learning because it helps teachers organize each class activity. Time management is an effective strategy used by teachers to improve classes because it implies the taking of an active role in setting the amount of time that is necessary for developing skills; especially the communicative skill. Time management is closely related to the activity that students need to undertake, the objective of the lesson plan and the goal of teaching. For that, the importance of assigning time for each activity in class is related with the approach that one, as a teacher wants to achieve in order to give students opportunities to practice the language.

Additionally, according to Case (2010), the way teachers give instructions also is a factor that determines the success or failure of an activity. Giving and understanding instructions clearly will help students to develop the contents easily. On the other hand, unclear instructions may confuse students and cause frustration in some cases. Hence, giving clear instructions, assigning specific time for each activity in the development of skills shows how effective a teacher manages classes.

### *Providing Feedback*

It is important to consider feedback as one of the main aspects related to the teaching learning process. Spiller (2009), describes the importance of *providing feedback* as a strategy of improving the class because feedback gives students additional benefits such as metacognitive and cognitive learning experiences as well active participation. Hence, when teachers comment on students' work, there is a gradual and positive improvement because students know in which areas they have to work the most. Speller (2009), identifies various different types of activities that a teacher can use in order to provide feedback. One of them is asking common questions to identify strengths and weaknesses. Another type of activity is to create dialogues in which the teacher can control the spoken English. Also, teachers can design a task related to the topic, taking into account the learning goal and the skills that students need to expand. These types of activities help teachers and students to make effective use of the acquired knowledge.

It is crucial to know the right moment to provide feedback, according to Andrew, Butler, Jeffrey, Karpicke, Henry, and Roediger (2007), it has to be given as soon as possible after completing a task or when the mistake is made in order to eliminate incorrect responses and reinforce correct responses. However, a study carried out by Tanani (2011), in order to promote students communicative abilities it is important to investigate the use of existing grammar teaching techniques used to teach grammar. The traditional practice of teaching grammar dominates the classrooms and this situation has negative effects on language learning. Therefore, the researcher provides some grammar lesson plans in English, in order to measure the effectiveness and benefit of the suggested framework as well as the use of the communicative approach in the teaching grammar communicative.

### *Lesson Plans Design*

According to Brown (2001, p. 128-130) designing Lesson Plans is a vital component in the teaching- learning process. Therefore, it is important that when teachers are planning a class they have to consider two important aspects, *principled teaching and context learning*; in order to facilitate students learning. Since planning a class involves the appropriate selection of methods strategies and activities as well as the correct organization of classes, learning styles, objectives, and level of students. Additionally, planning a classes provide teachers with opportunities to improve their own performance because it helps them assess which activities worked well in class.

Harmer (2012), argues that a lesson plan should never be taken as instruction to be followed. A lesson plan can be considered as an idea about a learning outcome; it needs to be consistent and varied. Consistency means the teachers follow a logical sequence in the development of each activity in class; for example, first, the warm up; second, presentation of the topic; next, grammar practice; finally, feedback, and homework. The term varied refers to the variety of activities in order to help students engage learning skills.

According to Kadimba (2012), a lesson plan is a worthwhile instrument which helps teachers deliver concrete information that is important for both teachers and students, that is why, it is important to monitor a lesson plan. First, because it helps teachers assess student's actual knowledge, by looking at the strengths and weaknesses. Second, because it helps obtain a variety of information concerning all aspects of the learning which will be taught. Finally, monitoring lesson plans helps teachers judge which activities made in class achieves the main objective of teaching.

Regarding *elements of monitor* Cotton (1988), has stated that there are a variety of elements that teachers have to monitor; for example: learning objectives, which involves the skill

that teachers want to improve while taking into account the learners cognitive level and developmental stage in which it will be learned. Other elements are the differentiation and extension between the activities applied and the effectiveness of them; as well as the skills students' need to practice, and the learning outcomes.

Regarding *materials and resources*; the most important things that teachers should consider are: the efficiency of materials, resources and equipment and provide students with the necessary information to produce effective learning. On the other hand, monitoring methods, and strategies, involves paying attention to the methodology of teaching grammar and the strategies that will be applied in order to generate opportunities to interact in the foreign language.

#### *Teachers and Students English Proficiency level*

According to Stronge, Tucker, and Hindman (20016), highly effective teachers can have an enriching effect on the daily lives of children and their lifelong educational and career aspirations. Besides, teachers also have a direct influence in enhancing student learning. Years of research on teacher quality supports the fact that effective teachers not only make students feel good about school and learning, but also that their work actually results in increased student achievement since as the verbal ability, content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, certification status, ability to use a range of teaching strategies characterize the excellent level of teachers.

Furthermore, Abedi (2008), said the *language proficiency* level of teachers is an extremely important aspect for learners because it shows how much progress they have made and enables students to apply it in the appropriate context. Therefore, to provide reliable and valid assessments about student's proficiency level helps teachers determine outcomes of academic progress of students. This means that students need to do their best in order to achieve the required level of English proficiency. According to Zhang (2008), the English proficiency level of students

depends a great deal on the scale of the teacher's training. They need to be up to date with the latest advances in education and hold an appropriate linguistic level, nowadays the requirement for teachers is the B2 level. Thus, students are provided with an effective and appropriate use of the target language. Therefore, it is considered as an important factor which hinders the teaching of students because the academic knowledge and the efficiency of teachers in the development of a task and management of strategies enable learners to reinforce their academic English knowledge to a higher level of English proficiency.

## METHOD

### *Setting and participants*

The current study was carried out in three public high schools in Loja, which is located in the southern region of Ecuador. The educational institutions are located in the urban area of Loja. It is important to note that the chosen schools do not have adequate conditions, or necessary resources for teaching English. The selected population was learners of different academic levels because some of them take regular English classes in particular institutes. It is also important to emphasize that the participants included 6 English teachers and 30 foreign language learners (female and male) from 14 to 16 years old, who were second year students. The participants were selected at random, in order to improve the reliability of the research.

### *Procedures*

In order to conduct the current study, it was necessary to collect information from different sources such as the Internet, books, journals and web articles. The collected information helped to give theoretical support to the current project. The information was related to the following topics: Grammar concept, strategies, activities, materials to teach grammar, approaches and procedures for teaching grammar, difficulties in teaching and learning grammar, teachers and students proficiency level, classroom management, lesson plans; and factors that affect the use of grammar for communicative purposes, this information was collected in order to determine the academic factors which hinder the use of grammar for communicative purposes.

It is important to note that in order to undertake this study, it was necessary to develop the field research. Therefore, it was necessary to obtain permission from the principal of each school, where the research was conducted. In order to obtain this permission, it was necessary to present a formal letter, which was examined and accepted by the authorities of the institution. The



information was collected using various instruments: questionnaires and observation-sheets. These instruments were used for both teachers and students, in order to validate the information. The questionnaires were used to collect information from participants while the observation-sheet was used to verify the information from teachers and students' replies. The collected information in the classroom helped to obtain the statistical information for the quantitative interpretation, and the information gathered from the observation-sheet was used for the qualitative interpretation.

Finally, the conclusions of the current study were based upon the results provided and the analysis advanced which gave the necessary guidelines to make suggestions and recommendations in order to improve the teaching-learning process of the English language.

## DISCUSSION

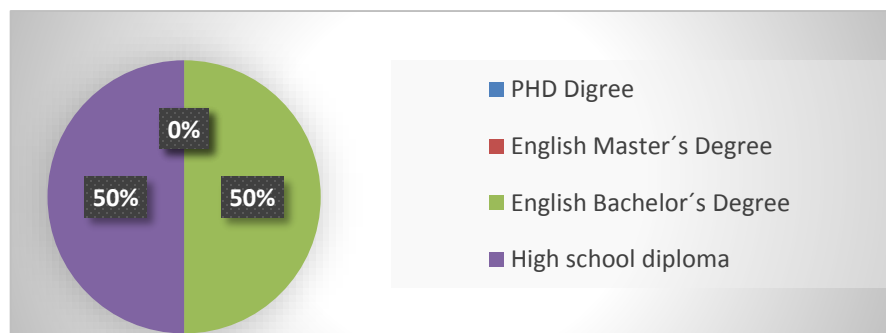
### Description, Analysis and Interpretation of Results

This section includes quantitative and qualitative descriptions of the results obtained from the application of questionnaires to both teachers and students from public high schools. The quantitative analysis is based on the percentage of teachers and student's answers. Whilst the qualitative analysis is based on the information gathered from the literature review, and observation-sheet, which will be compared to the statistical results and theoretical support; as well as, academic contributions.

This analysis will contribute to an understanding of the academic factors which hinder the use of grammar for communicative purposes. In addition, the research will provide some recommendations for the improvement of the teaching learning process of grammar for communicative purposes.

#### Which level of education do you have?

Graph 1



**Source:** Teacher's questionnaire.

**Author:** Doris Sosoranga

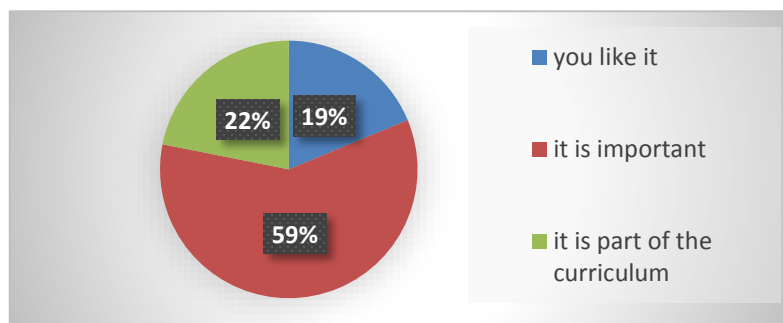
Graph 1 shows that 3 out of 9 teachers, which constitutes 50% of the population, have obtained an English Bachelor's Degree; while the 3 remaining English teachers that represent the other 50% have a High school diploma.

According to Stronge, Tucker and Hindman (2016), effective teachers have a direct influence in enhancing student learning. Years of research on teacher quality support the fact that effective teachers not only make students feel good about school and learning, but also that their work actually results in increased student achievement since as the verbal ability, content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, certification status, ability to use a range of teaching strategies characterize the excellent level of teachers.

