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

**TRABAJO DE TITULACIÓN**

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De mi consideración:

El presente trabajo de titulación: “Factors that influence the English language teaching-learning process in Ecuadorian private high schools” realizado por Espíndola Lara Mónica Gabriela y Herrera Quishpi María Margarita, ha sido orientado y revisado durante su ejecución, por cuanto se aprueba la presentación del mismo.

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## DECLARACIÓN DE AUTORÍA Y CESIÓN DE DERECHOS

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Margarita declaramos ser autoras del presente trabajo de titulación: Factors that influence the English language teaching-learning process in Ecuadorian private high schools, de la Titulación de Ciencias de la Educación mención Inglés, siendo la Magister Lida Mercedes Solano Jaramillo directora del presente trabajo; y eximo expresamente a la Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja y a sus representantes legales de posibles reclamos o acciones legales. Además certifico que las ideas, conceptos, procedimientos y resultados vertidos en el presente trabajo investigativo, son de mi exclusiva responsabilidad.

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## DEDICATION

We want to dedicate this thesis to our beloved God, who has given us the opportunity to finish our studies in the “Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja” and to get our university degree.

We also want to dedicate this thesis to our parents for giving us their support and encouragement and being with us in this stage.

Additionally, we would like to dedicate this research work to our teachers who have provided us with the information, support, and experience to improve our knowledge of the English language and teaching techniques. Teaching is a noble profession that helps in the growth of our.

Finally, we dedicate this research to all the students who have helped us to grow as teachers, and given us numerous moments of joy and personal satisfaction.

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## ABSTRACT

The theme investigated is factors that influence the English language teaching-learning process in Ecuadorian private high schools. The purpose of this study is to analyze what factors influence the teaching-learning process, so that teachers can use this information to improve their teaching process, which in turn will improve the students learning process.

This research was carried out in the city of Riobamba, at fourteen private high schools where one teacher and one student from each institution participated. In other words, fifteen teachers were interviewed and applied a questionnaire, fifteen classes were observed and fifteen students were surveyed in levels ranging from eighth grade of basic education to third year of senior high school. The data collected through classroom observations, interviews, and questionnaires was analyzed quantitatively and it was presented in 20 graphs, where four main factors concerning teachers, students, classrooms, and institutions were considered.

The analysis of results allowed concluding that the main factors that influence the English language teaching learning process in private high schools are the ones concerning to teachers and classrooms.

Key words: Teaching English, factors, private high schools, students, education.

## RESUMEN

El tema investigado es “Factores que influyen el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje del idioma Inglés en instituciones privadas Ecuatorianas”. El propósito principal de este estudio fue el analizar qué factores influyen en el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje, para que los maestros puedan usar esta información y mejorar su enseñanza, la cual a futuro mejorará el proceso de aprendizaje de los estudiantes.

La investigación fue llevada a cabo en la ciudad de Riobamba, en catorce colegios privados, desde octavo año de educación básica a tercer año de bachillerato. La población de muestra fue seleccionada entre estudiantes y maestros. Quince maestros fueron entrevistados y además se les aplicó un cuestionario, quince clases fueron observadas y quince estudiantes fueron encuestados. La información recolectada a través de observaciones de clase, entrevistas y cuestionarios fue analizada cualitativamente y presentada en veinte gráficos, los cuales consideraron cuatro principales factores que conciernen a los docentes, estudiantes, aulas e instituciones.

El análisis de los resultados permitieron concluir en los principales factores que influyen en el proceso de enseñanza aprendizaje del idioma inglés, en las escuelas secundarias privadas, los cuales son relativos a los docentes y referentes a las aulas de clase.

Palabras clave: Enseñanza del inglés, factores, colegios privados, estudiantes, educación.

## INTRODUCTION

English has become the most important and standardized language in the world because it is used by people to communicate in many fields such as science, technology, politics, economics, among others.

Due to this growing expansion of the English language throughout the world, it is important for students in Ecuadorian high schools to learn it and for teachers to improve the teaching of this subject. Research based on the factors that influence the teaching-learning process has been minimal in Ecuador; for this reason, it is necessary to investigate on the factors that influence the English teaching-learning process in Ecuadorian private high schools so that authorities and teachers of these institutions could know how to take action regarding these factors.

The specific objectives of this study were to identify the level of English of students and what their needs in the English classroom are, to identify students' English level and their needs in the classroom, to determine the classroom conditions in which English lessons take place, to identify the characteristics of in-service English teachers, and to determine institutional facilities and norms regarding quality education.

Since the purpose of this study was to determine the factors that influence the teaching-learning process, it is worth mentioning that the study of this topic is very important for the English language teaching community in Ecuador because teachers, institutions as well as authorities will be able to understand the factors that influence the teaching-language process positively and/or negatively; and in this way, weaknesses can be improved or strengths reinforced as far as English teaching is concerned.

This research includes some studies on factors influencing the English

teaching –learning process that have been previously investigated by other researchers and that are also of great support for the current research. For example, Cakmak (2009) carried out a study to identify the perceptions of students in transition to be teachers (practitioner teachers) about class size and its effects on the teaching process. Although statistical references are not included in this study because it is complicated reflect results of students-teachers relationship between teaching methods and classroom statements. This includes an important fact that is classroom management has a great relevance in different kinds of classes, considering the students amount in each class. No limitation is informed in the investigation.

By this part, Blatchford, Russell, Bassett, Brown, and Martin (2006) conducted a study to determine whether teachers in large and small classes differ in time spent on teaching or instructional activities. By considering four language skills there are times in which depending on topic, and classroom objectives; time may vary according to their syllabus. For that reason syllabus must be flexible to accomplish the principal achievements. The limitations found were that class size is related with the students' inattentiveness and the interaction between children.

Abbas (2012) conducted a research which dealt with the factors that affect EFL learners' pronunciation learning and strategies for instruction which looked at the role of the teacher especially, with regard to feedback in the classroom. Teacher must act as a 'speech coach', rather than as pronunciation corrector, the feedback is an important point for activating students' willingness for not committing any mistakes and getting enough confidence to speak in class. If these criteria are archive according to learners' needs and preferences, learning the pronunciation of foreign language may be accomplished. Again the author did not find any limitations.

The present research is going to benefit teachers, institutions, and students.

Firstly, teachers through this study can become aware of the factors that influence the teaching-learning process, especially, the ones related to teaching methods. Institutions will also benefit from the information related to classroom size, seating arrangement, importance of teaching and classroom equipment, monitoring, and observation processes; thus they will be able to consider these aspects in a suitable way.

Additionally, through this research, teachers and institutions will understand better how different factors influence the teaching-learning process. Also, students will benefit too as they will receive an improved teaching process, facilities, and equipment in the classrooms.

Finally, it is relevant to mention that a limitation was found during the field research, and it was related with the small sample for answering to the survey since only one student from each class was part of it. For this reason, it is possible that choosing only one student could have brought a very limited idea of what was actually happening, as one student may have one opinion and the rest a different one. Therefore, it is recommended to apply the survey to three or more students in further investigations.

## METHOD

### *Setting and Participants*

This research was carried out in fourteen private high schools from the city of Riobamba, province of Chimborazo. The participants were fifteen teachers and fifteen students from eighth grade of basic education to third year of senior high school. The average age of the teachers was thirty to fifty; the majority of them were experienced teachers and most of them were women. The students surveyed were from thirteen and eighteen years old and were both male and female and their academic level was standard.

### *Procedures*

The research process began by conducting a bibliographic investigation, which involved the gathering of information in topics such as teaching English as a foreign language in Ecuador, teaching approaches and methods, classroom management, lesson design, class size, seating arrangement, teaching resources, classroom observation, learning styles, and language aptitude. In addition, data of previous studies carried out on factors influencing the teaching-learning process of English as a foreign language (EFL) was included. After that, with all this information, the literature review was developed with the purpose of building a basis of knowledge on the factors that affect the teaching-learning process. This information was obtained from a variety of sources such as journal articles, the internet, and books.

Once concluded the bibliographic research and literature review, the process of the field research started by observing fifteen classes. After the class observation, one student was selected randomly to fill out a questionnaire. The teacher, whose class was observed, was also asked to do the same. The students' questionnaire had 14 questions and the teacher's questionnaire 20 questions. The majority of the

questions were Yes/No questions and some of them included a “why” section. The questionnaire covered four distinct themes such as factors that influence teachers, students, classrooms, and institutions.

Moreover, the teacher of the class was interviewed in order to get further information on the teachers’ English language proficiency. The content of the interview involved teaching English in Ecuador and the benefits and rewards of learning and teaching English.

The techniques employed were survey, observation, and note taking. Moreover, questionnaires, interviews, and observation formats were instruments supplied in order to collect the necessary data.

The next step was to process and tabulate the data gathered during the field investigation. This tabulation was carried out according to the results from the teachers’ questionnaire, which had 20 numerals which were used to report the number of teachers that answered positively or negatively to each of the variables. Furthermore, once the number of answers were established, it was possible to change them into percentages which were represented through graphics that helped in the visualization of the results.

As a final point, the aspects considered on the description were: an analysis and interpretation of results, which were considered with a quantitative method. These outcomes were displayed into percentages through graphics according to the factors concerning teachers, students, classrooms and educational institutions; then they were analyzed by describing and interpreting the results, giving support from students’ answers in the questionnaire, adding information from the class observations, and referring from the literature review. After analyzing the information collected during the field research, the results of the study were drawn.

## DISCUSSION

### Literature Review

In our globalized world English “is unquestionably the world’s *lingua franca* at present” states the Ministry of Education (2012, p.3). For this reason, it is crucial that students learn English well during their time in the education system since this language helps people to understand other people and cultures. Regarding this topic, Utreras (2012) goes as far as to say “If you don’t know English, you can’t be in anything” (p.1).

Considering the current and growing importance of English, it is vital that teachers and institutions are aware of the factors that influence the teaching-learning process so that they are able to contribute with the best training as well as teaching methodology.

This literature review will consider a variety of themes that support the current research in a theoretical and bibliographical way. The topics included are: importance of teaching English as a foreign language in Ecuador, teaching approaches and methods, managing learning, lesson design, class size (number of students), classroom space, seating arrangement, classroom and/or teaching resources, classroom observation, learning styles, language aptitude. In addition to these themes, five previous studies carried out in this field contribute to the understanding of the factors that influence the teaching-learning process. These topics are going to be enlightened in the following paragraphs.

#### *Importance of Teaching English as a Foreign Language in Ecuador*

Ecuador has been facing a deficit in the proper execution of the process of teaching and learning the English Language and for this reason the importance of teaching English as a foreign language has increased these past few years by

carrying out investigations and giving alternatives to improve this process. For instance, the Secretaría Nacional de Educación Superior, Ciencia, Tecnología e Innovación (SENESCYT) & the Ministerio de Educación del Ecuador (2012) reported that a great percentage of educators in the English language area do not achieve the minimum level (B2), that is required to teach English and that has been established by the Common European Framework of Reference of the Languages; in addition, the high school graduates' also have an inadequate level of English. Therefore, a project that focuses on the improvement of English teaching has been developed in Ecuador.

The Ministerio de Educación (2012) states that in order to run the project above mentioned, some objectives must be set; these objectives include requiring the minimum level of competency (B2), not only for those applying to teach English, but also for those already teaching the language; additionally, the high school students need to have the guarantee that they would reach the minimum level as well (B1); furthermore, these new guidelines also call for a curriculum that includes international standards that enhance the educational opportunities; and in order to develop these objectives, English teachers in Ecuador were evaluated with the TOEFL test to determine the level they have.

