



UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA PARTICULAR DE LOJA

La Universidad Católica de Loja

TITULACIÓN DE LICENCIADO EN CIENCIAS DE LA EDUCACIÓN

Factors that affect the English language teaching-learning process in Ecuadorian public high schools, made in El Carmen, Manabí, during the 2012 - 2013 high school period.

Trabajo de fin de titulación.

Autor:
Mena Valdiviezo, Luis Alberto

Mención:
Inglés

Director:
Ochoa Cueva César Augusto, Mgs

Centro Universitario Santo Domingo de Los Tsáchilas

2013

CERTIFICACIÓN

Mgs.

César Ochoa Cueva.

DIRECTOR DEL TRABAJO DE FIN DE TITULACIÓN

C E R T I F I C A:

Que el presente trabajo, denominado: “Factors that affect the English language teaching-learning process in Ecuadorian public high schools” realizado por el profesional en formación: Mena Valdiviezo, Luis Alberto; cumple con los requisitos establecidos en las normas generales para la Graduación en la Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja, tanto en el aspecto de forma como de contenido, por lo cual me permito autorizar su presentación para los fines pertinentes.

Loja, junio de 2013

f).....

CI: 110322216-0

CESIÓN DE DERECHOS

“Yo, Mena Valdiviezo , Luis Alberto declaro ser autor del presente trabajo y eximo expresamente a la Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja y a sus representantes legales de posibles reclamos o acciones legales.

Adicionalmente declaro conocer y aceptar la disposición del Art. 67 del Estatuto Orgánico de la Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja que en su parte pertinente textualmente dice: “formar parte del patrimonio de la Universidad la propiedad intelectual de investigaciones, trabajos científicos o técnicos y tesis de grado que se realicen a través, o con el apoyo financiero, académico o institucional (operativo) de la Universidad”.

f.....

Mena Valdiviezo, Luis Alberto
171738007-3

CONTENTS

CERTIFICATION.....	ii
CONTRATO DE CESIÓN DE DERECHOS.....	iii
CONTENTS.....	iv
ABSTRACT.....	v
INTRODUCTION.....	1
METHODOLOGY.....	5
DISCUSSION	
Literature Review.....	6
Description, Analysis and Interpretation of Results	22
Conclusions	47
Recommendations	49
REFERENCES.....	50
ANNEXES.....	54

ABSTRACT

The theme of this research refers to Factors that affect the English language teaching- learning process in Ecuadorian public high schools. The general objective of this study was to analyze the factors that affect the English language teaching-learning process.

The method applied in this study was quantitative to collect, explain, describe, and analyze the factors that affect the English language teaching-learning process in Ecuadorian public high schools.

This study took place in five public high schools located in the town of El Carmen, Manabí. In each high school, three teachers were observed, surveyed, and interviewed respectively. Moreover, during each class one student was surveyed at random.

This study demonstrates that the English language teaching - learning process in the observed Ecuadorian public high schools has been affected by four important factors: students, teachers, classrooms and educational institutions. These factors affect seriously the successful classroom management.

INTRODUCTION

Factors that affect the English language teaching-learning process in Ecuadorian public high schools is an important topic to be investigated since it will help to discover the major factors that affect EFL classes and find the appropriate solutions to the problems existing on them.

The purpose of this research was to identify, analyze, and determine what factors are affecting the students' knowledge and the level in the English language as well as to find out factors that affect the teachers' teaching and the classroom environment in EFL classrooms in public high schools in Ecuador.

In order to achieve the purpose of this study three specific objectives have been considered. First, determine the classroom conditions in which English lessons take place. Second, identify the characteristics of in-service English teachers. Third, determine teachers' instructional competence.

To support this research, it is important to mention some previous studies in order to get more information about the factors that affect the teaching-learning process in EFL classrooms. For example, Sakui (2007), conducted a research in a women's university in Japan. The main purpose of this study was to describe the challenges of classroom management that Japanese teachers of English experience in their work.

This study had two limitations. First, conducting Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) while managing their classroom was a challenging task for the teachers at times. Second, the teachers in this study appeared to have difficulties in objectively analyzing their own classroom teaching practices from a classroom management perspective. Specifically, they were less articulate in describing exactly

in what ways CLT makes classroom management challenging and what they could do to alleviate any problems.

According to Carpenter (2006), the primary purpose of his exploratory study was to identify effective teaching methods for the large class environment in University of South Carolina. Furthermore, the research questions guiding the study were “What teaching methods are effective in the large class environments?” and “What are students’ perceptions of these methods?”

However, this study had one limitation. The team project assignment required teams of four students to develop a profile of a retail firm, with the entire project being completed outside of class.

Another useful study was performed by Rodríguez & Oxbrow (2008) whose objective was to explore the use of L1 and translation with first-year English Language students of ‘English Philology’ at the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Spain. Furthermore, to discover how useful do our learners feel the use of the mother tongue and/or translation is as a language learning strategy in a monolingual context?

Nonetheless, Rodríguez and Oxbrow explained that during this study they found the next limitation: the overwhelming majority was of a late elementary or low intermediate ability.