Considering the statistical results, it is evident that half of the teachers who are currently teaching, have the English Bachelor's Degree. However, according observation data English teachers do not develop verbal ability, or ability to use a range of teaching strategies. Based upon the above analysis, it is important for teachers to specialize in the subject in order teachers able to enhance students in active learning.

### You study English because:

Graph 2



Source: Student's questionnaire

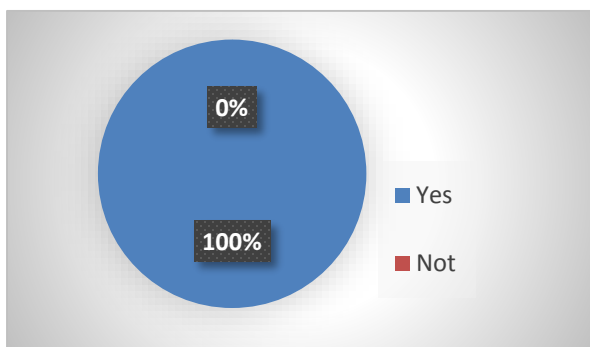
Author: Doris Sosoranga

Looking closely at graph 2, it can be seen that 59% of students study English because they consider this language is important for them 22% study English because it is part of the curriculum. Finally, 19% of students study English because they like the subject.

According to Burns (2009), Grammar is an essential part of the system of teaching and learning because it is considered as the basic component students need to acquire and develop different skills. Therefore, Widodo (2006), adds the teaching and learning of grammar needs to have an academic and social purpose

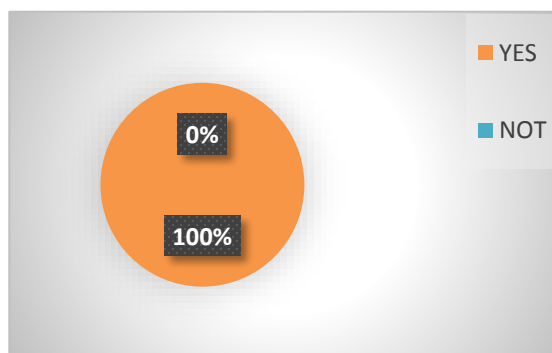
Considering the importance of learning grammar, comparing both the aforementioned results with the data from the observation sheet it was discovered that more of half of students consider that studying English is important whereas the rest of the population were not interested in learning the language, which is why in some cases students were doing other activities while the teacher was conducting the class. Also some students lost concentration or were not engaged with the lesson because teachers tend to teach using methods and strategies which no longer give productive results. Even though students claimed that they considered it important to learn English and some of them show interest in the subject they feel that teachers do not motivate students to learn English by using interactive activities in class.

**Do you consider that teaching grammar is important?**



**Source:** Teacher's questionnaire.  
**Author:** Doris Sosoranga

**Do you consider that learning grammar is important?**



**Source:** Students questionnaire  
**Author:** Doris Sosoranga

**Graph 3**

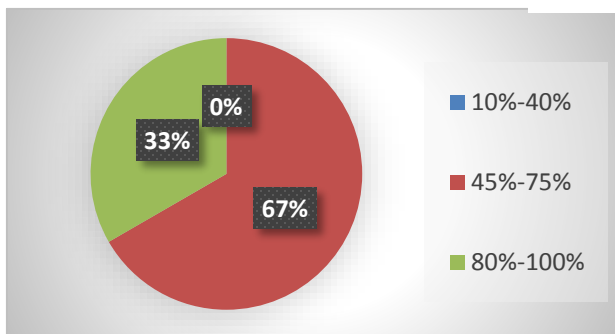
Graph 3 displays information about the teaching and learning of grammar in high schools. The first pie chart indicates that 6 teachers which is 100%, consider that teaching grammar is really important because it helps students develop confidence in the use of language.

By the same token, students were asked about the importance of learning grammar and 100% answered that grammar is relevant in the process because it allows them to communicate fluently as well as improve written and oral communication.

According to Zhang (2009), Grammar is the base of learning the English language as it provides learners with the structure that they need in order to organize ideas and give clear messages in written and oral communication. Grammar is the part of speech which focuses on structure and meaning of words and phrases in context.

Consequently, based on the statistical results and the author's opinion it can be stated that the teaching and learning of grammar is the basis of learning the language and enhancing learning skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Thus, students are able to develop communicative abilities efficiently.

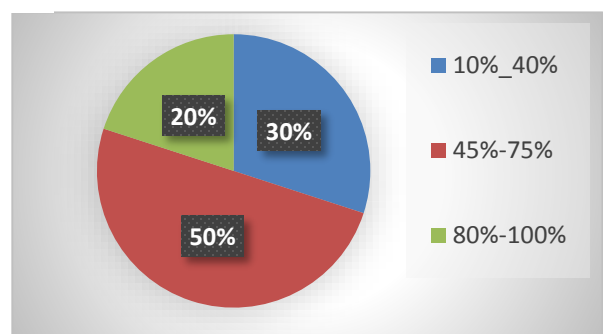
**What is the amount of spoken English you use in class?**



**Source:** Students questionnaire

**Author:** Doris Sosoranga

**What is the amount of spoken English your teacher uses in class?**



**Source:** Teacher's questionnaire.

**Author:** Doris Sosoranga

**Graph 4**

The figures from graph 4 indicate that 67% of teachers speak in English approximately 45% to 75% of the class. Conversely, two teachers claim that the percentage of English spoken in a regular class is about 80% to 100%.

Based upon students' results, 50% of learners indicated that the amount of English used in class by the teacher ranges from 45% to 75%, whereas 30% of students said that the percentage of English spoken in class varies from 10% to 40%. Finally, 20% of participants pointed out that the use of English in class goes from 80% to 100%.

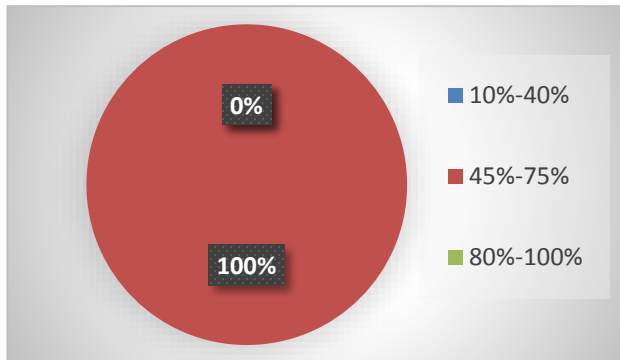
According to Harmer (2012), some classes are criticized because there is too much teacher talking time and not enough students talking time. However, there is not a specific time that teachers and students have to spend talk-time, but it is appropriate that teachers provide students with an adequate balance of spoken English.

Taking into consideration the results revealed in the chart, and according to the author's opinion concerning the percentage of the use of English in class, it can be noted that both teachers and students remain between 45% to 75%. This would seem to indicate that the data provided by both teachers and students matches the average percentage of spoken English in classes. However, the observations carried out in class showed a dramatic change, as the real amount of English spoken in class by the teacher goes from 10% to 45%, which is quite low. Hence, it is absolutely necessary to increase the use of English spoken in class so that students can get the most out of it and increase their linguistics skills.

**What percentage of the class talk-time do you use?**

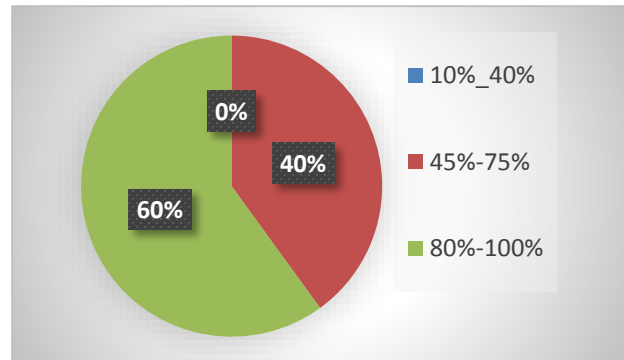
**What percentage of the class talk-time does your teacher use?**

**Graph 5**



**Source:** Teacher's questionnaire

**Author:** Doris Sosoranga



**Source:** Students questionnaire

**Author:** Doris Sosoranga

The pie chart illustrates the percentage of talking time by teachers in a regular class. As can be seen from the graph, 100% of teachers stated that the figure for talking-time in class ranges from 45% to 75%.

The same question was applied to students and the 60% indicated that teachers usually talk a considerable amount of time which in terms of percentage is represented as 80% to 100%. Conversely, 40% of students pointed out that the talking time by their teachers goes from 45% to 75%.

According to Harmer (2012), there is not a specific time that teachers and students have to spend talk-time, but thus it is appropriate that teachers reduce the talking time in order to give students more chance to practice the English language since the percentage of teacher's talking time in class influences on the student's achievement and proficiency in communication.

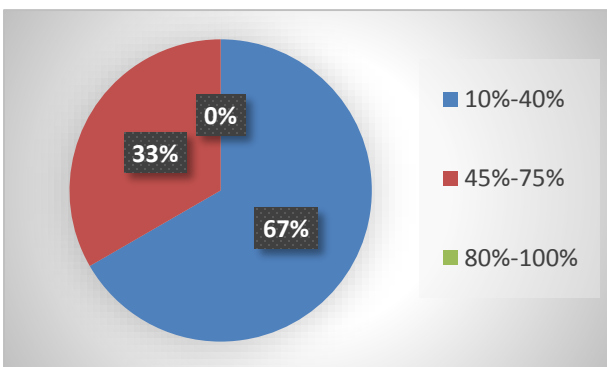
Therefore, if teachers allow an appropriate percentage of talking time in class, it will provide students with opportunities to become more involved in active oral communication within

the class. However, considering the statistical results and comparing these with the observation-sheet, it was noticed that the majority of talk-time as used by teachers which would seem to indicate that there is not enough interaction between both constituents. Additionally, considering the author's opinion concerning the percentage of the talk-time which teachers should use in class, it is evident that they do not meet the basic requirement which the author suggests would make a good balance so that students are able to undertake opportunities to interact with the language.