The results allowed the Ministry of Education to set the information programs which then allowed the participants to be grouped according to their commonalities. For instance, a program of scholarships in the United States called “Enseña Ingles” has been created and which aims to enhance the teaching knowledge and methodology of the English Language of the prospect educators of Ecuadorian public high schools in order to guarantee the students that they will acquire a good level of English when they graduate.

### *Teaching Approaches and Methods*

In the classroom there are a number of different methods that teachers can use, there are traditional methods and contemporary methods that have been developed recently, especially due to changes in technology and pedagogical theory. It is important for teachers to be aware of and understand these different methods and the advantages and disadvantages of using them, so that they can make good decisions about which is best to use in each situation.

For instance, the Natural Approach is a teaching method that focuses on “presenting comprehensible input in the target language” (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p.185). According to these authors, the teacher will use visual aids such as objects in the classroom or pictures to help the students identify the new language, and when the students are ready, they will respond to teacher’s commands and questions. Here, realia is very important (charts, pictures, advertisements, etc.) and pair /group work is common with a focus on communicative activities.

Additionally, Brown (2001) states that in the Natural Approach, second languages are sometimes learned by communicating in a written way and sometimes by listening to lectures, speaking in a classroom context, or writing for reporting a research study.

Another teaching method is the Communicative language teaching (CLT) which according to Richards and Rodgers (2001) as the name implies is based on communication. These authors also state that communication includes the combination of different language skills. Furthermore, Brown (2001) states that in CLT, language techniques are applied to have students use the language in a pragmatic, authentic, functional, meaningful, productive, and receptive way.

In addition, the methods and approaches above mentioned, there is another

one called Content Based Instruction. Richards and Rodgers (2001) say that in this method the teaching does not focus on any sort of syllabus, instead it focuses on the content itself and on what the learners will learn. For Larsen-Freeman (2000), in Content Based Instruction the learning of language is integrated with the learning of academic subject matter, which offers a natural content for language teaching.

An additional method is the Grammar Translation one, and regarding this matter Richards and Rodgers (2001) say that it has as a main feature, the focus on translating texts or sentences from the native language to the target language or vice versa; furthermore, Spolsky and Asher (1999) state that in Grammar Translation Method, students are required to understand and memorize grammar rules of the target language to carry out written tasks.

Last but not least another teaching method is the Total Physical Response (TPR). This method has emphasis on teaching speaking skills through drills, primarily by having the students to listen carefully and to respond physically to a series of given commands (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). In addition, in TPR the target language is used communicatively to make learners to listen to it from the beginning of instruction, and the teacher facilitates comprehension of the language being taught through the use of pictures and occasional words provided in the mother tongue of the learners (Larsen-Freeman, 2000).

### *Managing Learning*

It is very clear that managing learning is very important for teachers in the classroom; this specifically refers to giving instructions allotting the right time for each task and giving feedback. Harmer (2007) considers that instructions are essential because if the students do not understand how to develop a group activity, a listening comprehension task or a piece of homework they will be unable to carry

out the task correctly. The same author points out “There are two general rules for giving instructions at any level: they must be kept simple as possible, and they must be coherent” (p.265).

On the other hand, feedback is a very important aspect in the classroom as it helps students to understand their mistakes. Gower, Phillips and Walters (1983) present the main stages in the feedback process; the students must know that something is not accurate, and what kind of mistake is making. The authors also mention that feedback can be given by the teacher directly or it is possible for students to give feedback to each other. However, they make the point that feedback is a skill that has to be developed over time saying that it requires sensitivity on the part of the teacher.

Regarding time, Harmer (2007) discusses the importance of good timing of activities in lessons, saying that if students never finish activities they will lose confidence in teachers and become frustrated, but if a teacher is always continuing after the bell has gone the students will become irritated. Also if a teacher overestimates the time needed for an activity they will have time to fill in the class and may have nothing prepared. The author recommends that it is impossible to prevent these problems, but teachers should try to estimate how long each activity would take.

### *Lesson Design*

Developing a lesson plan is vital to succeed in teaching English since it aids teachers to have clear objectives to teach their classes. Harmer (2007) states that planning lessons shows the students that the teacher is committed to the classes, as well as demonstrating a level of professionalism. This means that students will respect their teachers and be more likely to pay attention in the class. Additionally,

planning gives lessons a framework, teachers can go in a different direction to the plan as they respond to their students, but the plan provides the teacher with “a destination which they want their students to reach, and some idea of how they are going to get there” (p.156).

Moreover, planning is a process that involves more than simply writing down a written list of what to do in the class; regarding this aspect, Woodward (2001) notes important factors involved in the planning process such as listening to students, remembering, visualizing, noting things down and even staring into space while drinking a tea. The author makes the point that planning is an organic, continuous process and describes some important advantages of planning lessons such as reducing panic and increasing confidence, inspiring confidence to students who perceive purpose, progression and coherence, as well as reminding teachers of what materials to prepare to make it easier to organize the time; and activity flow in classes. On the other hand, the author also comments on possible disadvantages of planning such as the fact that students can change their attitude towards learning English during the course, or that staying too close to plans can make teachers inflexible.

### *Class Size*

Class size is an important factor in the teaching-learning process, classes that are too big can negatively affect the teaching learning process; considering this fact, Hayes (1997) states that English teachers think that large classes hinder them from teaching efficiently and effectively, and that most teachers consider classes of 50-60 students to be very large. On the same matter, Strevens (1978) argues that classes that are overcrowded influence negatively the effectiveness of the teaching learning process, because the students are more likely to be distracted and the teacher gives

less attention to each pupil. Students are not the only ones who suffer from oversized classes, teachers also have to “adapt to different classroom contexts” (Bartolo, 2004, p.54). The author makes the point that with large classes, the teacher needs to take care of individual problems whereas with smaller groups it is possible to make whole class modifications.

#### *Classroom Space and Seating Arrangements*

Harmer (2007) introduces the theme of classroom space and seating arrangements by contrasting the difference between students sitting on chairs with wooden pallets in orderly rows, with the teacher often on a raised platform in front of the students and the contrast of students sitting in a large circle around the walls of the classroom with the teacher in the middle. In addition, new ways of arranging seats like separate tables or the horseshoe design, have advantages that Harmer (2007, p. 42) describes as it follows, “the classroom is thus a more intimate place and the potential for students to share feelings and information through talking, eye contact or expressive body movements (eyebrow-raising, shoulder-shrugging, etc.) is far greater”.

On the other hand, Gower, Phillips and Walters (1983, p.22) make the point that even as good as ways of arranging the seats are, not all the time teachers can do what they would like to “Classroom furniture always affects the learning atmosphere to some extent, but the choice will almost certainly be out of your control”.

#### *Classroom and/or Teaching Resources*

Through the use of teaching resources teachers are able to make their classes more interesting and effective. The use of teaching resources also helps teachers to bring variety during the process of teaching and learning. According to Gower, Philips and Walters (1983), there are 8 different teaching aids; the board, overhead

projector, visuals, worksheets, and work cards, the cassette recorder/CD player, Video/DVD, computers, and photocopier. The cassette recorder/CD player is considered as “one of the language teachers most useful tools” (Gower, Philips & Walters, 1983 p. 168), as nearly all published EFL material comes with cassettes, or nowadays CDs. Similarly, the authors say that videos, or nowadays DVDs, are very popular among students; therefore, using these materials in the classroom complements the teaching and learning process by adding variety in the classroom.

In addition to these aids, Gower, Philips, and Walters (1983) also consider course books as a tool that provides advantage such as, providing tasks, a syllabus at the correct level of the students, a great variety of grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, etc. In addition, the book gives continuity and progression, it serves as a guide for the teacher, it is professionally produced with images, CDs, DVD etc. Likewise, these authors also remark some disadvantages regarding course books; for instance, it is not always easy to find course books which match the students’ needs, they may not like the book or they can act as a straightjacket and stop teachers from being creative.

Similarly, Harmer (2007) supports this divided opinion of course books stating that some teachers have a poor opinion of them, considering them boring and stifling, while other teachers have a more positive opinion due to the attractive presentation of the material and the variety of tasks.

#### *Classroom Observation (institution monitoring)*

Throughout history teachers have had a disagreement on whether being observed in their teaching settings has brought benefits or nuisance. According to Garvo and Rothstein (1998), monitoring is important in a class and represents a positive aspect for teachers because it raises their self-confidence. These authors said

that if they receive support from the institution to find alternative solutions to problems that may occur in the classroom, then they will personally grow in efficiency and effectiveness as teachers. These authors also declare that during this process the supervisor needs to use skills of understanding about human behavior, additionally he/she needs to also convey knowledge of learning settings and theories, his /her comprehension of human growth as well as experience. On the contrary, a weak supervisory system has a negative influence, such as misinterpretations or incorrect information provided to the supervisor which may cause a tense working environment.

On the other hand, Glickman (2002) states that the supervisors or principals are not the only leaders to perform activities in favor of improving classroom teaching and learning; they said that it is also important to understand that the use of numerous structures with many leaders for support, focus, and improvement of the teaching and learning process in the classroom, together, can actually lead to progress. For instance, this author states that there are some structures for classroom support that are helpful in schools, such as the clinic supervision, peer coaching, critical friends and classroom action research teams or study groups. Richards and Lockhart (2010). Also state that many ‘traditional’ schools do not monitor their teachers; they simply give them the schedules, but do not monitor what they teach or how they teach. This contrasts to what ‘modern’ schools do; that is, to carry out a continual monitoring process of their teachers and the classes they give. *Learning Styles*

Reid (1995) defines learning style as the term used to describe a person’s usual, typical, and preferred way of absorbing, processing, and retaining new information and skills. In addition, Lightbown and Spada (2006) explain that

learners' instructional preferences influence the way in which they try to learn and assimilate new material.

Furthermore, Woodward (2001) talks about the idea of students having 'dominant sensory channels', these channels are; sight, hearing, touching, tasting, and moving. This author states that some students learn better through activities that use the sense of sight, while others learn better through the sense of hearing, and other through moving, etc. In other words, different senses are stimulated by different teaching methods; for example, communicative teaching stimulates the sense of sound, while total physical response the sense of movement.

#### *Language aptitude*

Lightbown and Spada (2006) state that learners with high aptitudes learn quicker and easier than students with lower aptitudes; they also state that with perseverance, students with lower aptitudes also learn. Besides, they mention that some students have skills in different areas of language learning; for example, one student might have better memory recall, and another, better language analysis skills. Institutions or teachers can implement learning programs that are more appropriate to certain students and less to others. Similarly, John Carroll (1991), who was one of the pioneers in this area of study, characterized aptitude as the ability to learn languages quickly.

Ellis (1997) also mentioned that the different aptitudes that students have for learning L2, is referred as language aptitude, and this is related to students' overall intelligence but is considered different from their intelligence. Moreover, Carroll identified a number of language aptitude components; phonemic coding ability, grammatical sensitivity, inductive language learning ability, rote learning ability.

So far, information regarding the topics that are a relevant part of the

literature review has been mentioned; following, some studies related to the current investigation are presented, and which also are a main bibliographic contribution for this section.

Cakmak (2009) introduces a study whose goal is to recognize the perceptions of teachers as well as of students related to the effects of class size in the teaching-learning process. Student teachers' (practitioner teachers) vision regarding class size and its influence were studied with relation to diverse characteristics of the teaching process. Following, the methodology used through this study in order to collect the respective data was by applying open-ended questions in a questionnaire. While the questionnaire was being applied, the researcher was present in the classroom to assist if any trouble or questions occurred. The aim of the study and the directions for the questionnaire were explained by the researcher and also ensured that the information gathered would be used just for this study. Afterwards, when the questionnaire was completed, the data was analyzed, and a file for each question was created; this aided to examine and to determine the general answers.