As this research is aimed to identify the factors that affect the English language in public high schools, the main beneficiaries will be students, teachers, educational institutions, and authorities in order for them to address students’ needs, teacher training, institutional equipment purchases, and development of policies, getting as a result the improvement of the language proficiency level in students. In

this way, teachers will have a better perception about the aspects that should be taken into consideration to teach a foreign language; therefore, this research will serve as the basis for future researches that are aimed to enhance students' academic performance and to change the educational system in Ecuador.

During this study one limitation was found. The sample size chosen was very small; only five high schools were observed and in each one of them three teachers and one student per class were surveyed, which was a disadvantage to make a general analysis and to obtain more accurate and favorable results concerning the factors that affect the teaching and learning process in public high schools.

It is recommended that for future researchers the sample size involves more participants in order to have more reliable results.

METHOD

Settings and participants

This study was carried out in five public high schools located in the town of El Carmen, Manabí, during the 2012 -2013 high school period.

The field research started on July 30th, 2012 and ended on September 17th of the same year. During the course of those months, three teachers were selected and observed in each selected public high school. Four variables were proposed for this study: they were factors concerning students, factors concerning teachers, factors concerning classrooms, and factors concerning educational institution.

During the observed classes it was noticed that the students' ages range between 12 and 17 years old. Furthermore, in each public high school the classrooms were large but crowded with no less than 20 students per class.

Procedures

In order to gather information from some resources such as books, journals, and the Internet a deep bibliographic research was done. Additionally, useful data on previous studies from researches done around the world were collected.

The general method of this study was quantitative. There were direct observations to classes, application of techniques (surveys and note-taking). Surveys to collect first hand data and note-taking to collect the most relevant bibliographic information that served as basis of the investigation. Additionally, observation formats, questionnaires, and interviews to the population (teachers and students) involved in this investigation were used as research instruments which made possible to perform each activity from facilitating the process of information to data analysis.

The information collected through the teachers' questionnaires was tabulated

in twenty charts using a computer program. In this way charts one to eight the factors concerning teachers were organized; the ninth, tenth and eleventh chart expose the factors concerning students, charts twelve to eighteen correspond to factors concerning classrooms; and chart nineteen to twenty illustrate the factors concerning educational institutions.

Likewise, to obtain a significant analyze and interpretation of these results, the above twenty charts were scrutinized thoroughly considering the students' questionnaire and observation sheet which facilitated the identification and comparison the major factors that affect the English language teaching-learning process in each observed public high school.

DISCUSSION

Literature Review

In Ecuador the teaching English as a foreign language has recently been emphasized by the Ministry of Education in 2011 because English has not been considered as an essential subject or support area in the teaching and learning process particularly in public high schools. On the other hand, El Comercio newspaper on October 11th, 2011 highlighted that most of the teachers do not rely on quality standards of teaching since they do not master or they do not have a good level / knowledge of the English language because their teaching is based on old techniques, repetitive methods and poor curricular plans; furthermore, many high schools are not well equipped; they do not have adequate teaching resources and enough materials to do the different activities and projects that the schools' year program contains. As a result, all these aspects have been self-defeating in the motivation and reliability of the students.

Teaching Approaches and Methods

Richards & Rodgers (2001) suggest that for teaching a foreign language it is important and essential that teachers consider the following approaches and methods:

First, Natural Approach consists on exposure, or input, rather than practice; optimizing emotional preparedness for learning. Second, Cooperative Language Learning is an approach where the group language activities are organized so that learning is dependent because the students exchange information between them. Third, Content -Based Instruction is an approach in which the four English skills are considered. It employs authentic reading materials so students understand the information, interpret and evaluate it. Then, Task-Based Language Teaching

proposes the notion of “task” as a central unit of planning and teaching. A task is an activity or goal that is carried out using language, such as finding a solution to a puzzle, reading a map and giving directions, writing a letter, etc. Next, Total Physical Response (TPR) is a language teaching method built around the coordination of speech and action; it attempts to teach language through physical (motor) activity. Finally, The Whole Language is an approach widely used for learning to read and write naturally; furthermore, this approach is focused on real communication and reading and writing for pleasure.

However, Fromkin, Rodman, & Hyams (2011) assert that in Grammar Translation Method students learn a list of vocabulary, verb paradigms, and grammatical rules. Also, learners translate passages from the target language into their native language. Meanwhile, in Content –Based Instruction the language is meaningful because the students communicate in the target language.

Lastly, Oxford (1996) mentions an interesting approach for teaching languages. This approach is Cognitive Academic Language Teaching (CALLA) which refers to the application of all four language skills (listening, reading, speaking, and writing) in communicating, learning, and thinking in content-area classrooms.

Teaching Techniques

According to Dhand (2008), the day to day activities that the teacher designs for a particular lesson are techniques of teaching. They may include group discussions, projects, the use of the textbook or field tripping. However, the teacher should choose the technique according to the topic and purposed purposes (i.e. filling out forms for skill development quiz downs for developing knowledge and

simulation games for decision making skills).