**What percentage of the class talk-time do your students use?**

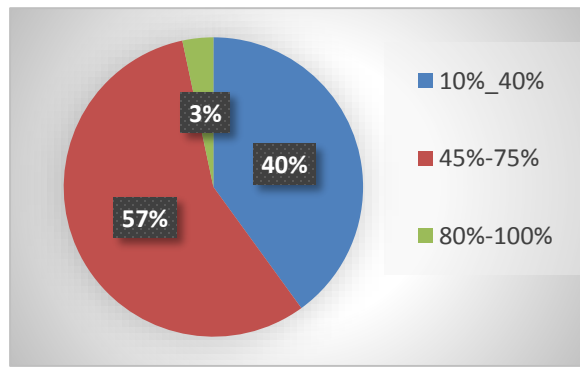
**What percentage of the class talk-time do you use?**

**Graph 6**



**Source:** Students questionnaire

**Author:** Doris Sosoranga



**Source:** Teacher's questionnaire

**Author:** Doris Sosoranga

The above pie charts depict information concerning the talking time that students have in a regular class. The graph shows that 67% of English teachers utilise 10% to 45% of students speaking and interacting in class, whilst 33% of professors stated that the percentage of talking time goes from 45% to 75%.

Looking closely at chart 6, it can be noted that 17 participants representing 57% of the total, claimed that the percentage of students' talk-time varies from 45% to 75%; while 40% of



them stated that the percentage of talk-time ranges from 10% to 45%, and only 3% indicated that the percentage of students' speaking time varies from 80% to 100%.

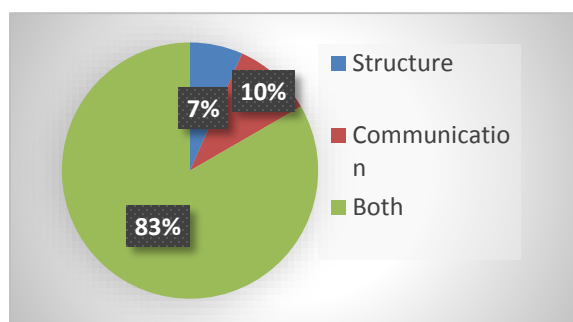
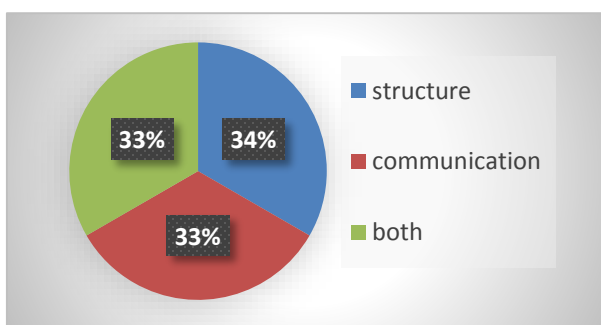
According to Harmer (2012), there is not a specific time that teachers and students have to spend talk-time, but thus it is appropriate that teachers reduce the talking time in order to give students more chance to practice the English language since the percentage of teacher's talking time in class influences on the student's achievement and proficiency in communication.

During observations the majority of teachers mentioned that the talk-time spent by students in class is not enough. They argued that their English level is low and that is why they do not speak in class as much as they should. Others claimed that students do not make any effort to make progress in the subject. The findings also showed that most of the time the teacher kept on talking and did not provide students with opportunities to develop their communicative abilities. Therefore, teachers need to reduce their talking time and encourage students to take advantage of each lesson and get the most out of it by participating more actively in class.

**Grammar should be taught with a focus on:**

**Your teacher teaches grammar with a focus on:**

**Graph 7**



**Source:** Teacher's questionnaire

**Source:** Students questionnaire

**Author:** Doris Sosoranga

**Author:** Doris Sosoranga

The above pie charts give information on teaching grammar. The first graph shows that 34% of the population teaches grammar in a structural form, whereas 33% of teachers prefer to teach grammar centering on communication. Finally, a group of participants representative of 33% stated that they teach grammar focusing on both communication and structure.

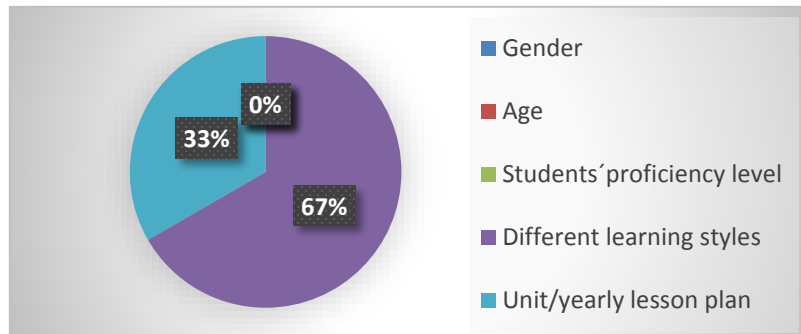
Conversely, the student's chart shows that 83% of learners indicated that grammar is usually taught by teachers using both communication and structure, while 10% of participants said that grammar is taught in a communicative way. Finally, a figure of 3% stated that grammar is carried out communicatively.

According to Krashen cited in Chalipa (2013), grammar should be taught in a structural and communicative way in order to help students develop communicative competences in the English language.

Both graphs suggest that grammar should have a balance between communication and structure as the aforementioned author explains. However according to observations undertaken, it was noticed that in most classes grammar was taught by focusing on structure rather than on communication. This being the case, students probably know enough grammatical structures, but they are unable to use them in context.

**Which of the following aspects do you consider at the moment of teaching English?**

**Graph 8**



**Source:** Teacher's questionnaire

**Author:** Doris Sosoranga

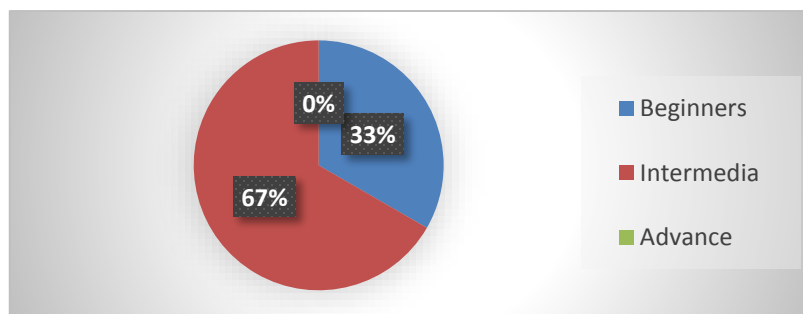
Graph 4 shows figures for aspects that must be considered during the teaching of English: 67% of teachers consider different learning styles whereas, 33% of them stated that they work entirely based on their unit / yearly lesson plan.

Brown, (2001, p. 128-130), states that when teachers design a lesson plan they must consider various aspects such as: learning styles, objectives, level of students, skills and time for each activity, use of materials and strategies to provide feedback.

In respect of the teachers results from graph 8, there are a significant number of English teachers who take into account both learning styles and unit/yearly lesson plans. Having analyzed the above information, it is important to note that according to the observations, teachers face some problems during the class, as many classrooms are inadequately equipped to cope with the requirement of modern teaching methods.

### Which level of English proficiency do your students have?

Graph 9



**Source:** Teacher's questionnaire

**Author:** Doris Sosoranga

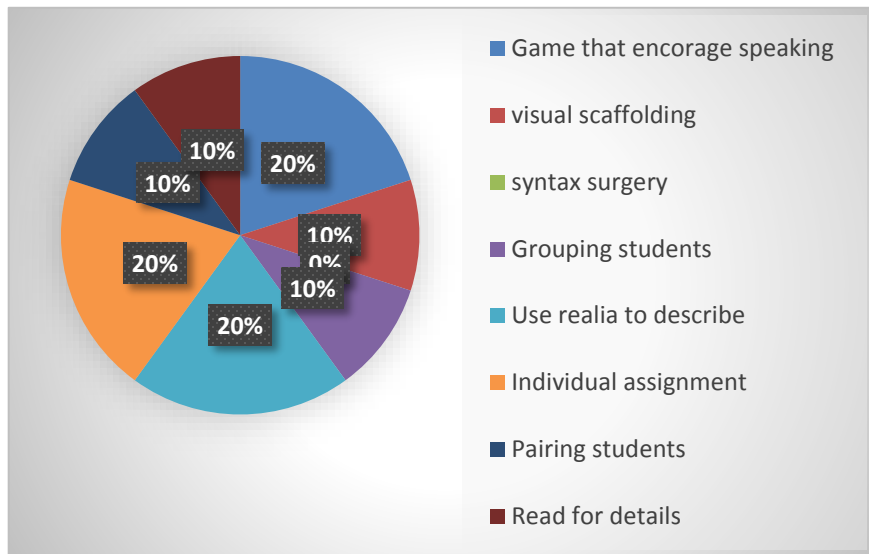
The chart shows the percentage of students' English proficiency. As can be seen from the graph, 67% of English teachers claim that the students' proficiency level is intermediate. While the remaining 33% for beginners.

According to Zhang (2008), the English proficiency level of students depends a great deal on the scale of the teacher's training. They need to be up to date with the latest advances in education and hold an appropriate linguistic level, nowadays the requirement for teachers is the B2 level. Thus, students are provided with an effective and appropriate use of the target language.

Taking into account the previous statistical results and comparing them to the findings gathered from observations, more than fifty per cent of students were shown to have an intermediate level, and the remaining percentage are considered beginners as they still struggle with sentence construction. Even though their level is low-intermediate, it is enough to communicate with their peers. However, they hardly ever interact with their peers. The fact that their teachers are explaining grammar in a structural way often affects students' interaction, they need to use grammar to communicate effectively.