The results presented in this study were: That though the statistical connection for this research was not addressed, the analysis showed that student teacher's answers revealed that there is a close association between class size and motivation, the methods used, classroom managing and assessment. For the student teachers, the variety of teaching methods was a practical way in classes with a small number of students so that they could be motivated without much problem. Therefore, successful classroom management can be set in classes of small size. Moreover, different techniques of assessment can be used easily during these classes. Furthermore, most of the student teachers who were part of this study stated

that there is a significant connection between class size and student success as well as with teacher behavior.

Aduwa and Iyamu (2006) found that students in public secondary school in Nigeria do not learn English in an environment conducive to effective learning because the schools are overcrowded, the furniture is not comfortable for proper sitting, and classrooms are without proper lighting as well as ventilation. Taking into consideration these findings, the researchers recommend that the learning environment in public schools in Nigeria should be given priority attention by state and federal governments to help the students learn English effectively.

Furthermore Abbas (2012) conducted a study that focused on factors that affect the learning of English pronunciation by English learners, as well as considering strategies for instruction. The study also looked at integrating pronunciation into the curriculum. The method of the study was to have the students to read and consider literature on the subject and have them report about what they read. From this process, the study found that four factors principally affect English pronunciation learning: attitude, motivation and exposure, instruction, exposure to target language. The conclusion of the study was that it is important to integrate pronunciation with other parts of an English language course like listening; this helps to make pronunciation practice more realistic and practical. This helps the students to feel that they themselves are their own progress and the teacher is not just acting as a “speech coach”. This study also showed the importance of linking different parts of English courses (reading, writing, listening and speaking), so that students apply more interest and work that we carry out in the class is more productive.

Likewise, Sugimoto, Rahimpour and Yaghoubi (2006) conducted another

study about how gender may affect the motivation of students. It is important to consider that there are factors outside the classroom that can improve the English of the students. These may involve economic class, age, location, motivation for being in class and in this case gender. The methodology of the study was the use of a questionnaire with 30 questions to carry out a survey that could be answered using a five point scale (Strongly Agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree.) The conclusions of the authors were that teachers can have a biased attitude in the classroom based on gender. Therefore, the authors concluded that teachers should “free their mind of prejudice and try to see EFL attitudes as unified” (p.58). This helped to understand that teachers must not allow outside factors influence their classes. However, it is important to comprehend that due to different external factors students may have “specific motivational patterns” and thus teachers can prepare classes to take account the motivational patterns, so that all the students are attracted by the classes, this will help to improve the learning of the students.

Finally, Bahous (2011) studied what factors affect students’ language learning, using the views of teachers and students, and through this study help teachers to be able to motivate students. The research used qualitative methods, both questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Notes were also recorded on general discussion and meetings on English courses given at the university; in addition, informal comments were recorded for the study of students and teachers on the English courses subject. The study showed the importance of English in helping students in other areas of their studies, the importance of a relaxed class atmosphere, but one of the main factors affecting students was the lack of motivation. In conclusion, the author found that there are important things to address in English

language classes in the university and those teachers need to incorporate interesting life material that link to their university courses and university professions. Also it is important to motivate students and that action must be taken to develop more positive attitudes towards English learning.

### Description, Analysis, and Interpretation of Results

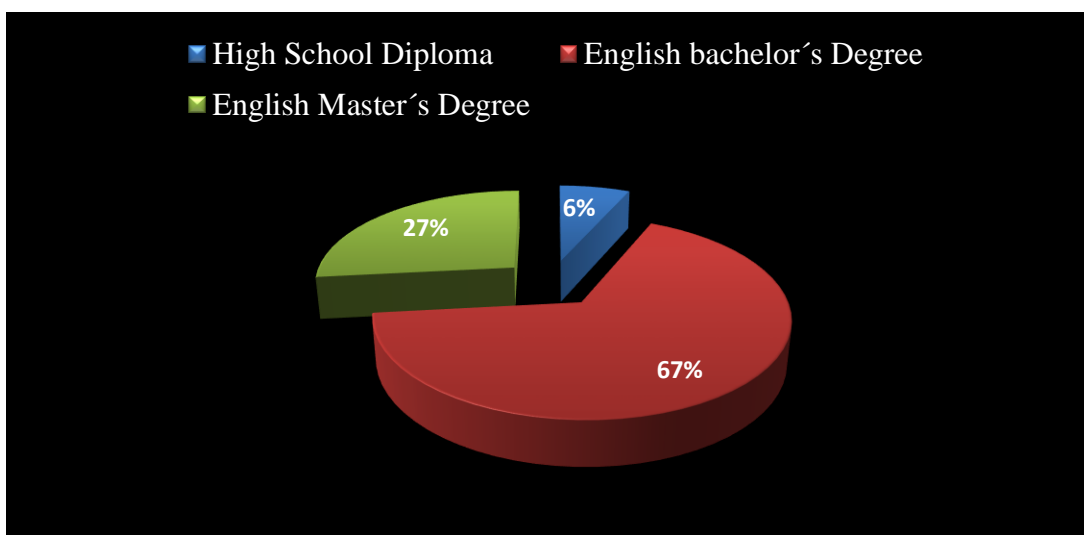
This section analyzes quantitatively the information collected through surveys applied to teachers and students; this data was contrasted and compared with the results acquired in the interviews and observations carried out throughout the field research and which were also tabulated; these results were displayed into 20 graphs and were analyzed according to the factors concerning teachers, students, classrooms, and educational institutions.

#### *Quantitative Analysis*

##### *Factors Concerning Teachers*

*Which level of education do teachers have?*

*Graph 1*



Authors: Espíndola Lara Mónica Gabriela & Herrera Quishpi María Margarita  
Source: Private High Schools of Riobamba

This graph shows that 67% of the interviewed teachers have an English

bachelor's degree and 27% have a master's degree; however, only one, which represents the 6% of the teachers surveyed, did not have a professional teaching qualification, in this case, this teacher only had a high school diploma.

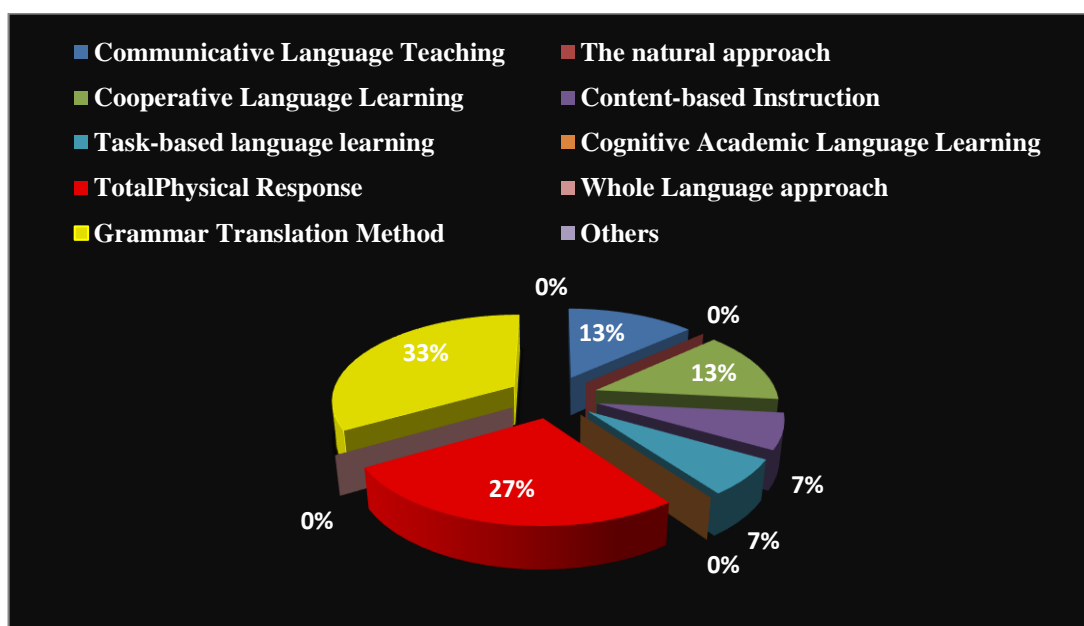
In the observations carried out, it was clearly evidenced that most of the teachers who had an English bachelor's degree and a master's degree have good teaching skills because they used varied teaching methods, they demonstrated good organizational skills, and they have high level of acceptance among students. In fact, the surveyed students stated that they enjoy learning English and that the activities carried out in class motivate them to learn English; this means that the teachers are doing their job well. However, the teacher who only had a high school diploma showed a lack of language proficiency and poor teaching skills.

It was evidenced during the interview (see annex 2) that the teacher with high school diploma (6%) has low English level and he did not speak English; therefore, he was assigned with level A2. Another group of teachers (20%) showed a B1 level which is not appropriate to work in high school. On the other hand, a high percentage of teachers showed good language proficiency since 20% of them had a B2 level, 40% had a C1 level, and 13% had a C2 level. It is important to highlight that the teachers' responses were scored according to the number of questions answered and the level of fluency that teachers demonstrated to express their opinions.

Evidently, the ones who had good English speaking skills were placed in an advanced level, whereas the ones who were not able to answer all the questions in a fluent way were placed in basic levels. This means that only a few teachers had a lower level of English than the required to teach, which is B2.

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

*Graph 2*



Authors: Espíndola Lara Mónica Gabriela & Herrera Quishpi María Margarita  
Source: Private High Schools of Riobamba

According to the teachers' survey, the method mostly used was the Grammar Translation Method (33%). During the observed classes, there were activities such as learning grammar rules and changing English sentences into Spanish, which meet the type of work mentioned by Richards and Rodgers (2001) regarding the Grammar Translation Method; the activities assigned by the teachers show as its main feature the focus on translating texts or sentences from the native language to the target language or vice versa.

On the other hand, Total Physical Response was used in 27%. During classes students received commands from their teachers and they responded with body actions showing a positive attitude towards the lesson.

Another method mentioned by the teachers was the Communicative Language Teaching, which in the survey, it was said to be used in a 13%. In the observed classes, the teachers worked with topics related to real life and encouraged their

students to interact and communicate with one another. What the teachers did completely agrees with Richards and Rodgers (2001), who stated that this method, as the name implies is based on communication.

In the same way, 13% of the teachers indicated that they used Cooperative Language Learning. When teachers used this method all the students were able to communicate and help each other. For instance, students worked in groups and developed written activities and oral expositions that involved everybody's participation. The activities met the description given by Zhang (2010), who explains that Cooperative Learning designates to a systematic instructional method in which students work together in small groups to achieve shared learning goals.

It was also found that 7% of educators mentioned that they used task-based language learning. During the observed classes, the teachers worked with different kinds of tasks that were very similar to real life. In these classes, tasks were the center of the lesson just as Richards and Rodgers (2001) states.

Regarding Content Based Instruction, 7% of the teachers said to apply this method. During the classes, the teachers exposed their students to the English language through simulating real life situations. For example, students practiced the use of language structures needed to interact with others in a gas station. Even though the students practiced and participated actively during this activity, the lesson was not aimed to teach content to the students. Therefore, this type of activity does not meet the description provided by Richards and Rodgers (2001) about Content Based Instruction, which is focused on teaching students a type of content related to any subject.