Additionally, a similar definition for teaching techniques is the one from Abbs, Barker & Freebairn (2008) who declare that the choice of teaching techniques obviously depends on the individual classroom situation and your preferred teaching style. For example: students can work in groups when they do discussions, task-based activities, role plays, questionnaires, and projects. Repetition and choral practice can be used with dialogues, putting it together, grammar focus charts, pronunciation exercises, vocabulary lists, useful expressions, communication and speaking exchanges.

Richards & Renandya (2002) recommend certain techniques of teaching which help to enhance the teaching and learning process. These techniques ranging from controlled (drills, dialogues, reading aloud, display questions/answers, etc.) to semi controlled (referential questions/answers, cued narratives, information gaps activities, etc.) to free (role-plays, problem solving, interviews, discussions, etc.). Also, teachers could consider other important teaching techniques, which are the whole-class, group-work, and pair-work activities.

Managing Learning

Showing the importance of managing learning Laslett & Smith (2002) suggest that whatever the subject or topic each lesson should start with some activity which keeps every student quietly occupied. Moreover, managing learning should reinforce previously acquired skills, review earlier work or set the scene for new learning. This warming-up period might only last four or five minutes. Additionally, or sometimes, it is vital that all work must finish in good time 'two minutes precisely' for material to be collected, put books away and still give opportunity for

some revision or feedback, summary and recapitulation of what has been covered during the lesson in order the students can achieve at higher levels and reach deeper understanding.

Hammomd et al. (2005) determine that classroom management compasses many practices integral to teaching, such as developing relationships; structuring respectful classroom communities where students can work productively; organizing productive work around meaningful curriculum; making decisions about timing and other aspects of instructional planning; successfully motivating students to learn.

Nonetheless, Lindsay (2000) argues that clear and concise instructions are crucial for managing learning. Instructions need to be given to the whole class before starting any activity. Teachers should tell the students what they are going to do, how the activity is to be organized, and why they are going to do it. In addition, teachers should remember that students are dealing with a dual problem: understanding what teachers say and understanding what students are supposed to do; thus, the teachers' instructions must be in a simple language adapted to the level of the students.

Lesson Design

According to Singh (2008), lesson design has a significant role in planning and organizing teaching which is shown as follows, in teacher-education program, the lesson planning provides the guideline to pupil-teachers during their teaching practices. It provides awareness of teaching objectives and structure of content. It maintains the sequence of content presentation and prevents the teacher to deviate from the topic. It determines the suitable places of reinforcing and controlling the student behavior during teaching. In addition, in the lesson plan the classroom teaching activities are organized by considering the students individual differences.

So, the effectiveness of a teacher depends on a good lesson plan.

Nonetheless, Arabit, Inlayo, & Boiser (2003) affirm that the importance of planning each lesson cannot be over emphasized. No teacher can go to class unprepared and successfully teach. Teachers must know exactly what they will teach and how they will teach it; that is, the lesson plan should be organized on paper and used as a guide whenever teachers introduce the lesson. On the other hand, the lesson plan presents two important purposes .In the first place, it gives the teacher a comprehension of the main objectives which a subject or course of study seeks to realize. In the second place, it provides a working basis for the specific goals that the individual lesson is seeking to obtain.

Lastly, Butt (2006) believes that the exact form of the lesson plan that teachers adopt is very much a personal choice ; however, it is important to note that all plans contain similar common elements, such as aims, learning objectives, teaching and learning activities, timings, assessment and evaluation. Many include simple ‘administrative’ details such as the date, classroom, information about the class/year group, number of students of each sex, class register, and possibly and appended seating plan.

Class Size

Tyagi (2011) explain that large classes can be as effective as small classes for certain educational outcomes, for instance, large classes can be superior to small classes for retention of factual information as assessed with achievement tests. However, large classes are simply not as effective as small classes for retention of knowledge, critical thinking and attitude change. Thus, the relative effectiveness of large versus small classes depends upon the educational goals to be achieved.

Moreover, Erickson, Peters, & Strommer (2006) claim that class size does make a bit of difference. For example, if 10 percent of the students in a small class miss a class or do poorly on an assignment or seek extra help, teachers can probably give learners the individual attention they request. In a large class, the percentage of students seeking or needing attention may be the same, but the sheer number of students- now twenty or fifty- needing our time and attention quickly surpasses our ability to provide it.

In the same manner, Farrel (1999) points out that the effective teaching is more easily achieved in smaller classes than in larger ones. It is relatively easy to be persuaded that wide differences in class size influence standards. Classes of six are likely to produce better student accomplishment than classes of 36, all other things being equal. A more difficult challenge is to determine the effect of narrower ranges of class size in public schools. If large classes of 32 make a difference between classes of 28, then class size is related to achievement.

Classroom Space

As stated by Tabassum (2005), teachers need to observe how the space divides subjects and objects from one another, the gaps separating materials objects, the rifts between subjects, and in turn how the space can be reconstructed differently. On the other hand the spatial organization of the classroom also reflects how the teacher wants to lay out the curriculum and pedagogy.

In addition, Marzano et al. (2005) state that how the physical space of the classroom is organized can either contribute to or detract from creating a good environment for teaching and learning for students and teachers alike. Furthermore, the classroom space should provide the teacher with access to any student in the

room in three or four steps, it should provide for easy access to and storage of materials, as well as clear traffic pathways.