**Mark the strategies that favor the communicative approach of language**

**Graph 10**

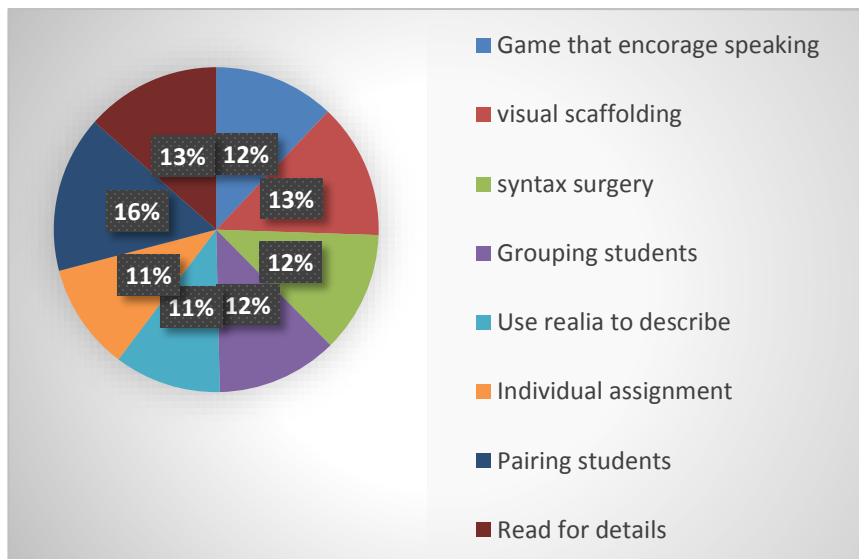


**Source:** Teacher's questionnaire

**Author:** Doris Sosoranga

**Mark the strategies that your teacher uses, to teach English grammar.**

**Graph 10**



**Source:** Students questionnaire

**Author:** Doris Sosoranga

The above pie chart displays information about strategies that teachers use to teach grammar, 20% of participants stated that they use games to encourage speaking, the same figure used realia to describe and introduce vocabulary. A similar percentage relied on individual assignments to develop autonomy and get the most of students talking. There was a low percentage for activities such as pair work, readings exercises, visual scaffolding and syntax surgery.

The second graph shows students' answers concerning strategies used by teacher. Pair work accounts for 15%, details and visual scaffolding had 13% respectively. Students also stated that one of the strategies used by teachers is games to encourage speaking; the figure for this option is 12%. Syntax surgery and grouping students account for the same percentage. Finally, 11% of learners pointed out two strategies which teacher use; they are individual assignments and realia to teach contents, especially vocabulary.

According to Wenden and Rubin (2013), strategies are any set of operations, steps, and routines used by teachers to encourage and facilitate student's language acquisition in written and oral communication. Therefore, including activities such as communicative games that foster speaking and grouping students can provide them with opportunities to develop communicative abilities.

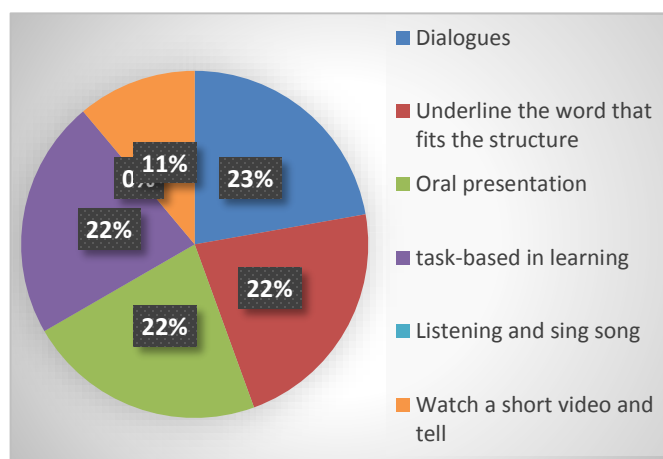
Taking into account the importance of the application of some effective strategies in teaching English, it can be said that the results provided in both charts do not show the same results because teachers claimed that they focused on developing communicative competences. On the other hand, students argued that the strategies used the most are meant to develop writing skills. Comparing these results with the data from the observation-sheet, it was noticed that the

majority of strategies used by teachers do not enhance communicative competence. Therefore, it does not promote the active participation and interaction of students in using the target language; as a consequence, students do not feel encouraged to learn.

**Which of the following activities do you use to encourage students communicate?**

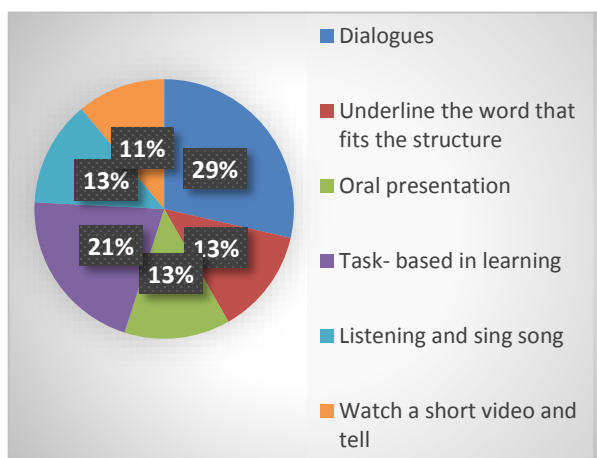
**Which of the following activities does you teacher use, to teach English?**

**Graph 11**



**Source:** Teacher questionnaire

**Author:** Doris Sosoranga



**Source:** Student's questionnaire

**Author:** Doris Sosoranga

Figure 11 presents data about activities used in a class and to develop communicative skills, as illustrated in the first chart, 23% of participants used dialogues, 22% of teachers prefer to work with strategies such as underline the words which fits the structure, oral presentation and task-based in learning. On the other hand, the 11% of participants rely on other activities such as watching a short videos and commenting on them.

The students' results plotted in chart 2 clearly show that dialogues represent the highest percentage, i.e. 29%. Task based learning is the second most popular activity with 21%. Nearly

13% of participants claimed that some of the activities their teachers apply in class are listening and singing a song, underlining the word that fits the structure, and oral presentations. Watching short videos represents the lowest percentage.

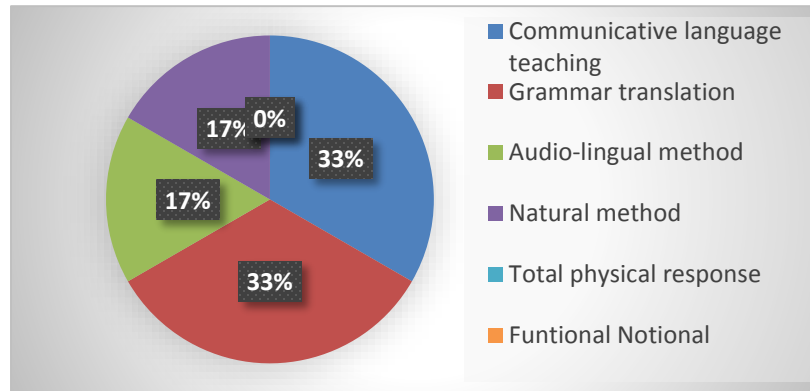
Pölzleitner (2013), notes that Language classes should be communicative, therefore we should make sure that we include enough communicative activities in our lessons in order to grammar s be taught communicatively. Richards (2006), mention some of activities that contribute to communication such as memorization of dialogs and drills, the use of pair work activities, role plays, group work activities and project work. These activities help students improve communicative skills because these activities provide students with opportunities explore and practice the language in an exhaustive way.

Contrasting the author's opinion with the results from graph 11; it is noticeable that teachers and students match when it comes to the activities that are usually applied in class. The above findings contradict the observed results where it was noticed that teachers focus more on developing of activities like underline the words that fits the structure and task-based learning rather than communicative skills such as the ones mentioned in the statistical results.



**Which of the following methods or approaches do you use when teaching grammar?**

**Graph 12**



**Source:** Teacher's questionnaire

**Author:** Doris Sosoranga

Regarding methods and approaches applied by teachers to teach English, chart 12 showed the following results: 33% use “*The communicative language teaching*” and “*The grammar translation method*”. Interestingly enough, the *Audio-lingual method*, *Natural-method*, and *Total Physical response method* account for the same percentage, i.e. 17%.

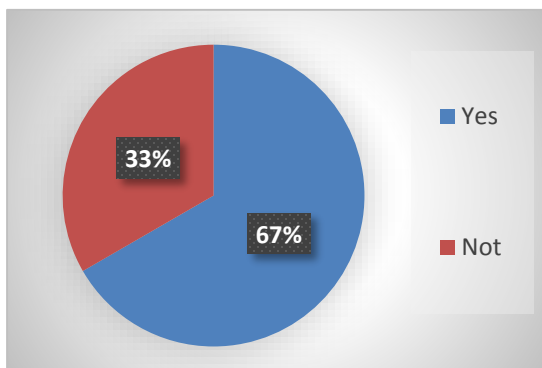
According to Mart (2013), The Audio-Lingual Method is an approach that provides students with the necessary approaches they need in order develop communicative competences. Sysoyev (1999) says that in order to provide students with opportunities to learn grammar in a communicative way, Integrative Grammar Teaching provides students with an adequate balance in teaching communicative grammar because this method combines the teaching of two different approaches: form and structure Kamiya (n.d.), Communicative language teaching is an effective way of improving communication skills in order to replace the traditional teaching of grammar because it based on the theory that the primary function of language is communication.

Taking into account the results from graph 12 and comparing them with author opinions, it is important to highlight that the approaches used by teachers are focused in the main, on the teaching objective, which is to develop communicative competences in Spanish, but not in English because the most popular approaches among English teachers are the Grammar translation, and Audio- Lingual method. These methods have some advantages but they are considered obsolete and should be replaced by new methods which offer complete skill development. On the other hand, considering the data from the observation-sheet, Grammar Translation, which is the most popular method, does not provide a wide range of communication as students tend to translate every sentence into their first language. In addition, overemphasis on translation does not foster learner autonomy on the foreign language. Grammar translation focuses more on reading and writing, leaving behind listening and speaking. Knowing many grammar rules does not guarantee their appropriate use in real contexts.

**Do you consider discipline is important to improve the teaching-learning environment?**

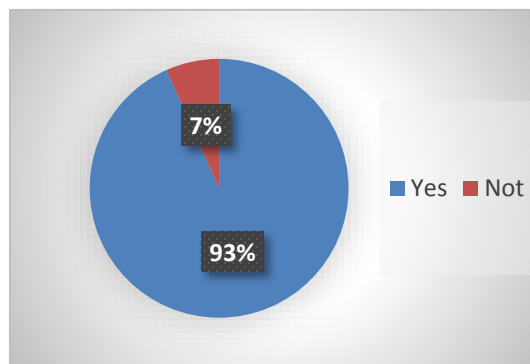
**Does the teacher control discipline to improve the teaching-learning environment?**

**Graph 13**



**Source:** Teacher's questionnaire

**Author:** Doris Sosoranga



**Source:** Students questionnaire

**Author:** Doris Sosoranga

The pie charts above depict information concerning discipline issues, as a factor that influences the teaching learning process. Graph 13 indicates that 67% of teachers agree with the fact that discipline is crucial to improve the academic process. Interestingly enough, 33% of educators are not in agreement with this statement.