It is important to mention that any of the observed lessons were focused in teaching content and the main subject was Language Arts. This might evidence that

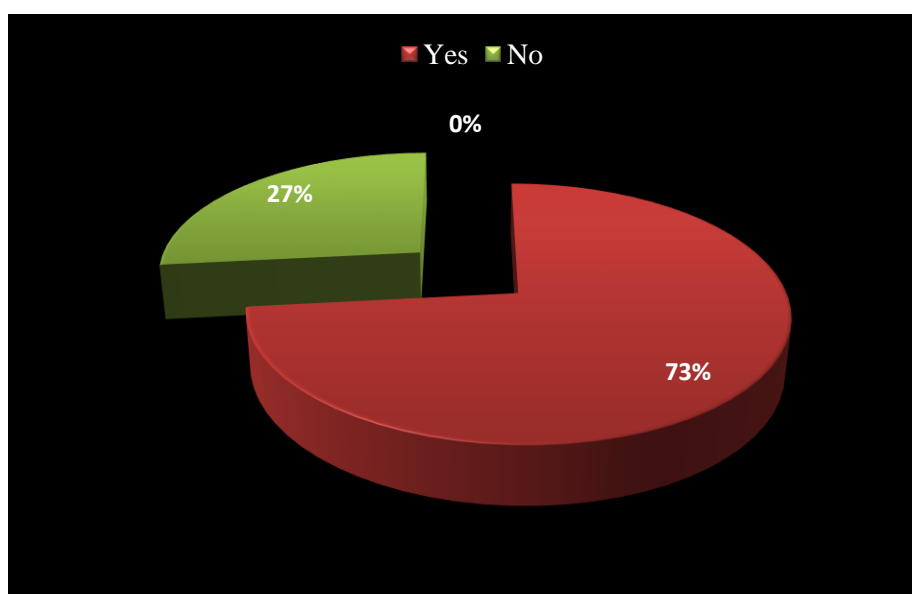
teachers misunderstand or confuse the use of language structures in real life situations with teaching specific content as a mean to acquire the English language.

Finally, the teachers in the questionnaire did not mention any of the following methods: Natural Approach, whole language approach and cognitive academic language learning. In fact, during the observations these methods were not applied at all.

The results show an emphasis in using traditional teaching methods such as Grammar Translation Method and Total Physical Response, while modern methods as Communicative Language Teaching and Cooperative Language Learning were used in less proportion. Besides, it was noticed in several observations that teachers used more than one teaching method in their classes; for instance, they used Grammar Translation Method combined with Communicative Language Teaching or Communicative Language Teaching with Cooperative Language Learning among others.

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

*Graph 3*



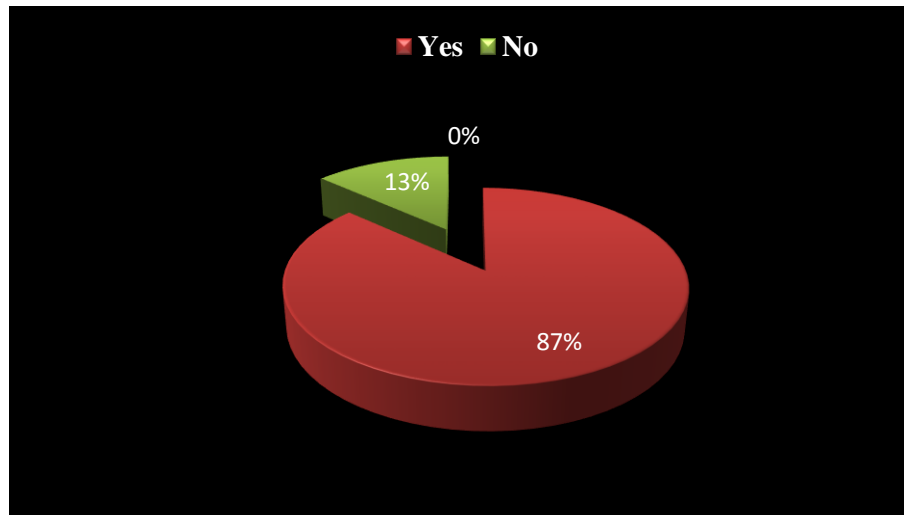
Authors: Espíndola Lara Mónica Gabriela & Herrera Quishpi María Margarita  
Source: Private High Schools of Riobamba

The results show that 73% of the teachers answered in the survey that they apply whole -group activities to teach their lessons. Some of the reasons given were that it is necessary to get the attention from all the students, the students can cooperate and help each other and also give feedback to one another. Relating what it was said by teachers, the British Council (2003) states that thanks to whole group work, students who are not confident enough get the opportunity to put their knowledge of the new language into practice in an environment that is more flexible. Instead of being dependent on the teacher, students get used to helping and learning from each other. However, what it was said by the teachers does not coincide with what it was observed since it was possible to notice that they used more individual activities than whole-group activities. In the observation, the students interacted and participated in the class either way they worked. In fact, during the survey applied, they answered positively about the use of different types of activities. They mentioned that by using diverse types of class activities they learn in an interactive way and that they learn the language better.

On the contrary, 27% of the teachers surveyed argued that they do not use whole group activities. According to them, there are too many students in the class, which means that they are not able to concentrate on the class; time is limited, and it is difficult to control the whole class. These answers were confirmed during the observations because the teachers actually did not apply whole group activities in their classes.

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

*Graph 4*



Authors: Espíndola Lara Mónica Gabriela & Herrera Quishpi María Margarita  
Source: Private High Schools of Riobamba

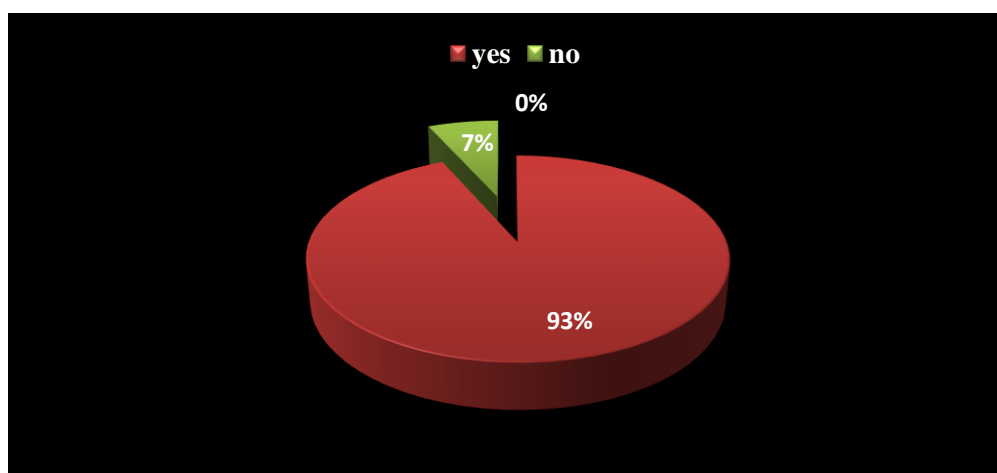
Graph 4 shows that 87% of the teachers said to use individual activities. Some of these teachers explained that they use individual work depending on the type of activity they are using or the type of teaching methods they choose for the lesson. According to these teachers, individual work consist usually in reading and writing activities; they mentioned that individual activities allow them monitoring and correcting students' work in a personalized way, to evaluate their progress and to check their weaknesses too. With regard to these kind of activities, Ur (1991, p. 233) says, that "to make students learn individually implies a serious attempt to place a higher proportion of responsibility for learning on the shoulders of the learners themselves".

Contrasting these results with what was observed, it was verified that there is a little difference since only 11 of the teachers, who responded to use these kinds of activities, taught their classes as they indicated. On the other hand, two teachers

(13%) that responded that they do not use individual activities said that there is not enough time and that there are too many students in the classroom, which does not allow the teacher to check all the students' work. In fact, during the observations these teachers did not use individual activities, but rather they used group work activities. As it was shown in graph four, students participated actively with either way the language was taught.

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

*Graph 5*



Authors: Espíndola Lara Mónica Gabriela & Herrera Quishpi María Margarita  
Source: Private High Schools of Riobamba

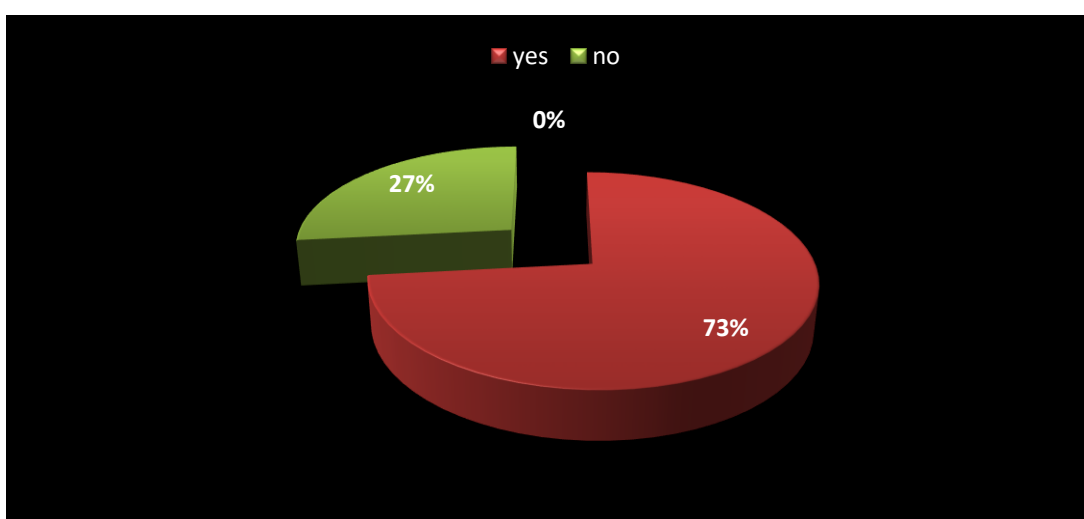
The results show that 93% of teachers stated that they use group work activities, while only one of the teachers said that group work activities are not used. The teachers who responded positively explained that group work activities help students to interact, to help each other, and to share information. It was observed in the classes that almost all teachers used group work activities and it motivated students to collaborate and to use the target language. It was a great opportunity for students to practice the language learned in class.

Regarding students' perceptions, there was an agreement in their opinion towards the use of group work. They mentioned in the questionnaire that group work activities encourage them to learn English better than individual activities because they exchange information and interact with their peers. With regard to this kind of activity, Davies and Pearse (2000) state that group work adds variety and dynamism to the lesson as well as promotes interaction among students. This agrees with the observed classes because there were students who worked in groups and they had the opportunity to interact with their classmates and learn the target language in a dynamic and varied way.

On the other hand, the 7% of the teachers, who said that they do not use group work activities, mentioned in the survey that they do not have plenty of time to apply these activities and that they prefer to apply individual activities because they are easier to perform. This was corroborated in the observations because in fact, group work activities were not used at all.

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

Graph 6



Authors: Espíndola Lara Mónica Gabriela & Herrera Quishpi María Margarita  
Source: Private High Schools of Riobamba

Graph 6 shows that 73% of teachers mentioned that they use English most of the time in their classes; in the questionnaire, they did not give reasons why they use English in class.