In the same line, Good (2008) reports that effective classroom arrangements reduce distractions, encouraging the students' focus to be on the instruction at hand. On the other hand, the aisles between furniture anticipate students' needs to move in and out of their chairs to access classroom materials, to work in small groups, and to enter and exit of the classroom, and also the aisles helps to avoid congestion at key areas in the classroom such as a door, wastebasket, pencil, sharpener, bookshelves, or materials cabinets.

Seating Arrangement

Nath & Cohen (2011) determine that it is crucial for teachers to understand the implications of furniture arrangements in the classroom. Seats arranged in rows with all students facing the front of the class may prove adequate for teacher or student presentations and demonstrations and audio or visual presentations made to the entire class, but this arrangement does not encourage interactive learning. Semicircles, a horseshoe pattern, and circle formation are best suited for whole-class discussion and interactions.

Also, McCune & Alexander (2011) show a similar explanation for seating arrangement when they comment that the seating arrangement can determine the kind and extent of interactions that will take place in the classroom. Groups of three to five desks or students are particularly appropriate when teachers want to use cooperative learning activities. For whole-group settings, circles and U-shaped designs promote discussion. Arranging desks in rows is particularly appropriate for teacher-centered instruction. Rows tend to reduce the interaction among students and

make it easier for them to work individually.

However, another interesting opinion about seating arrangements is the one done by Richard-Amato & Snow (1992) when they report that there are two plans that have worked well to incorporate peer teaching, private work station and flexible cluster work station. Private work station where the students work on their own, these students remain at the tables in the center of the room. On the other hand, the flexible cluster work station where the students are assigned to a particular peer teacher, sitting together with the peer teacher at the apex. This arrangement is dealing with group instruction or when a group project is undertaken.

Classroom and/or Teaching Resources

Goodwyn & Branson (2005) say that there are many resources that can be used for improving the teaching- learning process. These resources include audio and video tapes, printed worksheets, websites, textbooks, CD-ROMs, etc. It is prudent for teachers not to try to use many resources in a single lesson, but they should be sure to use allavailable resources over the course of a sequence of lessons.

However, Klotter , Klotter, & Street (2008) adduce that selecting materials involves an initial choice of whether the teacher wishes to have one primary content source or a package of content –related materials (chapters from various texts, video- and audiotapes, magazine and newspapers articles, encyclopedia entries, literary selections).

The previous points of view are reinforced by Richard-Amato & Snow (1992) who suggest that teachers do not have to limit themselves to materials that are typically associated with school (e.g., books, paper, pencils).They can feel free to add many nontraditional materials (e.g., natural objects, trash, road signs). By using

these types of teaching resources help to second language students, who feel less self-consciousness and less concerned about making a mistake, to respond freely.

Classroom Observation

As stated by Richards (1999), the most important purposes of the classroom observation are to help the teacher to improve, identify strengths and weaknesses in teaching behavior, evaluate teaching, learn to teach, learn to observe, collect data for research, and observe to become more self-aware.

In the same way, Kral (1994) expresses that one way teachers can gain awareness of their teaching is to observe others teachers. Teachers can see their own teaching in the teaching of others, and when teachers observe others to gain self-knowledge, they have the chance to construct and reconstruct their own knowledge.

In addition to what was mentioned above Randall & Thornton (2011), argue that the supervisor ‘understand’ rather than ‘judges’ and the supervisor has no ‘blueprint’ of how a lesson ought to be taught. This humanist view of supervision emphasizes ‘looking with’ rather ‘looking at’. The emphasis is not on judgment but on providing a record of what happened in order for this data to be worked on by the advisor and teacher.

Students’ Motivation

According to Oxford & Scarcella (1992), motivation has both external, behavioral characteristics and an internal, attitudinal structure. Three behavioral features of motivation are: decision, persistence, and activity level. The internal structure of motivation is just as important and includes these four attitudinal factors: interest, relevance, expectancy, and outcomes. If any of these factors – behavioral or attitudinal – is missing or negative, overall motivation of the learner is weakened. If

language classroom activities are perceived as uninteresting or irrelevant, the learner might decide, with a greater or lesser degree of conscious choice, to tune out or to reduce the level of involvement. Clearly, the attitudes of the learner directly affect the behaviors, and both aspects are integral to the concept of motivation.

On the other hand, Theobald (2006) identifies two general types of motivation, extrinsic and intrinsic. Extrinsic motivation refers to the external influences of praise and rewards. Meanwhile, intrinsic motivation refers to the internal drive within oneself to do well because of a desire to be challenged, for the sheer joy of participating or learning, or because of a personal desire to succeed.

But, to complement those previous conceptions above Brophy (2010) argues that it is helpful to view motivation to learn as a schema—a network of connected insights, skills, values, and disposition that enable students to understand what it means to engage in the learning activities with the intention of accomplishing their goals and with awareness of the strategies they use in attempting to do so.