Student's answers are illustrated in figure 2. While 93% of students considered that discipline is important to improve the teaching learning process, only 7% argued that discipline does not have much effect on the above mentioned process.

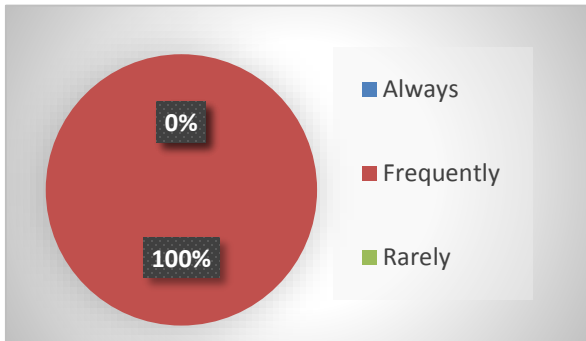
According to Marzano, Marzano, and Pickering (2003), teachers play several functions in the classroom, but the most significant is classroom management and students' discipline because they can both seriously interfere and affect the development of the class. Harmer (2007), claims that controlling student's discipline and providing clear instructions can benefit both teachers and students because it helps to set an organized classroom environment.

The statistical results from both charts and the author's opinion agree on controlling discipline as it helps teachers set an appropriate classroom environment. Additionally, according to the observation-sheets, it was noticed that all English teachers are able to control student's discipline. Classroom management is essential, not only for a teacher's piece of mind and in allowing them proper control over their classroom, but it is imperative for a positive and flourishing learning environment for students.

**When you provide instructions, in English, do your students understand them?**

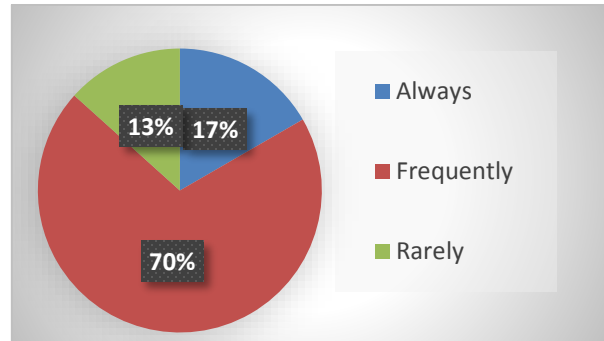
**When your teacher provides instructions, in English, do you understand them?**

**Graph 14**



**Source:** Students questionnaire

**Author:** Doris Sosoranga



**Source:** Teacher's questionnaire

**Author:** Doris Sosoranga

As the above pie charts indicate; 100% of teachers stated that their students understand the instructions given.

In contrast, the second chart which depicts students' answers shows that 70% fully understood the instructions; 17% state that they always understood the directions. Conversely, 13% of students had a hard time understanding the teachers' instructions.

According to Case (2010), the way teachers give instructions determines the success or failure of an activity. Giving and understanding instructions clearly will help students to develop the contents easily. On the other hand, unclear instructions may confuse students and cause frustration in some cases.

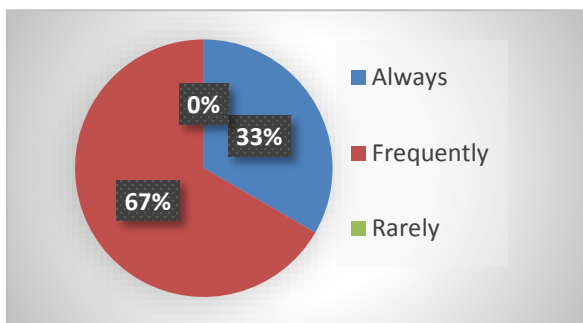
Both charts show that nearly sixty percent of the participants frequently and always understood instructions. However, taking into account the data from the observation-sheet and comparing them with the previous statistical results, it was noticeable that the moment teachers

give instructions and asked students to undertake an activity, they found it difficult to follow the directions and in some cases they did not carry out the tasks. Furthermore, it was found out that teachers' instructions were abstruse and too long which caused several problems such as wasting time, noise, disorganization and discipline issues. They also made the teacher lose the sequence of the lesson.

**Regarding instructions, do your students ask for clarifications?**

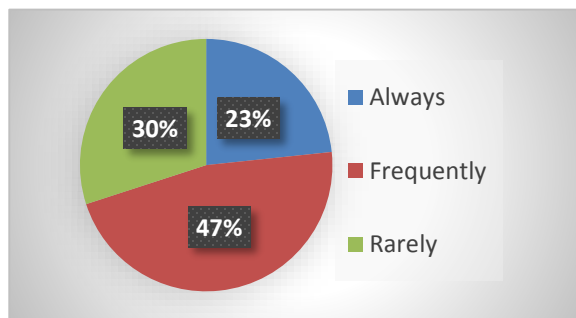
**Regarding teacher's instructions in English, do you ask for clarifications?**

**Graph 15**



**Source:** Teacher's questionnaire

**Author:** Doris Sosoranga



**Source:** Students questionnaire

**Author:** Doris Sosoranga

The pie charts above give information about teachers' instructions. As shown 67% of teachers stated that their students frequently ask for clarification; whereas 33% of participants needed clarification all the time.

Graph 15 exhibits data about students' results, 47% expressed that they frequently asked for clarification. The second highest percentage, i.e. 30% is for those students who rarely asked for clarifications; and 23% claimed that they always asked teachers to clarify the directions.

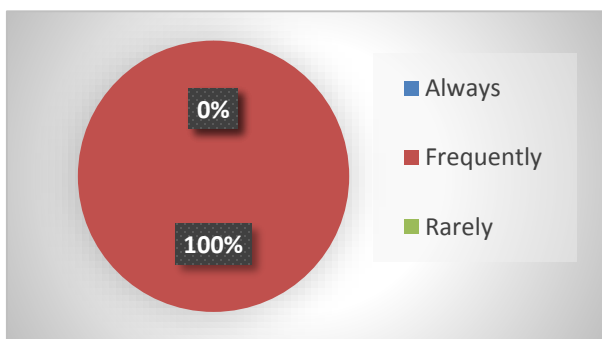
According to, (n.d.), in an article published by Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (2015), asking for clarification enables students to undertake any task and develop it as accurately as possible. Clarifying instructions involves genuineness on the listener's part, also learners feel confident with the activities that they are going to do and say. That is why instructions have to be clear and objective.

Considering the statistical results from the charts, teachers, as well as students agree that clarification was always and frequently asked. These findings are consistent with the observations which also revealed that students asked teachers to repeat and explain the instructions more than once. The observations also provided evidence that teachers' instructions were not clear enough, and as a consequence students struggled with the assignments and took more time to complete each activity.

**How often do you assign specific time for the activities that students have to perform in class?**

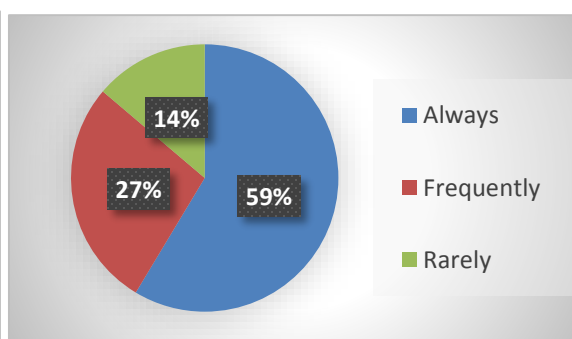
**How often does your teacher assign specific time for the activities that you have to perform in class?**

**Graph 16**



**Source:** Teacher questionnaire

**Author:** Doris Sosoranga



**Source:** Students questionnaire

**Author:** Doris Sosoranga

The graphs display the results concerning the use of timing for activities in class. The findings reveal that 100% of teachers frequently set a time limit for each activity.

Looking closely at the second graph, 59% of participants claimed that teachers always assign time for each activity they develop in class, a lower percentage i.e. 27% of learners said that teachers frequently assign specific time for assignments. On the other hand, 14% of students mentioned that teachers rarely establish a time limit for tasks.

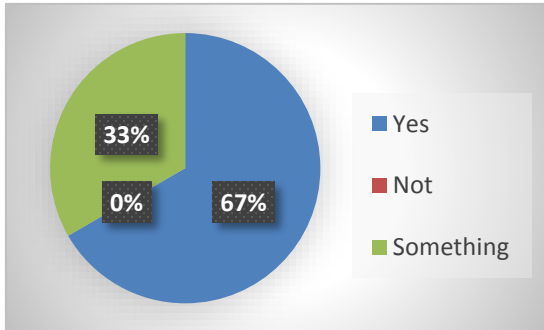
According to Rollefson (1997), assigning time is important because it helps teachers prioritize their work. When teachers and students take control of their time, they improve their ability to focus. And with increased focus comes enhanced efficiency.

Comparing both charts, it can be noted that setting a time limit is a useful issue in class since teachers as well as students agree on this statement. However, the observations reflected that teachers do not often assign specific time for some activities. Thus, students spend too much time doing only an activity; as a consequence, there was not enough time to practice all the skills. They tended to center on reading and writing most of the time. Teachers need to have a balance and distribute time effectively so each component can be explored.