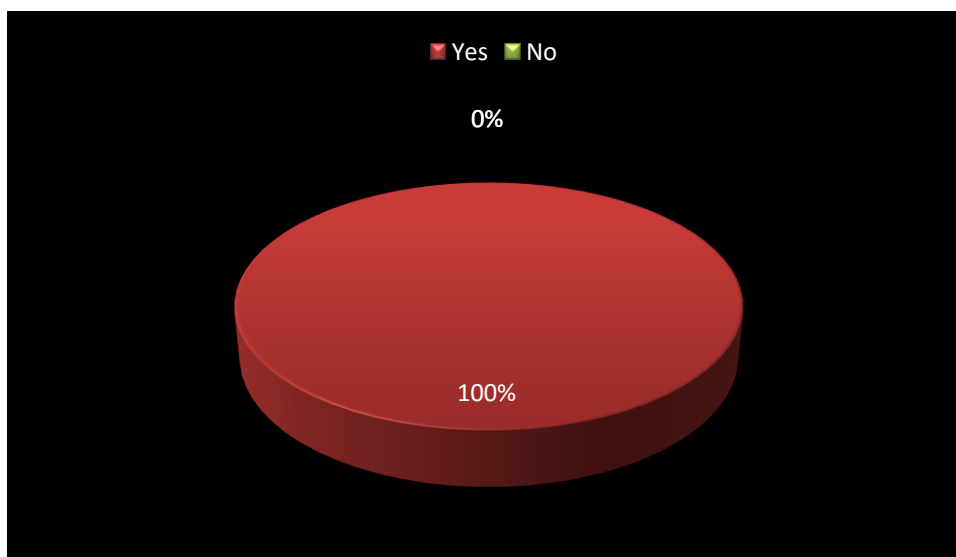
On the other hand, 27% of teachers who stated that they do not use English most of the time were the ones who were placed in lower levels since they spoke in Spanish and used just a little English; in fact, in the observations done, it was noticed that it was not possible for them to express their ideas fluently and clearly when speaking in English; therefore, they used Spanish in the classroom in order to be understood.

The fact that teachers mentioned that they did not use English, 100 % of the time, was some students were not able to understand the content of the lesson. Despite this fact, these teachers showed good linguistic competence because when they used English, they did it appropriately and fluently. Regarding this topic, it is worth retaking the information about the teachers' language proficiency interview since the teachers who were placed in higher levels were the ones who used English in a higher percentage in their classes.

Contrasting the results of the teachers' and the students', it was possible to notice that there is a close coincidence of criteria since the majority of the students answered that their teachers use English most of the time in their classes. In the observations where Spanish was used just a little and English most of the time, the majority of students participated actively to learn this foreign language effectively.

*Do teachers plan their lessons?*

*Graph7*



Authors: Espíndola Lara Mónica Gabriela & Herrera Quishpi María Margarita  
Source: Private High Schools of Riobamba

As it can be seen in the graph, 100% of teachers stated that they plan their lessons; some of them indicated that planning is important and the institution asks them to plan their classes; they also plan their lessons because the content of the course book needs to be taught by creating a lesson plan. Others remarked that planning helps them to give organized and structured classes. In addition, the teachers stated that planning their lessons help them to make classes more effective, interesting, and motivating. What the teachers said agrees with the following statement “a destination which teachers want their students to reach, and some idea of how they are going to get there, is planning” (Harmer, 2007, p.156).

During the observation, it was evidenced that most of the teachers had a lesson plan; although some aspects of the lesson plan such as timing was not taken into account in most of the classes. The time planned by the teachers was not enough and some activities were not completed during the class. This situation does not match with the information provided by students in the questionnaire because all of

them mentioned that their teachers give them a determined time for each activity to be developed.

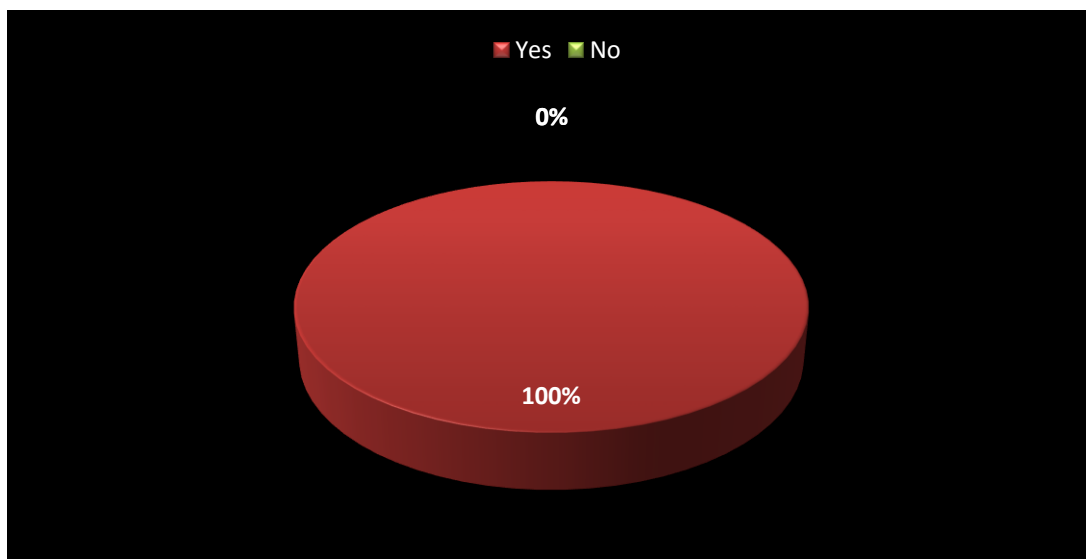
On the other hand, the lesson of the topic was considered in most of the classes since this was introduced appropriately and in a clear way. Objectives were taken into account in just a few classes because despite of the fact that the classes were dynamic, sometimes the aim of the topic was deviated to other themes and therefore kept the teachers from considering the real objectives that were set up in the first place.

Additionally, warm-up activities were considered in more than half of the classes. This was corroborated during the observations since the teachers used dynamic ways to start their classes; for instance, some of them used songs and others used games. Likewise, materials and resources were used during several classes which evidences that these teachers engaged the students by using different teaching techniques.

Moreover, introduction of the new topic was also considered by most of the educators, but guided individual practice was not taken into account because the big number of students did not allow the teachers to apply this aspect of the lesson plan. Finally, review/assessment/feedback were not applied by most of the teachers in the observed classes; however, the students answered in the survey that their teachers explained what they did wrong and what they needed to improve all the time, so there is not agreement of criteria in this case.

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

*Graph 8*



Authors: Espíndola Lara Mónica Gabriela & Herrera Quishpi María Margarita

Source: Private High Schools of Riobamba

The pie chart above shows that 100% of the teachers surveyed mentioned that they consider aspects such as discipline, timing, feedback, and instruction. They explained that by considering these aspects, they are able to give good classes, teach better, and students learn in a good way. In addition, teachers consider that these aspects are very important to perform a good lesson. Another reason that teachers gave was that they have some students to whom it is more difficult to teach; so they need to receive individualized attention.

Nevertheless, the results shown in the chart above do not coincide with the observations carried out in the classes neither with students' interview since not all teachers were able to control discipline and it affected to the teaching-learning process. In those classes, it was difficult for students to listen to the teacher and their peers, some students walked around the class and did not complete the activities. Teachers spent a lot of time trying to control students' behavior and they were not

able to engage students in the learning process.

Likewise, few teachers gave feedback to some of their students. It was observed that teachers had difficulties to control discipline and it made difficult for them to provide effective feedback. These results do not agree with the answers given by the students since all of them mentioned that their teachers give feedback.

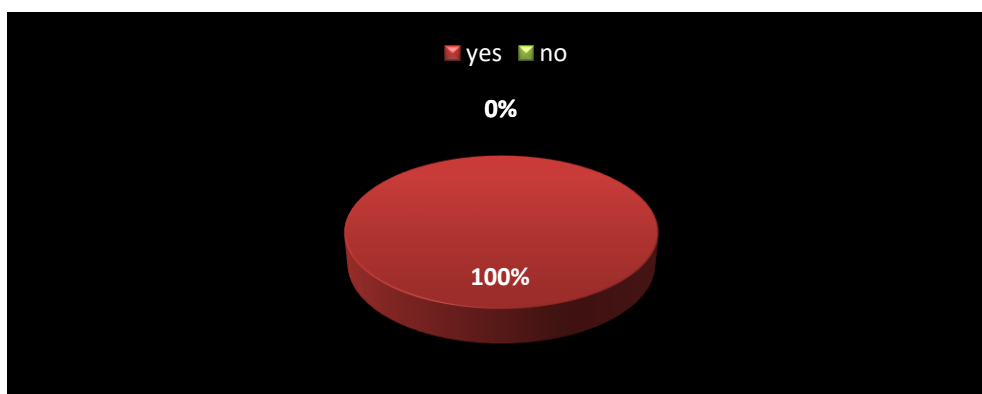
Also, activities management as well as time management were considered also by just a few teachers during the observed classes. This information, again, does not agree with what they said in the survey nor with what the students mentioned since all of them answered that the instructions that are given by the teachers are clear and that specific time is allotted for their activities during the classes.

Regarding time, Harmer (2007) marks the importance of good timing of activities in lessons. He mentions that students may lose confidence and may become frustrated when they don't finish the activities on time, but if a teacher is always continuing with the class after the bell has gone, the students will become irritated because they want to change the type of activities or go to recess.

#### *Factors Concerning Students*

*Do teachers consider students' needs to teach English successfully?*

*Graph 9*



Authors: Espíndola Lara Mónica Gabriela & Herrera Quishpi María Margarita  
Source: Private High Schools of Riobamba

This graph shows that 100% of the teachers surveyed consider students' needs in the classroom to teach English successfully; teachers indicated that they need to be aware of students' needs because they need to know their students in order to help them according to their personalities, weaknesses, and strengths and they need to understand their students' realities in order to teach English successfully.

Additionally, teachers mentioned that it is important to consider students' needs because not all of them learn at the same time nor in the same way. Regarding this aspect, Woodward (2001) refers to the idea of students having 'dominant sensory channels'; these channels are sight, hearing, touching, tasting, and moving. This author states that some students learn better through activities that use the sense of sight, while others learn better through the sense of hearing, and others through movements, etc.

Likewise, it was observed that most of the educators considered their students' needs. In the observed classes, these teachers adapted the topics of the lessons to their age and interests. Additionally, because the students' needs were taken into account, most of the activities done in these classes were encouraging and motivating for them. This helped the teachers attract the attention of everyone to encourage his or her positive attitude toward the English learning.

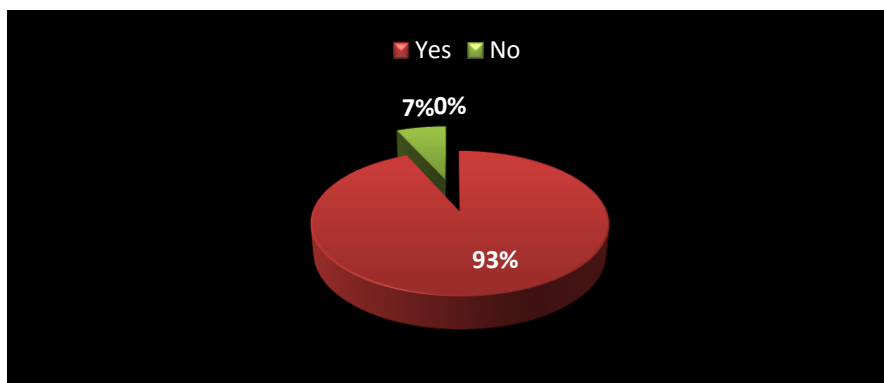
Furthermore, in the progression of the lessons, the teachers also considered learning styles such as visual, auditory, and analytic. This was corroborated during the observation because they asked the students to do activities that involved the previously mentioned learning styles. The way how these types of learning styles were considered is described in graph 17, which relates to the teaching resources used in the observed classes.

During the observations, it was noticed that the desire for learning English of

everybody was not the same because there were students who responded to a few lessons more dynamically and enthusiastically than others. Although, it was perceived that in some classes most of the learners' aptitude and purpose to learn the target language was similar since their involvement was highly arisen for the tasks they worked on. Therefore, their needs were one way or another taken into account by the majority of the educators.