Learning Styles

Bender (2003) gives an interesting definition about learning styles, when he mentions that each student has his/her own learning style; that is some students learn and understand the information by listening, others by seeing, and still others by touching and moving about. Then, if teachers include a variety of activities in their lessons, they could address a variety of learning styles, adapt their teaching to fit the needs of their students and even to assure that more students will be successful and they will be fewer bored and disruptive.

Furthermore, Richards & Renandya (2002) define language learning style as another key determiner of second language strategy choice. For example, students

with an analytic learning style prefer strategies such as contrastive analysis, rule learning, and analyzing words and phrases ,whereas students with a global style use strategies that help them to find , guess, scan and predict a picture, and also they use another strategies that assist them in conversing without knowing all the words (i.e., paraphrasing, gesturing).Visually oriented students use strategies such as listing, word grouping, etc., whereas those with an auditory preference like to work with tapes and practice aloud.

Similar, but shorter than the previous definitions is one that was written by Schurr (1989) when he notes that auditory learners use their voices and their ears as the primary mode for learning. Visual learners prefer to see words written down on paper, a picture of something being described, a timeline to remember events in history, or the assignment written on the board. Kinesthetic learners prefer, and actually learn better,when they touch and are physically involved in what they are studying.

Students Intelligence or Aptitude to Learn English

Jonassen & Grabowski (1993) indicate that students vary in their aptitudes for learning, their willingness to learn, and the styles or preferences for how they learn if they choose to. That is, the nature of the thinking and learning processes varies with the task.

On the other hand, Graham (2011) claims that most of the teachers recognize that within any class, some learners learn more quickly than others and may attribute this to ‘natural ability’. That is, some learners memorize items in the first place after; they subsequently retrieve them when needed. So, aptitude, while an important learner characteristic, perhaps needs to be treated with some caution when making

decisions about who, what and how to teach.

It is precise to mention a definition which summarizes the previous ones. According to Howe (1976), differences in learning between students are compounded by the fact that the impact of learning is cumulative. This implies a kind of snowballing effect, one small initial difference leading to another, which produces another, and so on. The next section analyzes previous studies that have been carried out in different parts of the world in order to assess certain factors that affect the English language teaching-learning process. These factors are so interesting because they could help teachers to enhance their teaching as well as the English knowledge of their students.

Sakui (2007) states that the purpose of the present study is to describe the challenges of classroom management that Japanese teachers of English experience in their work.

Furthermore, the same author says that he used the quantitative method for this study. Teachers were selected following “purposeful sampling” principles. The three main participants were all female and did not have any children. For the 15 additional selected interviewees, it included male participants. The interviews were conducted in Japanese, audio taped, transcribed, and translated into English. It was collected and analyzed data by adopting an inductive process.

Sakui concludes that the problem of classroom management in EFL classrooms in Japan becomes particularly difficult when teachers are encouraged to incorporate communicative language teaching activities (CLT) into traditional teacher-fronted lessons.

In this study McCorskey & McVetta (1978) introduce the following research

questions: Do students have differential preferences for the three common types of classroom arrangements? Does the type of course to be taken affect student preferences for classroom arrangements?

In addition, McCorskey and McVetta claim that this study was carried out in the following way: nine hundred seventy two college students who were simultaneously enrolled in two basic courses in communication, one a lecture course with over 300 students per section and the other an experience-based course with a maximum enrollment of 25 per section. Data were collected at two different times in the course of a semester. During the first week of class a measure of CA (Communication Apprehension) was obtained in the small classes. Approximately three months later the measures of arrangement and seating preferences were obtained in the lecture course. Coded student numbers were employed at both times so that the two data sets could be merged for analysis. In addition, to obtain measures of classroom arrangement preferences, subjects were provided diagrams of classrooms, except that the seats were represented by numbers (01-25).

Lastly, the researchers conclude that certain seats in a classroom increase a student's participation. Both the seat and the orientation of the occupant contribute to participation frequently. Students prefer the traditional classroom arrangement for required courses but prefer the horseshoe or modular arrangement for elective courses.

According to Çakmak (2009), the major aim of the present study was to identify the perceptions of student teachers concerning the effects of class size with regard to the teaching process.

Also, the same author comments that open-ended questions were developed

to gather data about the perceptions of student teachers on class size. Content analysis was used in order to analyze open-ended items in this study. First, all responses for each item were typed in to a computer file to see them as a whole. Open-ended items were very useful because they provided in-depth information related to student teachers' views about class size effects.

Çakmak concludes that class size is an important dimension in planning and realizing effective teaching. Large classes have some difficulties in maximizing the opportunities offered in the small class setting because they are not used to dealing with small numbers. In addition, the use of various teaching methods was a viable way in less crowded classes and in such classes; students could be motivated more easily and distinct techniques of assessment can be easily employed in such classes.

The following study to consider was carried out by Rodríguez & Oxbrow (2008) whose objective was to explore the use of L1 and translation with first-year English Language students of 'English Philology' at the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Spain. Furthermore, to discover how useful do our learners feel the use of the mother tongue and/or translation is as a language learning strategy in a monolingual context?