**Do you provide feedback to student's performance?**

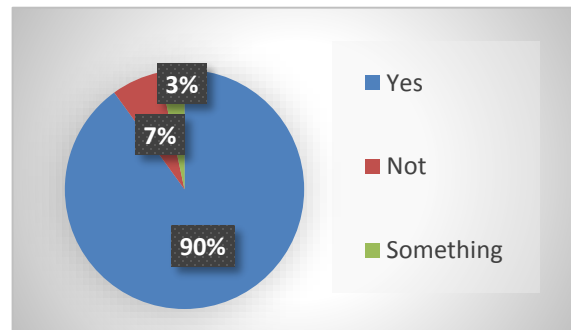
**Does your teacher provide feedback?**

**Graph 17**



**Source:** teacher questionnaire

**Author:** Doris Sosoranga



**Source:** Students questionnaire

**Author:** Doris Sosoranga

Graph 17 depicts data about the frequency teachers give feedback to students. Four out of six teachers stated that they do provide feedback to students about their academic performance. By the same token, two teachers mentioned that feedback sometimes is provided.

Students' results are shown in the second chart, 90% of learners confirmed that teachers always gave feedback, 3% of participants said that teachers sometimes provide feedback to students. Interestingly, 7% stated that they do not have any feedback

According to, Spiller (2009), providing feedbacks to students generates confidence and encourages students to participate in class actively. It also enables students to gradually improve their performance.

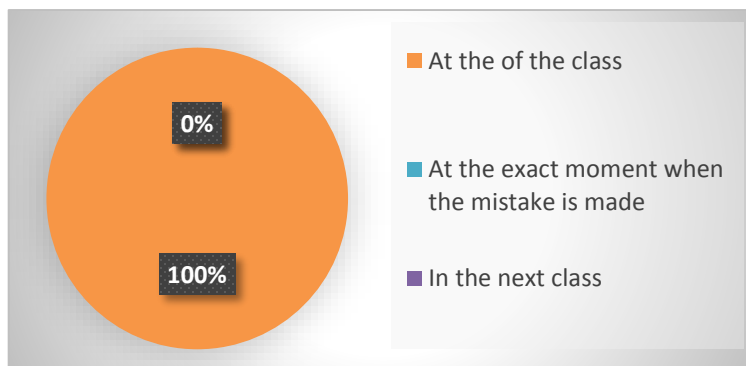


The majority of participants agreed that feedback is one of the main parts of the teaching-learning process because it allows teachers to clarify and reinforce topics that students find hard and confusing.

However, the observations showed that in many classes teachers did not provide any feedback. This was due to several factors, but mainly the lack of time affected it a great deal. A period of forty-five minutes is not enough to carry out a process and give feedback to each student. Despite this issue, teachers need to find a way and try to provide at least general feedback about the most defining topics.

### What is the most appropriate moment to provide feedback to students?

Graph 18

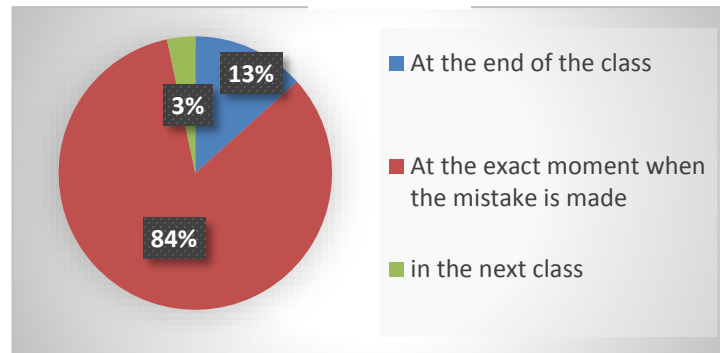


Source: Teacher's questionnaire

Author: Doris Sosoranga

## In which moment does your teacher provides feedback?

Graph 18



**Source:** Students questionnaire

**Author:** Doris Sosoranga

The pie charts provide information concerning the appropriate moment to provide feedback to students, as shown in the above figure, 100% of teachers mentioned that the most appropriate moment to provide feedback to students is at the end of the class.

In contrast, 84% of students contradicted the above findings stating that teachers provided feedback immediately after the mistake was made, 13% of students stated that the feedback was given at the end of the class; whereas 3% said the teachers provided feedback within the following classes.

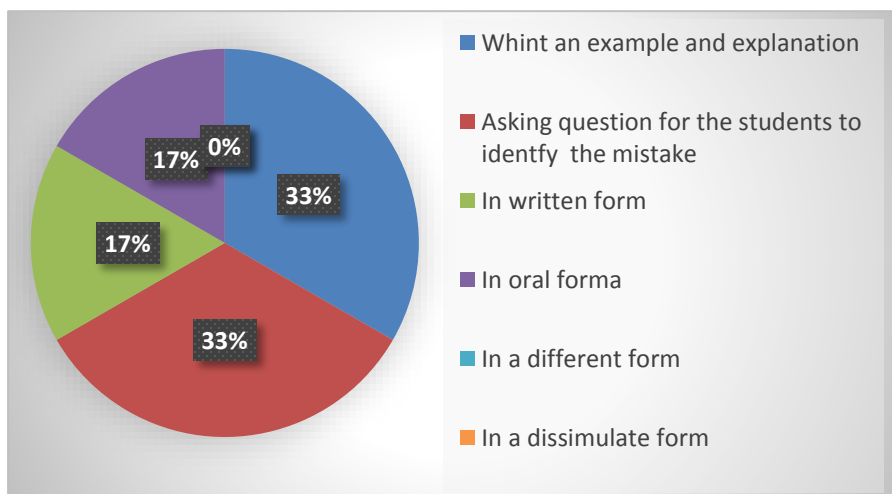
According to Andrew and Henry (2007), feedback must be given immediately after completing a task, or after the mistake is made. It is really necessary to provide feedback after a test has been administered.

As can be seen from graph 18, teachers claimed that they provided feedback at the end of the classes. This is consistent with the theory by Andrew and Henry (2007), who mention that the

most appropriate way to provide feedback is at the end of classes. However, it was later stated by students that teachers provide feedback at the exact moment when the mistake takes places. The observation-sheet data confirmed the findings that students are given feedback when the mistake occurs. Although, correcting mistakes at the very moment can be frustrating for students, it can stop them from doing so again. Teachers have a crucial role as guides who have to find the precise moment to make corrections without hurting students' feelings.

### What is the most appropriate way to provide feedback to students?

Graph 19

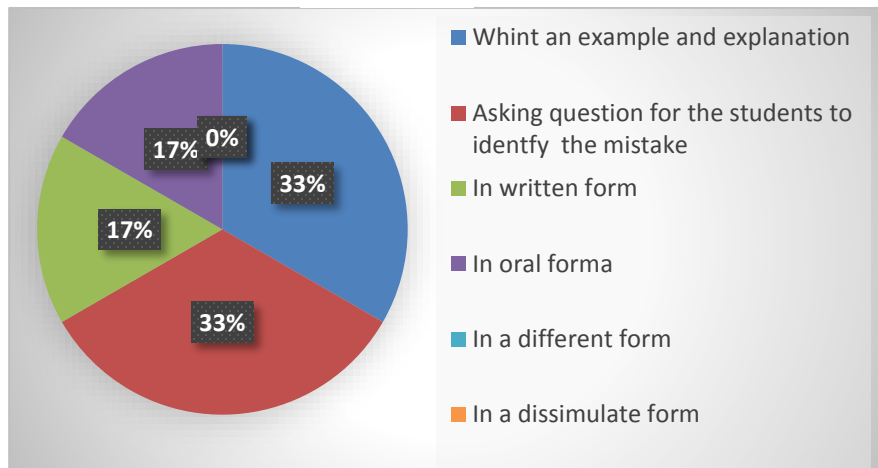


Source: Teacher's questionnaire

Author: Doris Sosoranga

## How does your teacher provide feedback?

Graph 19



**Source:** Students questionnaire

**Author:** Doris Sosoranga

As illustrated in graph 19; 33% of teachers provide feedback by asking questions so that students can identify and correct the mistakes by themselves. Similarly, 33% of teachers prefer to set an example and give a logical explanation. Conversely, 17% of participants take advantage of mistakes to give feedback in a written form and finally a similar 17% use oral activities to make corrections.

These results are consistent with the students' answers where 36% mentioned that teachers provide feedback with an example and explanation, 28% stated that teachers prefer to ask questions to force students to spot the mistake. Finally, 14% stated that teachers use oral and written activities to correct errors.

According to, Speller (2009), when teachers provide feedback they have to use activities which demonstrate the appropriate usage, for example common questions or dialogues and games

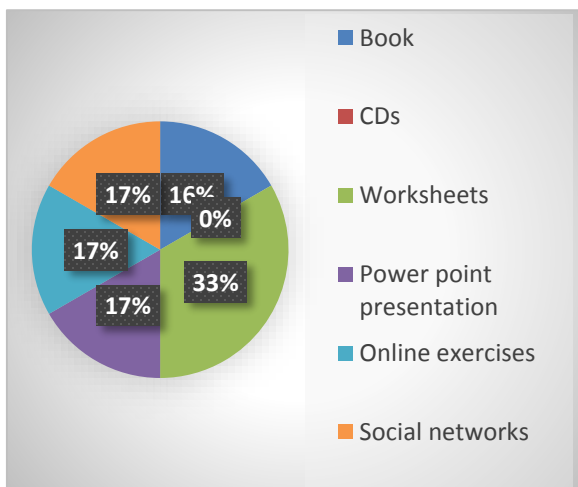
which demonstrate to students their knowledge, abilities and skills in the development of activities and the use of the target language.

Taking into account the statistical results from graphs, teachers as well as students agree on the different strategies teachers use to provide feedback. The observations also confirmed this finding, teachers used the activities they mentioned in the surveys. However, it is believed that teachers should include a variety of strategies to help students develop their communicative competences.

**Which of the following teaching resources are useful to teach grammar in order to encourage communicative skills?**

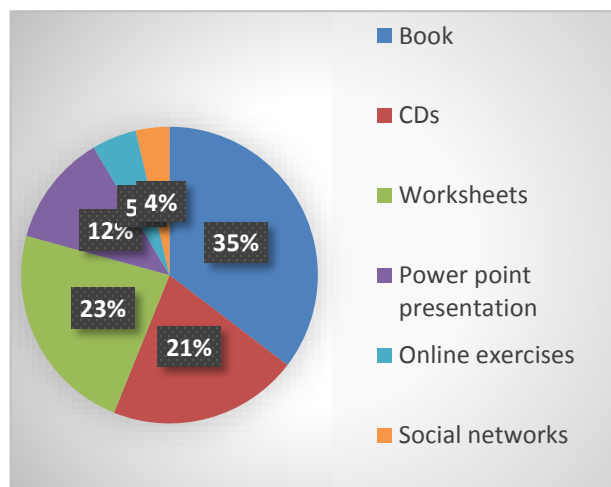
**Which of the follow teaching resources does your teacher use to teach English?**

**Graph 20**



**Source:** Teacher's questionnaire

**Author:** Doris Sosoranga



**Source:** Students questionnaire

**Author:** Doris Sosoranga

Graphic 20 displays data about the resources teachers use to teach grammar, 33% of teachers preferred to explain and teach grammar using worksheets, 17% have access to

technological resources and used power point presentations, online exercises and social networks, for their classes. Only 16% use only one resource, which is usually, the textbook.