*Do teachers consider students' level to teach English successfully?*

*Graph 10*



Authors: Espíndola Lara Mónica Gabriela & Herrera Quishpi María Margarita  
Source: Private High Schools of Riobamba

Graph 10 shows that 93% of teachers mentioned that they consider their students' level, while only one out of the 15 teachers responded that they do not consider the level of the students. The teachers who responded positively stated that it is important to consider the students' level when giving a class, otherwise the students will not understand the class or it will be too easy for them.

In the observed classes, it was confirmed that the levels of the students were taken into account; for instance, language proficiency of the students was considered by the teachers as they said in the survey since the majority of them asked their pupils to develop activities related to their understanding. That is, the content of the lessons involved vocabulary, grammar structures, and tasks targeted at the learners'

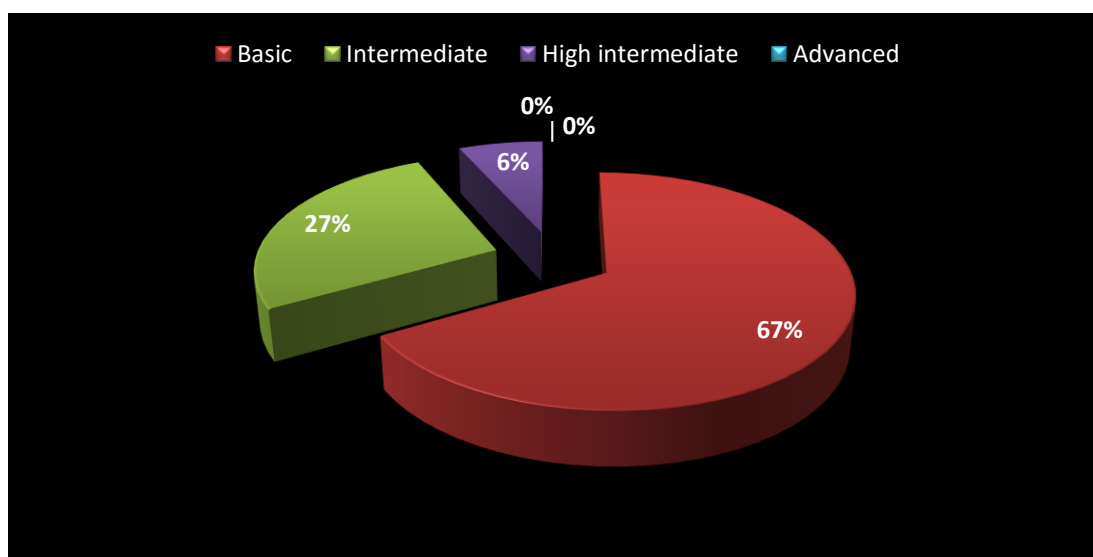
English level.

Comparing the previous results with the results of the students' questionnaire, most of them responded that they find the activities and the instructions in the classroom "easy"; this evidences that teachers teach the target language at the right level. In fact, it was observed that teachers assigned students simple activities such as matching words to pictures, choosing options, completing sentences, among others, that students completed quickly.

On the other hand, 7% (which is an equivalent to one teacher) of teachers who answered negatively stated that it is not possible to consider the level of students because it is the institution who sets the level for them. In fact, during the observation, it was possible to evidence that at one high school the levels were not set appropriately since these were too easy or too advanced for the students. In this high school, the teacher had difficulties to teach the English language because the contents were not appropriate to students' level.

*Which is the level of the students?*

*Graph 11*



Authors: Espíndola Lara Mónica Gabriela & Herrera Quishpi María Margarita  
Source: Private High Schools of Riobamba

This graph shows that 67% of the surveyed teachers answered that their students have a basic level. Also, 27% of them said that the level of their pupils is intermediate. During the observations, most of the students showed a basic level just as the teachers said. It was possible to confirm this because a great number of students accomplished easy tasks set by the teachers.

In addition, the observations allowed to evidence that the teachers who worked with basic levels used a course book suited to it, so students learned English through basic vocabulary, simple grammar structures, and reachable tasks. On the other hand, the ones who were working with an intermediate level had a course book suited to this level where tasks such as reading texts, learning vocabulary in context, and filling in grammar sentences were developed; these activities were stimulating enough for students' understanding. Secretaría Nacional de Educación Superior, Ciencia, Tecnología e Innovación (SENESCYT) and the Ministry of Education (2012) stated that students that get graduated from a high school in Ecuador need to have an intermediate (B1) level of English according to the Common European Framework of reference.

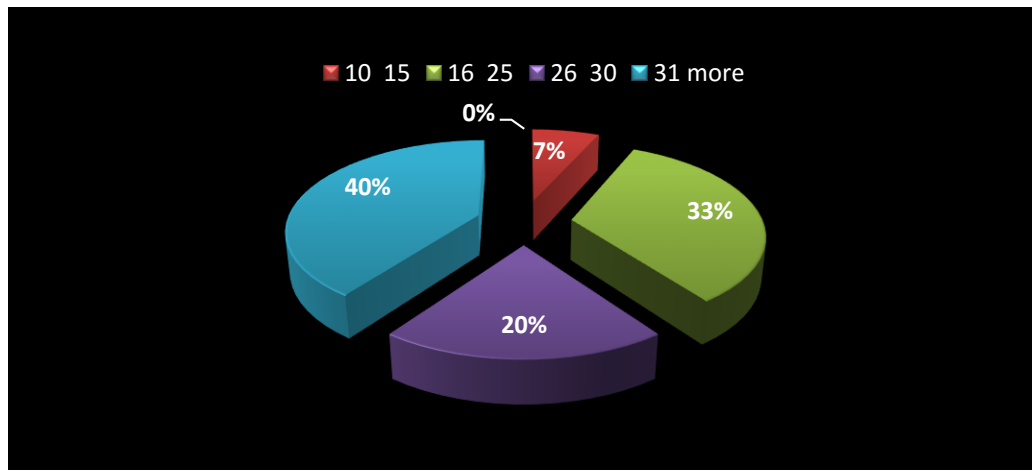
On the other hand, 6% of teachers stated that their students had a high intermediate level. This information does not agree with the observations done because the students did not show a good English language proficiency. The type of activities assigned to students were similar to the tasks described previously; this means that students had a basic level.

Finally, none of the teachers mentioned that their pupils have an advanced level and it was corroborated during the observed classes because the students did not show any advanced English skill such as extensive writing/reading or fluent speaking activities.

### *Factors Concerning Classroom*

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

*Graph 12*



Authors: Espíndola Lara Mónica Gabriela & Herrera Quishpi María Margarita  
Source: Private High Schools of Riobamba

The results of graph 12 show that 40% of teachers mentioned that in their classes there are 31 or more students, 20% of them affirmed that they had classes where there are 26 to 30 students. Also, 33% of teachers said they had 16 to 25 students, and only 1 teacher (7%) said there were between 10 and 15 students in the classroom.

Throughout the observations, it was possible to evidence that actually most of the classrooms had a great number of students just as the teachers stated in the survey. In these bigger classes, with 25 or more students, it was more difficult for the teachers to control the class, give effective feedback, and create effective group work activities. This big number did not help so much to the teaching-learning process because the teachers could not check the class work. Also, there were students who did not practice their language skills since they showed a deficit of attention because of the large number of pupils and the teacher as well. In this regard, Strevens (1978) explains that it is not only the students who suffer from oversized classes but also

teachers who have to adapt and deal with the different classroom contexts they work in.

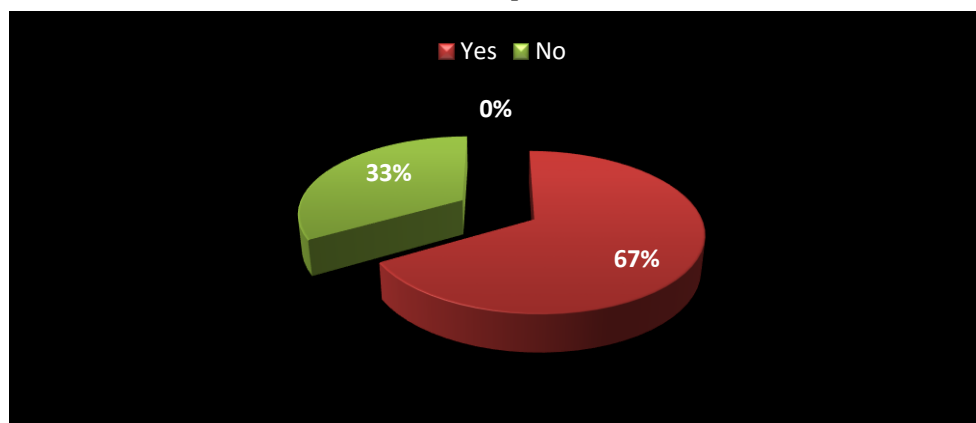
Concerning students' answers they indicated that large classes make difficult for teachers to control behavior and the result is noisy classes; also, students who do not pay attention, interrupt the class, and work in other activities. This information was corroborated during the observations since teachers in large classes had difficulties to work properly. They tried to engage students in the lessons, but the level of noise was so high that students in the back could not listen to the teacher; as a result, only few students, those seated at the front, worked in the activities.

On the other hand, the few teachers, who had small classes, did not have much trouble with the class because they could interact more with students, help with their work, and evaluate their progress more easily. As Bartolo (2004) mentions that small groups allow teachers to arrange classroom configuration to work with students.

The previous results meet the information provided by the students in the questionnaire because a great majority of them agreed that in a small class the teacher is able to control the students and they are able to interact between them.

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

Graph 13



Authors: Espíndola Lara Mónica Gabriela & Herrera Quishpi María Margarita  
Source: Private High Schools of Riobamba

This graph reveals that 67% of teachers feel comfortable with the number of students in their classes, while 33% of them do not feel comfortable with the number of pupils in the classrooms. These teachers had 26 to 30 students and some of them had more than 31 students in the classroom. In the survey they mentioned that they do not like to work with big groups because they face many problems with discipline and, it makes activities difficult to carry out and feedback difficult to give, just as Strevens (1978) states that classes that are overcrowded influence negatively in the effectiveness of the teaching learning process because the students are more likely to be distracted and the teacher gives less attention to each pupil.

This information was corroborated in the observed classes because the groups of students were big; so the teachers had problems when they needed to develop the activities they planned.

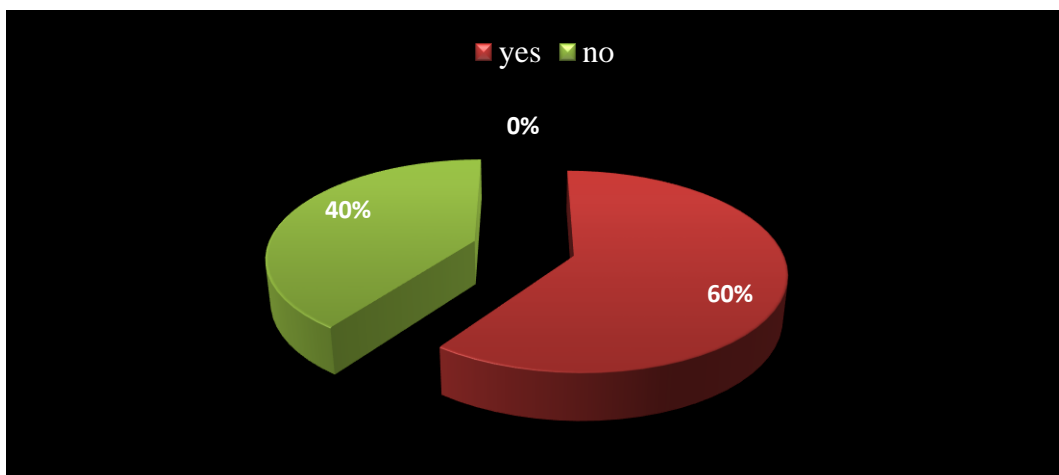
On the other hand, most of the teachers who answered positively (33%) worked with small classes (25 to 35), and they mentioned that they feel comfortable working with this number of students because they can deal with their students, control discipline, and give more individual assistance. One of the teachers went as far as to say that “the individual teaching is fantastic because the students improve their academic performance”. This was corroborated during the observations because they were able to check students’ work and the interaction among pupils and the teacher was more active.