Additionally, Rodríguez and Oxbrow explain that this study was done as follows, the students' level of English had been formally tested at the beginning of the academic year in October 2005 using the computer-based version of the 'Quick Placement Test' (Oxford University Press, 2001) in conjunction with a free written sample. Also, worksheets and activities were prepared and integrated into normal class sessions, including the dictation of sentences in L1 for simultaneous translation, written translation of both sentences and short texts from Spanish-English and

English-Spanish, cross-linguistic comparison, and guided discovery analysis techniques. It is relevant to point out here that in the majority of the teaching sessions were used monolingual dictionaries and vocabulary recording techniques in L2 such as writing definitions of new lexical items exclusively in English.

In conclusion, the authors note that the use of L1 and translation seem to, in fact, enhances second language acquisition processes. The learners in this study appear to show a favorable response to the translation activities and the judicious use of mother tongue in the same way as findings. Indeed, raising awareness of the value of comparisons between languages in regular EFL instruction contributes to promoting second language acquisition processes by enabling learners to “notice the ‘gap’ between their inner grammars and the target language and ultimately, through constant hypothesis testing, achieve higher levels of grammatical as well as communicative competence.”

Carpenter (2006) states that the primary purpose of this exploratory study was to identify effective teaching methods for the large class environment. Furthermore, the research questions guiding the study were “What teaching methods are effective in the large class environments?” and “What are students’ perceptions of these methods?”

As well, Carpenter argues that this study was done in the following way: specific learning objectives were set forth for each of five chapters, and a different teaching method (lecture/discussion combination, jigsaw, case study, team project) was applied for each chapter. Moreover, students were pretested and post tested using objective, multiple-choice questions covering basic terminology and concepts from each chapter in order to assess knowledge of the material before and after each

treatment (teaching method) was applied. In order to gather information related to students' assessment of the course, preferences for class size, and perceptions of teaching methods, a survey instrument was developed for the study.

The author concludes that most students (51%) have a preference for small class sizes (less than 50 students). However, some students (38%) indicated no preference for class size, while the remaining 10% indicated a preference for large classes (100 or more students). Nearly all of the respondents (99%) indicated that they were currently enrolled in other large classes. Large groups of students found the jigsaw and lecture methods to be the least valuable (31% and 30%, respectively), while some students listed the team project and case study methods. No student indicated that the lecture/discussion method was the least valuable teaching method.

Description, Analysis, and Interpretation of Results

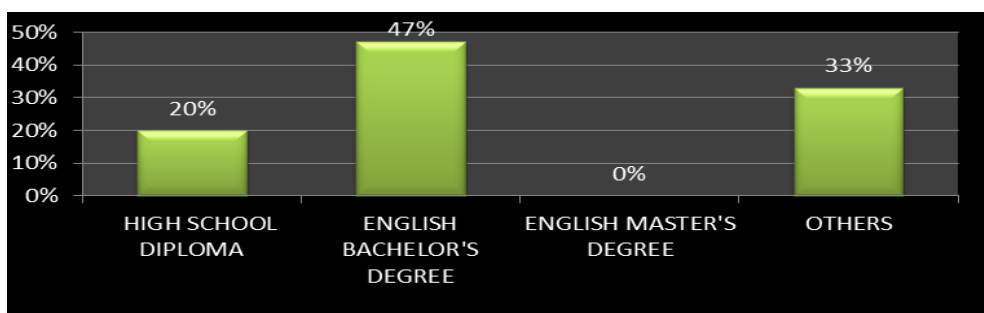
This section contains the quantitative analysis of the total results obtained in the investigation that was carried out in the five observed public high schools. In this analysis there is a detailed description of each one of the factors that are affecting the English language teaching-learning process in the chosen public high schools.

Quantitative Analysis

Factors Concerning Teachers

Which level of education do teachers have?

Graph 1



Author: Luis Mena.

Source: Teachers' questionnaire

Graph number 1 clearly reveals the English degree that teachers from the observed and selected public high schools have. A minimum quantity of them (20 %) have a high school degree; many teachers, (47 %), have an English bachelor's degree; on the other hand, none of the teachers have an English master's degree; finally, there is a considerable number of teachers (33 %) that possess another degree which is not precisely English but Math and Finances.

The English level of the teachers was also noticed during the present research through an interview that the fifteen teachers responded with the aim of analyzing

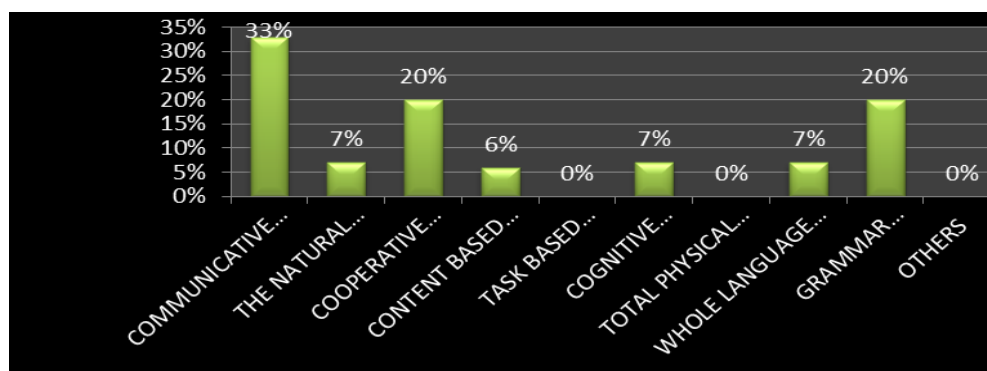
their English proficiency and level according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment. The results demonstrated that most of the teachers are between A1 and A2 levels which mean that they could describe in simple terms aspects of their background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.