Considering the students' results, 35% of participants mentioned that the most common resource was the book, 23% stated that grammar is taught with worksheets. Conversely, 17% claimed that grammar is explained using CDs, power point presentations, online exercises and social networks resources.

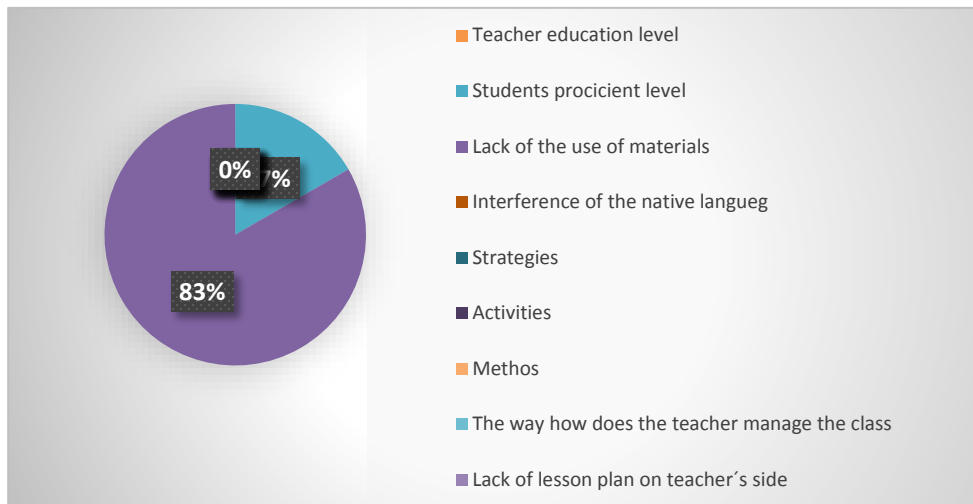
Howard and Major (2015), state: "Effective teaching materials to teach English grammar should be focused on the communicative language teaching. Also they should be applicable and suitable for real experiences in the first and second languages." Also, the teaching resources have to be attractive and stimulate interaction among students.

The correlation between teachers and students is interesting because the results vary considerably in that teachers stated that they often use technological resources and students claimed that textbooks, worksheets and CDs are the main resources in class, this fact was confirmed through observations. It is important to highlight that many classrooms are not equipped with the necessary tools to use power point presentations or any type of online resource.

Based on these results, it can be noted that because of financial issues teachers are not able to use technological resources in most cases. Which is why they rely on worksheets, cd's and textbooks to teach most of the contents.

**What are the factors that limit the use of grammar, in students, for communicative purpose?**

**Graph 21**

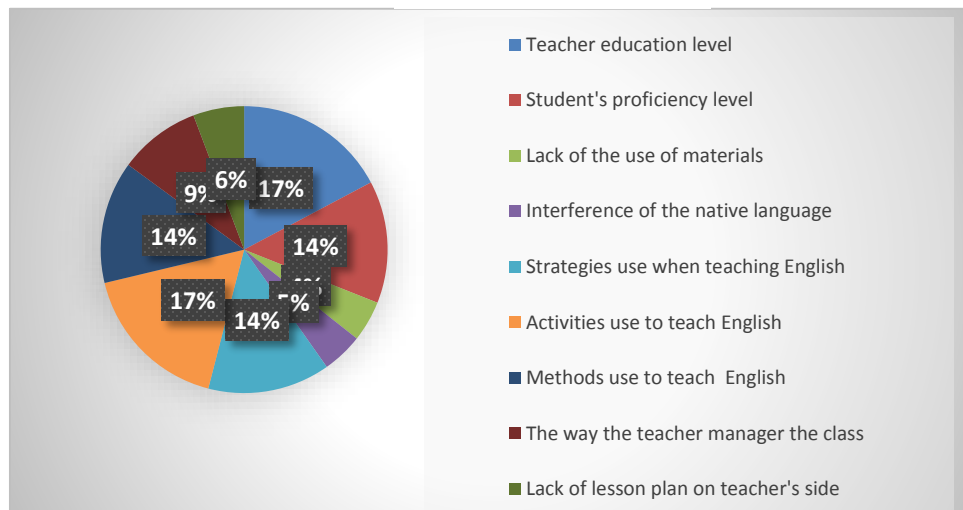


**Source:** Teacher's questionnaire

**Author:** Doris Sosoranga

**What are the factors that limit the use of grammar, in students, for communicative purpose?**

**Graph 21**



**Source:** Students questionnaire

**Author:** Doris Sosoranga

Graph 21 analyzes the possible reasons which limit the use of grammar for communicative purposes. As illustrated in the pie chart, 83% of teachers believe that one of the main factors preventing students from using grammar for communicative purposes is the lack of didactic materials; whereas 17% mentioned that the proficiency level had a great impact on students in terms of communication.

The second figure displays the students' results about the topic mentioned above. According to the chart, 17% of students considered that the reasons why they do not use grammar effectively in communication was the lack of activities to teach English and the teachers level of education. Inadequate methods, students' proficiency level, and inappropriate use of strategies in the teaching learning process represent 14% of the participants. While management of the class accounts for 9% of the students, the percentage for lack of lesson plan, interference of the mother tongue, and lack of didactic materials had only 6%.

According to Huang (2010), one of the main factors limiting teachers and students ability to develop communicative competences in class are: lack of didactic resources, lack of use of techniques, strategies and activities that enhance interaction in the target language.

Comparing the statistical results from both graphs, it is clear that the majority of teachers consider that one of the main factors which limits the use of grammar for communicative purposes is the lack of didactic resources. If teachers are not provided with the necessary materials, they will not be able to develop and optimize the teaching process. In contrast, students found differences suggesting that the use of grammar for communicative purposes is basically limited by the lack of interactive activities, teaching methods and the inadequate use of strategies. On the



other hand, the observations found that facts such as effective strategies and didactic resources are the main cause of avoiding the use of grammar in real situations.

## CONCLUSIONS

Among many of the approaches used by teachers, to teach English, are Communicative language teaching and Grammar Translation method, the latter does not favor communicative competences because it is based on the traditional approach of teaching grammar. Therefore, students do not have opportunities to practice of language in a communicative form.

A few teaching strategies which are used: such as games that encourage speaking, use of realia to describe things and individual assignment do not provide students with the adequate balance needed in order to develop communicative skills. As a consequence, students do not have opportunities to improve the language in exhaustive communicative way.

The majority of activities applied in the teaching of grammar for communicative purposes were dialogues, underline the word that fits the structure, task-based learning and oral presentation. However, these activities do not provide to students with enough spoken English required in order to improve communication. Hence, students are learning English from mechanical drills and not in a communicative way.

The teaching resources most used by teachers, to teach English, were, worksheets and text books. These resources do not promote in students the interaction and participation between the learning and use of language because these resources focus their teaching on the traditional manner of teaching English. As a consequence, the students learn English in passive way instead of active communicative way.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

English teachers should be use variety of teaching methods in order to expose students to the target language in all its forms.

Teachers should applied a variety of teaching strategies, in order to involve learners in the active learning.

Teachers should include variety of communicative activities in class in order provide students with opportunities to use the English language in a variety of context.

The teaching resources used by teachers should stimulate interest and promote interactive in the students.

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# ANNEXES



**UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA  
PARTICULAR DE LOJA**  
*La Universidad Católica de Loja*

**Modalidad Presencial**

**English Major**

**Teacher's Questionnaire**

**High school name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Year:** \_\_\_\_\_

Choose the option that applies to you

**1. Which level of education do you have? (only one option)**

- a. PHD Degree ( )      c. English Bachelor's Degree ( )  
b. English Master's Degree ( )      d. High school diploma ( )

**2. Do you consider that teaching grammar is important?**

- a. YES ( )  
b. NOT ( )  
c. Why? \_\_\_\_\_

**3. What is the amount of spoken English you use in class?**

- a. 10% - 40% ( )  
b. 45% - 75% ( )  
c. 80% - 100% ( )

**4. What percentage of the class talk-time do you use?**

a. 10%-40% ( )

b. 45%- 75% ( )

c. 80% -100% ( )

**5. What percentage of the class talk-time do your students use?**

a. 10%- 40% ( )

b. 45%- 75% ( )

c. 80% -100% ( )

**6. Grammar should be taught with a focus on: ( chose one option)**

a. Structure ( )

b. Communication ( )

c. Booth ( )

d. Why:\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Which of the following aspects do you consider at the moment of teaching English**

**(choose the option that apply)**

a. Gender ( )

b. Age ( )

c. Students´ proficiency level ( )

d. Different learning styles ( )

e. Unit /yearly lesson plan ( )

**8. Which level of English proficiency do your students have?**

a. Beginners ( )

b. Intermedia ( )

c. Advance ( )

**9. Mark the strategies that favor the communicative approach of language.**

- a. Games that encourage speaking ( )
- b. Visual scaffolding (provide visual support to understand vocabulary) ( )
- c. Syntax surgery (unscramble sentences) ( )
- d. Grouping students ( )
- e. Use realia to describe ( )
- f. Individual assignments ( )
- g. Pairing students ( )
- h. Read for details ( )

**10. Which of the following activities do you use to encourage students communicate?**

- a. Dialogues ( )
- b. Underline the word that fits the structure ( )
- c. Oral presentation ( )
- d. Filling in blanks ( )
- e. Task-based in learning ( )
- f. Listen and sing songs ( )
- g. Watch a short video and tell ( )