The students’ surveyed also indicated that they prefer to be in small classes because through it they might be able to have more organized classes and they might be able to learn more; while being in a big class, does not allow them to do such thing; on the contrary, this makes a more complicated class because the students’ discipline is not easy to manage, and therefore, they are not able to concentrate in the

lesson.

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

*Graph 14*



Authors: Espíndola Lara Mónica Gabriela & Herrera Quishpi María Margarita  
Source: Private High Schools of Riobamba

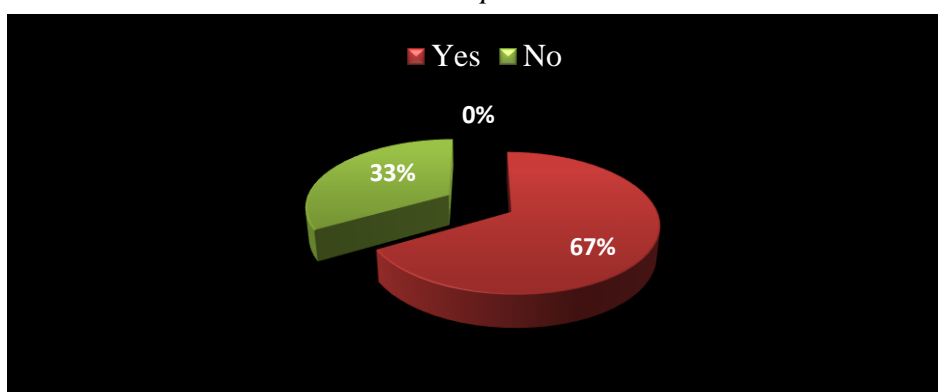
The above graph shows that 60% of teachers consider that they have enough space to work with the number of students that they have in their classrooms. According to the students' survey, most of them felt that the classrooms where they received classes were big enough to allow them to work in a pleasurable way, which means that the students feel comfortable with the size of the classroom. Actually, in the observed classes it was possible to confirm that classrooms had in fact enough space to work with the number of students of each class.

On the contrary, 40% of the teachers considered that the space they have in the classroom is not big enough for the number of the students they have. This was confirmed in the observations since most of these teachers actually did not have enough space to rearrange seats, use group work activities or whole class communication exercises. Gower, Phillips, and Walters (1983, p. 86) say that "classroom furniture always affects the learning atmosphere to some extent, but the

choice will almost certainly be out of your control”. According to the authors, even as good as ways of arranging the seats are, not all the time teachers can do what they would like to.

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

Graph 15



Authors: Espíndola Lara Mónica Gabriela & Herrera Quishpi María Margarita  
Source: Private High Schools of Riobamba

In this graph, it is possible to observe that 33% of the teachers stated that they do not arrange the students’ seats. The most remarkable answers given by the teachers were that there are a lot of students in the classrooms, and the space is limited; so they are not able to arrange the students’ seats according to the activities planned. This information was confirmed in the observations performed since teachers actually did not have enough space to arrange seats in any way because there were many students. In these classes, teachers did not use varied activities and the environment was monotonous.

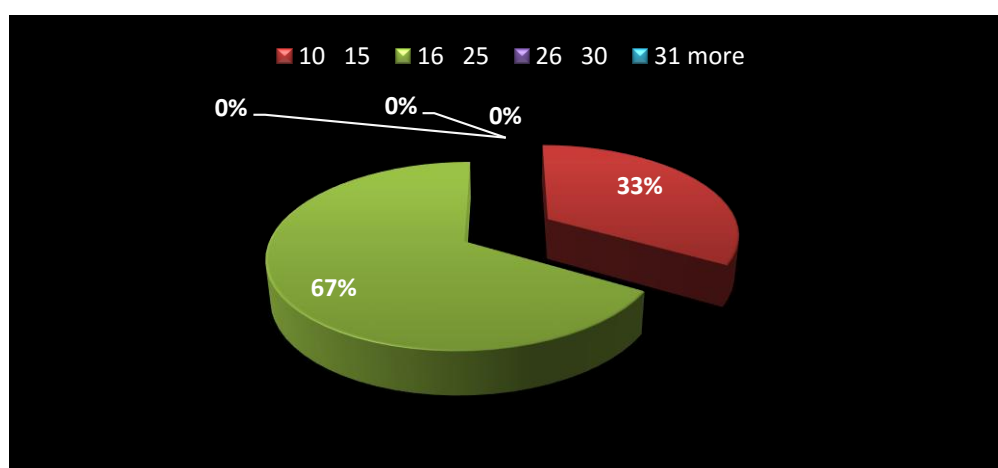
On the other hand, 67% of educators who answered positively to the question stated that they arrange seats in their classes because this allows the students to move for communication activities and permits teachers to carry out different types of activities as well as to help to control the discipline; they also indicated that it is a good way of distributing students depending on their level of English. They added

that seating arrangement is made according to the activity planned.

Comparing the teachers' and the students' results there is a coincidence because most of the learners mentioned that they like the way their seats are arranged. They also indicated that their seats are arranged for individual and group work activities. They also said that by arranging their seats they are able to interact more and they have more fun at learning; additionally, the activities are better developed since they learn more. This information agrees with what it was observed, for the reason that the seats were rearranged, the students felt motivated, and the teacher could perform varied activities when the students arranged their seats for group work, role plays, and debates. Harmer (2007) mentions that new ways of arranging seats like separate tables or the horseshoe design, have advantages since the classroom is a more intimate place and the potential for students to share feelings and information through talking, eye contact or expressive body movements (eyebrow-raising, shoulder-shrugging, etc.) is greater.

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

Graph 16



Authors: Espíndola Lara Mónica Gabriela & Herrera Quishpi María Margarita  
Source: Private High Schools of Riobamba

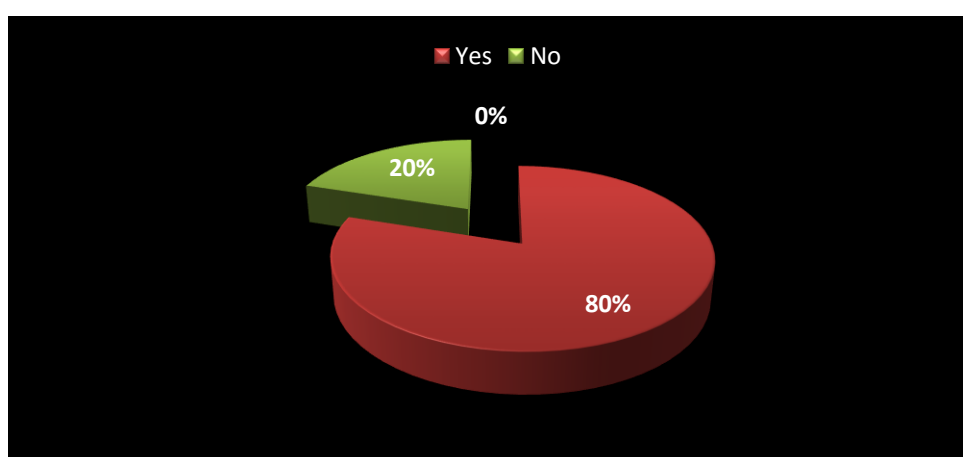
Graph 16 shows that 67% of the teachers in the survey felt that 16 to 25 students is an appropriate number for teaching English, while 33% felt that 10-15 is

an appropriate number. This result shows that teachers prefer small class sizes because none of them consider that 26 or more students is an appropriate number to teach English.

Some of the reasons that teachers gave for having a preference for small classes were that this allows them working with the students individually and in a personalized way, giving feedback, correcting errors, and motivating them. Other important reasons given were that with smaller numbers it is possible to carry out certain types of group activities and some of the teachers simply stated that this allowed them to teach better. This information given was corroborated in the classes that were observed because in small classes it was easier to control discipline, assess the students, and give them feedback individually. On the contrary, in the classes with big number of students occurred the opposite just as Hayes (1997) states that English teachers think that large classes hinder them from teaching efficiently and effectively.

*Do teachers use teaching resources (TV, Tape/CD recorder, computer(s), projector(s), smart board, and supplementary materials)?*

*Graph 17*



Authors: Espíndola Lara Mónica Gabriela & Herrera Quishpi María Margarita  
Source: Private High Schools of Riobamba

This graph reveals that 80% of the teachers affirmed that they use teaching resources such as TV, Tape/CD recorder, computer(s), projector(s), smart board, and supplementary materials in their classes. In the survey they mentioned that they use these materials because it is important to add variety to the class and the students learn better by using different resources. They added that through the use of supplementary materials different learning styles are considered; for example, they mentioned that by using the projector, TV, and flash cards, they catch the attention of the students that have a visual learning style, the tape CD recorder to the auditory and so on. This information was supported with the students' survey since the majority of them mentioned that their teachers use different teaching resources while just a few said the opposite. According to what was observed, it was possible to corroborate that actually different teaching resources were used by the teachers.

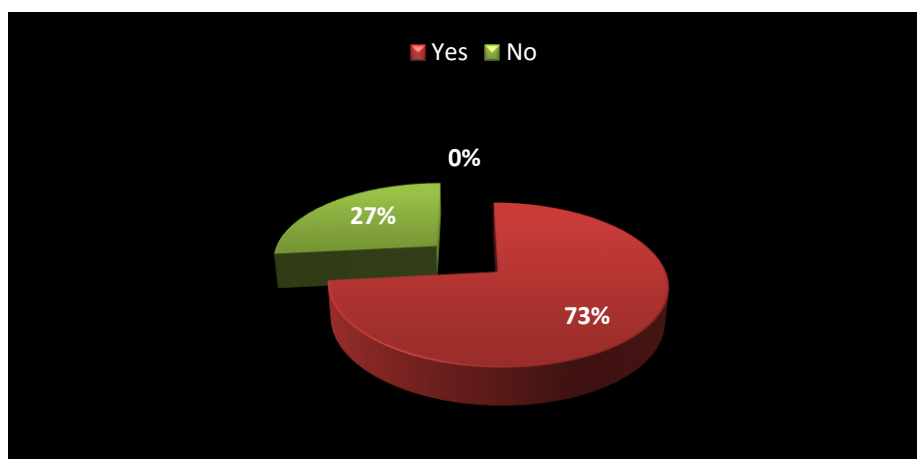
In the observations, it was clear that the private high schools generally provided excellent resources for their teachers and students. The materials mostly used were textbooks. Only two high schools had English labs and these were used for carrying out listening and pronunciation exercises on the internet. It was also evident in the observations that in the classes, where different teaching resources were used, the learning process was better and the students were engaged in the lessons.

On the contrary, 20% of teachers indicated that they did not use teaching materials; they mentioned that there were not any teaching materials in their institutions; this agrees greatly with students' opinions because they mention that their teachers do not use any teaching material. In fact, the observations showed that teachers did not use any additional teaching resource than the course books which caused students' boredom. Regarding course books, Harmer (2007) supports the divided opinion of this material stating that some teachers have a poor opinion of

them, considering them boring and stifling, while other teachers have a more positive opinion due to the attractive presentation of the material and the variety of tasks.