However, there were only two out of the fifteen teachers who are in B2 level. It shows that they could produce clear detailed texts or subjects, explain a viewpoint and a typical issue giving advantages and disadvantages of various options.

These equivalences show clearly that most of the teachers do not have the minimum suitable requirement (B1) for teaching practice in the transference of the English language; that is, they do not have an appropriate or sufficient level in the English language Knowledge which affects seriously the whole teaching-learning process in Ecuadorian public high schools.

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

Graph 2



Author: Luis Mena.

Source: Teachers' questionnaire.

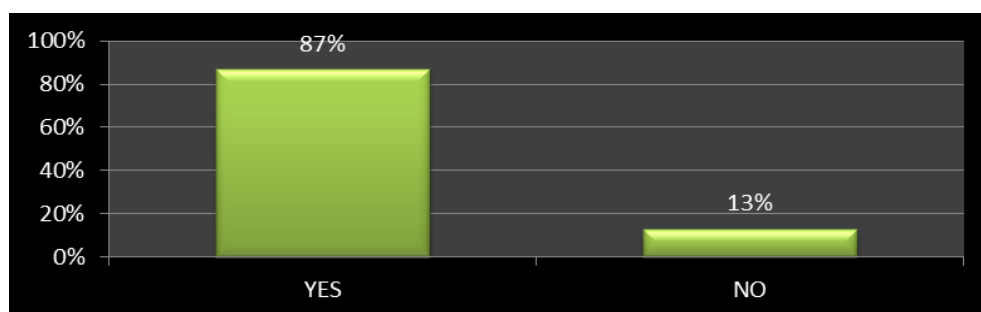
Graph 2 points out that during the survey most of the teachers (33 %) stated

that the method that they commonly use is Communicative Language Teaching; another important number of teachers (20 %) explained that they often employ Cooperative Language Learning Method or Grammar Translation Method in their classes. Some teachers (7 %) pointed out that they prefer to use The Natural Approach Method, Cognitive Academic Language Learning or Whole Language Approach; only one teacher (6 %) said he used Content-Based Instruction when he teaches; to conclude, nobody of the observed teachers (0 %) manifested that they use Task- Based Language Instruction, Total Physical Response or another different method during their English classes.

However, in the surveys done to the teachers it was verified that a lot of them did not have a clear idea about teaching English methods because according to the observations some teachers preferred to teach in their own way; that is, some lessons were not according to students' level, their ages, nor their understanding since it was seen that in some lessons many students did not develop the activities and exercises properly because they did not understand the instructions. Moreover, sometimes they only applied the methods that their textbook contained such as Cognitive Academic Language and Communicative Language Learning.

Do teachers use whole group activities to teach their lessons?

Graph 3



Author: Luis Mena.

Source: Teachers' questionnaire

Graph number 3 shows that the majority of the observed teachers (87 %) use commonly whole-group activities to teach the English lessons since they believe this kind of activity allows students and teachers to interact among them; and as a result, they get a successful communicative English class.

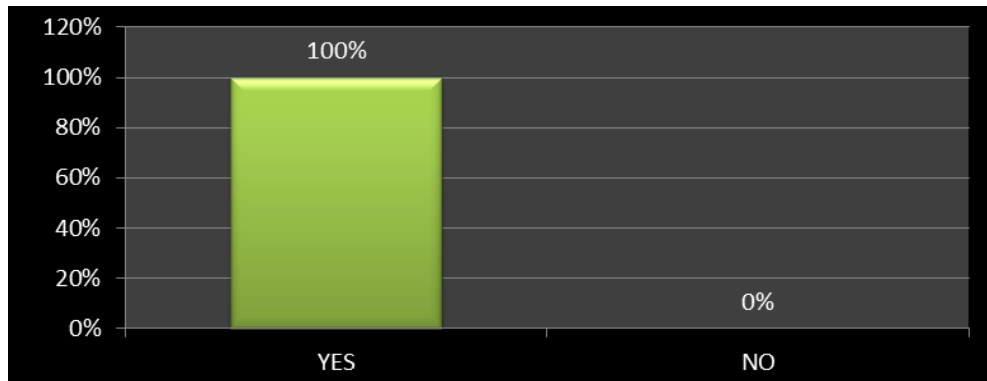
Furthermore, teachers explained that whole-group activities add more variety during the tasks; that is, in the ideas, opinions and experiences which can contribute to the learning process. Also, this can stimulate a greater involvement in each student and encourage a more memorable and meaningful exchange among them; but two out of the fifteen teachers (13 %) reported that they do not to use whole-group activities because they recognize that students have different learning styles, strategies, and preferences. They also consider that whole-group activities are not effective to work because lessons need a change of pace and focus to maintain the concentration of the learners.