**11. Which of the following methods or approaches do you use when teaching grammar?**

**(choose the most common)**

- a. Communicative Language Teaching ( )
- b. Grammar translation ( )
- c. Audio-lingual method ( )
- d. Natural method ( )
- e. Total physical response ( )
- f. Functional Notional ( )

**12. Do you consider discipline is important to improve the teaching-learning environment?**

- a. Yes ( )
- b. Not ( )

**13. When you provide instructions, in English, do your students understand them?**

- a. Always ( )

b. Frequently ( )

c. Rarely ( )

**14. Regarding instructions, do your students ask for clarifications?**

a. Always ( )

b. Frequently ( )

c. Rarely ( )

**15. How often do you assign specific time for the activities that students have to perform in class: (choose one option)**

a. Always ( )

b. Frequently ( )

c. Rarely ( )

**16. Do you provide feedback to student's performance?**

a. Yes ( )

b. Not ( )

c. Something ( )

d. Why\_\_\_\_\_

**17. What is the most appropriate moment to provide feedback to students?**

a. At the end of the class ( )

b. At the exact moment when the mistake is made ( )

c. In the next class ( )

**18. What is the most appropriate way to provide feedback to students?**

a. with an example and explanation ( )

d. In oral form ( )

b. Asking questions for the students ( )

e. In a different form ( )

to identify the mistake ( )

f. In a dissimulate form ( )

c. In written form ( )

**19. Which of the following teaching resources are useful to teach grammar in order to encourage communicative skills?**

a. Book ( ) d. Power point presentation ( )

b. CDs ( ) e. Online exercises ( )

c. Worksheets ( ) f. Social networks ( )

**20. What are the factors that limit the use of grammar, in students, for communicative purpose? ( choose the three most common)**

a. Teacher education level ( ) g. Methods used to teach English ( )

b. Students proficient level ( ) h. The way the teacher

c. Lack of the use of materials ( ) manages the class ( )

d. Interference of the native language ( ) i. Lack of lesson plan

e. Strategies used to on teacher's side ( )

teach grammar ( )

f. Activities used to teach English ( )

*Thanks for your answers*



**UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA  
PARTICULAR DE LOJA**  
*La Universidad Católica de Loja*

**Modalidad presencial**

**English Major**

**Student's Questionnaire**

**High school name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Year:** \_\_\_\_\_

**1. You study English because:**

- a. Do you like it ( )
- b. because it is important ( )
- c. because it is part of the curriculum ( )

**2. Do you consider that learning grammar is important?**

- a. YES ( )
- b. NOT ( )
- c. Why \_\_\_\_\_

**3. What is the amount of spoken English you use in class?**

- a. 10% - 40% ( )
- b. 45% - 75% ( )
- c. 80% - 100% ( )

**4. What percentage of the class talk-time does your teacher use?**

- a. 10%-40% ( )
- b. 45%- 75% ( )
- c. 80% -100% ( )

**5. What percentage of the class talk-time do you use?**

- a. 10%- 40% ( )
- b. 45%- 75% ( )
- c. 80% -100% ( )

**6. Your teacher teaches grammar with a focus on: (choose one option)**

- a. Structure ( )
- b. Communication ( )
- c. Booth ( )

**7. Mark the strategies that your teacher uses, to teach English grammar.**

- a. Games that encourage speaking ( )
- b. Visual scaffolding (provide visual support to understand vocabulary) ( )
- c. Syntax surgery (unscramble sentences) ( )
- d. Grouping students ( )
- e. Use realia to describe ( )
- f. Individual assignments ( )
- g. Pairing students ( )
- h. Read for details ( )

**8. Which of the following activities does your teacher use, to teach English?**

- a. Dialogues ( )
- b. Underline the word that fits the structure ( )
- c. Oral presentation ( )
- d. Filling in blanks ( )
- e. Task-based in learning ( )
- f. Listen and sing songs ( )
- g. Watch a short video and tell ( )



**9. Does the teacher control discipline to improve the teaching-learning environment?**

- a. Yes ( )
- b. Not ( )

**10. When your teacher provides instructions, in English, do you understand them?**

- a. Always ( )
- b. Frequently ( )
- c. Rarely ( )

**11. Regarding teacher's instructions in English, do you ask for clarifications?**

- a. Always ( )
- b. Frequently ( )
- c. Rarely ( )

**12. How often does your teacher assign specific time for the activities that you have to perform in class? (choose one option)**

- a. Always ( )
- b. Frequently ( )
- c. Rarely ( )

**13. Does your teacher provide feedback?**

- a. Yes ( )
- b. Not ( )
- c. Something ( )

**14. In which moment does your teacher provides feedback?**

- a. At the end of the class ( )
- b. At the exact moment when the mistake is made ( )
- c. In the next class ( )

**15. How does your teacher provide feedback?**

- a. With an example and explanation ( )
- b. Asking questions for the students to identify their mistake ( )
- c. In written form ( )
- d. In oral form ( )
- e. In a direct form ( )
- f. In a dissimulate form ( )

**16. Which of the following teaching resources does your teacher use to teach English?**

- a. Book ( )
- b. CDs ( )
- c. Worksheets ( )
- d. Power point presentation ( )
- e. Online exercises ( )
- f. Social networks ( )

**17. What are the factors that limit the use of grammar for communicative purpose?**

**(choose the three most common)**

- a. Teacher education level ( )
- b. Students' proficiency level ( )
- c. Lack of the use of materials ( )
- d. Interference of the native language ( )
- e. Strategies use when teaching English ( )
- f. Activities use to teach English ( )
- g. Methods use to teach English ( )
- h. The way the teacher manager the class ( )
- i. Lack of lesson plan on teacher's side ( )

*Thanks for your answers*



**UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA  
PARTICULAR DE LOJA**  
*La Universidad Católica de Loja*

**Modalidad presencial**

**English Major**

**OBSERVATION SHEET**

**High school name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Year:** \_\_\_\_\_

**1. What is the amount of English use in class by the teacher?**

a. 10%- 40% \_\_\_\_\_

b. 45%- 75% \_\_\_\_\_

c. 80% - 100% \_\_\_\_\_

**2. What is the amount of English use in class by the students?**

a. 10%- 40% \_\_\_\_\_

b. 45%- 75% \_\_\_\_\_

c. 80% - 100% \_\_\_\_\_

**3. What percentage of the class talk-time does the teacher use in class?**

a. 10%-40% \_\_\_\_\_

b. 45%- 75% \_\_\_\_\_

c. 80% -100% \_\_\_\_\_

**4. What percentage of the class talk-time do the students use in class?**

- a. 10%- 40% \_\_\_\_\_
- b. 45%- 75% \_\_\_\_\_
- c. 80% -100% \_\_\_\_\_

**5. The teacher teaches grammar with a focus on:**

- a. Structure \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Communication \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Booth \_\_\_\_\_

**6. Which the following strategies does the teacher use more frequently in class?**

- a. Games that encourage speaking \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Visual scaffolding \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Syntax surgery \_\_\_\_\_
- d. Group students \_\_\_\_\_
- e. Use realia to describe \_\_\_\_\_
- f. Individual assignment \_\_\_\_\_
- g. Pairing students \_\_\_\_\_
- h. Read for details \_\_\_\_\_

**7. From the following activities, which of them does the teacher use in class?**

- a. Dialogues \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Underline the word that fits the structure \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Oral presentation \_\_\_\_\_
- d. Filling in blanks \_\_\_\_\_
- e. Task-based in learning \_\_\_\_\_
- f. Listen and sing songs \_\_\_\_\_

g. Watch a short video and tell\_\_\_\_\_

**8. Which of the following methods, or approaches does the teacher use when teaching grammar?**

a. Communicative Language Teaching\_\_\_\_\_

b. Grammar translation\_\_\_\_\_

c. Audio-lingual method\_\_\_\_\_

d. Natural method\_\_\_\_\_

e. Total physical response\_\_\_\_\_

f. Functional Notional\_\_\_\_\_

**9. The teacher control the students' discipline to improve the teaching-learning environment**

a. Yes\_\_\_\_\_

b. Not\_\_\_\_\_

**10. When teacher provides instructions, in English, students understand them:**

a. Always\_\_\_\_\_

b. Frequently\_\_\_\_\_

c. Rarely\_\_\_\_\_

**11. Regarding instructions, students ask for clarifications:**

a. Always\_\_\_\_\_

b. Frequently\_\_\_\_\_

c. Rarely\_\_\_\_\_

**12. The teacher assigns specific time for the activities that students have to perform in class:**

- a. Always\_\_\_\_\_
- b. Frequently\_\_\_\_\_
- c. Rarely\_\_\_\_\_

**13. The teacher provides feedback to students' performance.**

- a. Yes\_\_\_\_\_
- b. Not\_\_\_\_\_
- c. Sometime\_\_\_\_\_

**14 In which moment of the class does the teacher provide feedback to students?**

- a. At the end of the class\_\_\_\_\_
- b. At the exact moment when the mistake is made\_\_\_\_\_
- c. In the next class\_\_\_\_\_

**15 How does the teacher provide feedback?**

- a. with an example and explanation\_\_\_\_\_
- b. Asking questions for the students to identify the mistake\_\_\_\_\_
- c. In written form \_\_\_\_\_
- d. In oral form\_\_\_\_\_
- e. In a direct form \_\_\_\_\_
- f. In a dissimulate form\_\_\_\_\_

**16 From the following teaching resources, which of them does the teacher use to teach grammar?**

- a. Book\_\_\_\_\_
- b. CDs
- c. Worksheets\_\_\_\_\_

d. Power point presentation\_\_\_\_\_

e. Online exercises\_\_\_\_\_

f. Social networks\_\_\_\_\_

**17 What are the factors that limit the use of grammar for communicative purpose?**

a. Teacher education level\_\_\_\_\_

b. Students proficient level\_\_\_\_\_

c. Lack of the use of materials\_\_\_\_\_

d. Interference of the native language\_\_\_\_\_

e. Strategies\_\_\_\_\_

f. Activities\_\_\_\_\_

g. Methods\_\_\_\_\_

h. The way the teacher manages the class\_\_\_\_\_

i. Lack of lesson plan on teacher's side\_\_\_\_\_