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

Graph 18



Authors: Espíndola Lara Mónica Gabriela & Herrera Quishpi María Margarita  
Source: Private High Schools of Riobamba

Graph 18 shows that 73% of teachers consider that they have appropriate resources in their classes; these teachers revealed in the survey that using good teaching resources is relevant while teaching English because it is fun for students to have varied resources in a class. They added that the use of appropriate teaching material can catch the students' attention and help them to learn easily. These results were confirmed in most of the observations because as it was mentioned in the previous analysis the institutions provided the teachers and students with good teaching resources; that is, the materials were colorful, attractive, and of good quality. This enabled the learners to focus their minds on doing numerous tasks and dynamically practice their listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills as much as they could.

On the other hand, 27% of teachers gave negative responses. They argued in the survey that though they have some teaching materials, these are outdated. Other

teachers mention that the only material available is the textbook and to make the lessons more engaging the schools need to buy teaching resources to work successfully.

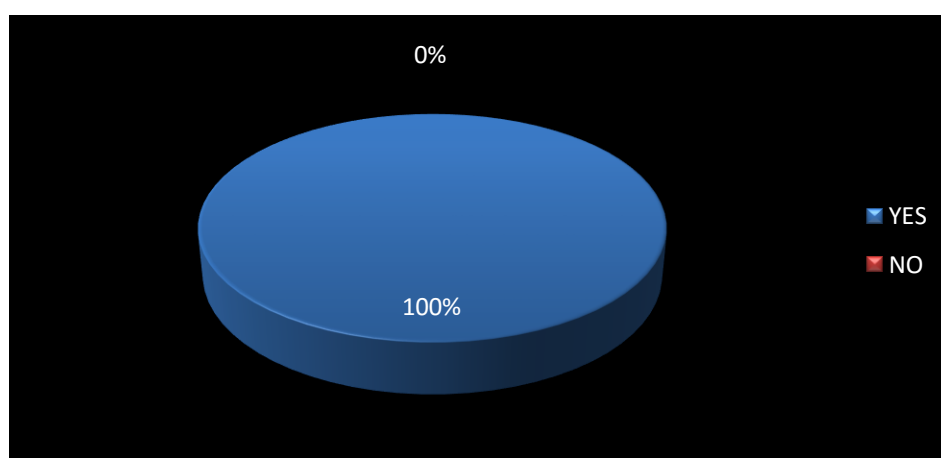
Regarding teaching materials, Gower, Philips, and Walters (1983) give some examples of some possible resources that can be used in class such as the board, overhead projector, visuals, worksheets and work cards, the cassette recorder/CD player, Video/DVD, computers, photocopier, and cassette recorder/CD player. Nevertheless, it was observed that the teaching resources mostly used were the whiteboard and the textbook. Teachers used the whiteboard to explain the class and to have students practicing grammar structures through activities, mainly through filling in the blanks and writing sentences. Any teacher used the whiteboard to play games or to engage students in competitions.

The textbook was used in a traditional way, this means that teachers followed the sequence of the books according to the planning and main activities were based on reading and completing the activities proposed by the book.

#### *Factors Concerning Educational Institution*

*Do institutions review teachers' lesson plans?*

*Graph 19*



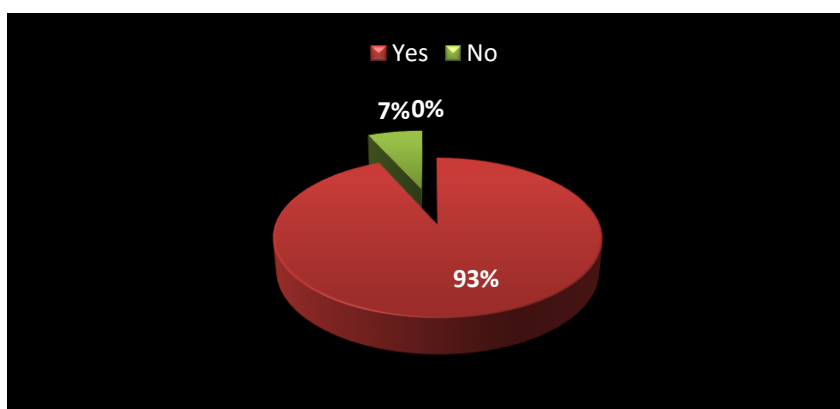
Authors: Espíndola Lara Mónica Gabriela & Herrera Quishpi María Margarita  
Source: Private High Schools of Riobamba

It can be observed in the graph above that 100% of teachers affirmed that the institutions review their lesson plans. Ten of them mentioned that their institutions checked their plans once a week; two teachers stated that the process takes place once a month; and three of the educators indicated that the institution reviews the lesson plans daily.

Despite of the fact that most of the teachers had their lesson plans during the observed classes, there was anybody verifying that teachers follow their plans although all of them affirmed in the survey that the institutions did such an activity every certain period of time as specified above. This fact might have been due to a possible coincidence that at the time of the observation there was anybody reviewing the plans, but again, a great majority of educators had this resource with them because the fact that institutions review lesson plans and also because their students expect a well-organized class, makes it a requirement for teachers. Concerning this aspect, Garvo and Rothstein (1998) state that lesson plan review is important because it helps teachers to raise their self-confidence through feedback and compliments. These authors remark that if teachers receive support from the institution to find alternative solutions to problems that may occur in the classroom, then they will personally grow in efficiency and effectiveness as teachers.

*Does the institution monitor teachers' teaching?*

*Graph 20*



Authors: Espíndola Lara Mónica Gabriela & Herrera Quishpi María Margarita  
Source: Private High Schools of Riobamba

As the graph above shows, 93% of teachers mentioned in the questionnaire that their institutions monitor their teaching and just 7% of teachers stated that their classes are not monitored. The frequency of these observations is varied; for instance, ten of them said that the observations are carried out once a month in their institutions while two of them mentioned that their classes are monitored once a week, other two teachers stated that this activity was performed every three months, and just one teacher affirmed that her institution does not observe their classes at all. During the observations, no supervisor or authority monitored the teachers' teaching process, again probably because it did not coincide with the date established to observe or evaluate the teaching process.

In relation to this aspect, Glickman (2002) states that the monitoring process is not only a responsibility of supervisors or principals; institutions can implement many other mechanisms to support, focus, and improve the teaching-learning process in the classroom, that together can actually lead to progress. Some mechanisms can be clinic supervision, peer coaching, critical friends and classroom action research teams or study groups.

## Conclusions

It was found that most teachers in private high schools have a good level of linguistic competence and they demonstrate perfect domain of the class, which helps students to improve their language skills.

Most of the students in private high schools have a basic English level; in fact, most of them have difficulties to develop complex activities and produce appropriate answers in speaking activities in which they have several problems of accuracy and fluency.

In most of the classrooms, the physical space is appropriate and allows teachers to assign group work activities and role-play that stimulate the interaction and the participation of all the students.

Some teachers work with big classes, which means an average of more than 31 students in a classroom; these teachers faced difficulties to manage their classes in an effective way.

All teachers considered the students' needs in order to teach English; in fact, most of them chose activities that were suitable for students' age, interest, and level.

The institutions monitor the teachers' classes with the necessary frequency to identify and to improve the teaching-learning process in the classroom, it seems that these kinds of practices are an integral part of the academic activities.

## Recommendations

To teach English successfully in private or public institutions teachers should have at least a university degree in teaching English, preferably a master's degree.

Teachers must constantly update their knowledge and English teaching techniques, because achievement objectives in second language acquisition constantly demand higher levels.

Class size should be kept to a maximum of 25 students because classes with too many students make hard to work appropriately discourage both teachers and students.

Institutions should guarantee that classrooms are big enough to make comfortable learning space and also to provide teachers with the flexibility to arrange seats.

Supervisors should monitor classes continuously and check lesson plans to ensure a good teaching-learning process.

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## ANNEXES



### UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA PARTICULAR DE LOJA

*La Universidad Católica de Loja*

#### MODALIDA ABIERTA Y A DISTANCIA

#### CARRERA DE INGLES

#### OBSERVATION SHEET

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

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

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

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

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

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

<b>*Students' Level</b>			
Basic        (   )	Intermediate    (   )	High Intermediate (   )	Advanced        (   )

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

#### 3. Which of the following methods are used?

Communicative Language Teaching	(   )
The Natural Approach	(   )
Cooperative Language Learning	(   )
Content-Based Instruction	(   )
Task-Based Language Teaching	(   )
Cognitive Academic Language Learning	(   )
Total Physical Response	(   )
Whole Language Approach	(   )

Grammar Translation Method	( )
Others _____	( )

**4. Which of the following activities are used?**

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

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

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

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

Discipline	( )
Feedback	( )
Activities management	( )
Time management	( )

**7. How many students are there in the classroom?**

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

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

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

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

YES ( )	NO ( )
NOTES: _____	

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

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

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

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

### TEACHER'S INTERVIEW

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

#### TEACHER'S LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY:

C2	( )	C1	( )	B2	( )	B1	( )	A2	( )	A1	( )
----	-----	----	-----	----	-----	----	-----	----	-----	----	-----



**UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA PARTICULAR DE LOJA**

*La Universidad Católica de Loja*

**MODALIDA ABIERTA Y A DISTANCIA**

**CARRERA DE INGLES**

**STUDENT'S QUESTIONNAIRE**

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

**1. ¿Te gusta aprender Inglés?**

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

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

SI ( )	NO ( )
¿Porqué? _____	

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

Muyfáciles ( )	Fáciles ( )	Difíciles ( )	Muydifíciles ( )
----------------	-------------	---------------	------------------

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

SI ( )	NO ( )
¿Porqué? _____	

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

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

**6. ¿Tu profesor utilizaInglésla mayor parte del tiempo en la clase?**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SI ( )	NO ( )
¿Porqué?	
_____	
_____	

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

SI ( )	NO ( )
¿Porqué?	
_____	
_____	

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

SI ( )	NO ( )
¿Porqué?	
_____	
_____	

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

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

**GRACIAS!!!!**



UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA PARTICULAR DE LOJA

*La Universidad Católica de Loja*  
**MODALIDA ABIERTA Y A DISTANCIA**  
**CARRERA DE INGLES**  
**TEACHER'S QUESTIONNAIRE**

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

**1. Which level of education do you have?**

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

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

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

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

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

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

<b>*Students' Level</b>			
Basic ( )	Intermediate ( )	High Intermediate ( )	Advanced ( )

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

Communicative Language Teaching	( )
The Natural Approach	( )
Cooperative Language Learning	( )
Content-Based Instruction	( )
Task-Based Language Teaching	( )
Cognitive Academic Language Learning	( )
Total Physical Response	( )

Whole Language Approach	( )
Grammar Translation Method	( )
Others _____	( )

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

YES ( )	NO ( )	
Why? _____		

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

YES ( )	NO ( )	
Why? _____		

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

YES ( )	NO ( )	
Why? _____		

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

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

**10. Do you plan your lessons?**

YES ( )	NO ( )
Why? _____	

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

YES ( )	NO ( )
Why? _____	

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

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

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

YES ( )	NO ( )
Why? _____	

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

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

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

YES ( )	NO ( )
Why? _____	

**16. How many students do you think is the appropriate number to teach English?**

*(check only 1)*

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

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

YES ( )	NO ( )
Which ones? _____	

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

YES ( )	NO ( )
Why? _____	

**19. Does the institution review your lesson plans?**

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

**20. Does the institution monitor your teaching?**

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

**Thanks for your cooperation!!!!**