It is important that teachers have a wide and flexible repertoire about the activities that they choose for the students to work. According to Baker & Freebairn (2008) teaching techniques could be a serious problem for some teachers, so the choice of one obviously depends on the individual classrooms situations and the teachers' preferred teaching style. For example: students can work in groups when they do discussions.

In addition, during the surveys, some students said that they do not like to work with whole-group classes because these cause a lot of noise and it is difficult for them to concentrate during the whole-group discussions, for example.

Do teachers use individual activities to teach their lessons?

Graph 4



Author: Luis Mena.

Source: Teachers' questionnaire.

Graph 4 demonstrates that all teachers (100 %) mentioned that they use individual activities during their English lessons because when students work alone, they as teachers can monitor the students' English understanding, and knowledge.

In addition, when students work individually they can develop their skills such as reading, writing and listening as well as learn and comprehend grammar and vocabulary in a successful way.

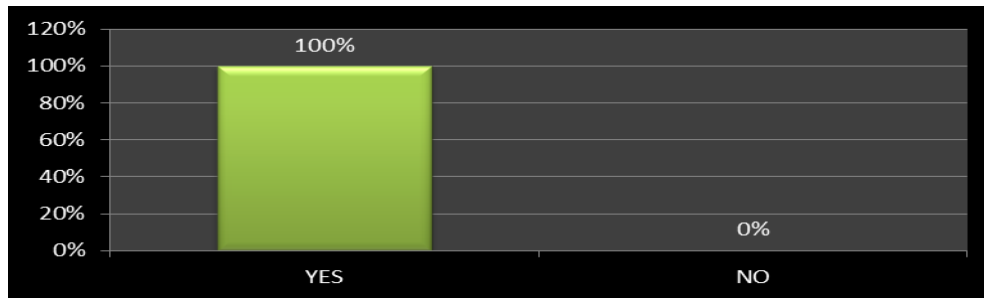
Also, from the observed classes, it is confirmed what several students manifested in the surveys. A few students preferred to work alone rather than to work with a group of students. Since the individual tasks help them to work on their weak points and also keep them focused on the subject. However, in a group, the students rarely have these opportunities because their classmates can disturb or distract them easily.

In brief, questionnaires determined that several teachers make their students work alone because they do not always manage the social aspects of group work so

that it will be advantageous to them.

Do teachers use group work activities to teach their lessons?

Graph 5



Author: Luis Mena.

Source: Teachers' questionnaire.

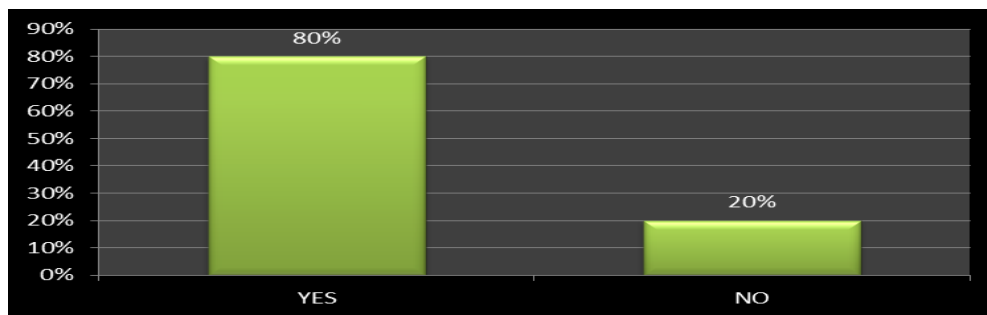
Graph number 5 points out that fifteen teachers (100 %) in the survey expressed they use group work activities during their English classes since they believe that this type of activity can be an effective method to motivate students, encourage active learning, and develop key critical-thinking and communication. Moreover, teachers stated that group work made it possible for them as teachers to dedicate more time to the students' oral production.

On the other hand, teachers think that thanks to group work, less confident students have the opportunity to practice their English knowledge and the new learned themes. Instead of being dependent on teachers, students get used to helping and learning from each other. Finally, by means of group work activities the observed teachers left free to prudently monitor students' progress and give help, advice and encouragement where and when students need. As Richards & Renandya (2002) said, certain teaching techniques help to enhance the teaching and learning process. These techniques rang from controlled (drills, dialogues, reading aloud,

display question/answers, etc.) to semi controlled (referential questions/ answers, cue narratives, information gaps activities, etc.) to free (role-play, problem solving, interviews, discussions, etc.) Also, teachers could consider other important teaching techniques, which are whole -class, group-work and pair-work activities.

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

Graph 6



Author: Luis Mena.

Source: Teachers' questionnaire.

Graph 6 shows that most of the teachers (80 %) claimed that they use English in their everyday classes because if they use their first language instead of the English language, it will not motivate students to improve their English knowledge. For this reason, they always find many ways for their students to understand what they want to communicate or transmit during their English classes. Some of these forms are mime, drawing stick figures, and examples that help students remember the new words, phrases, idioms, or whatever. Nonetheless, two of the fifteen observed teachers (20%) pointed out that they do not use only English during their classes but also Spanish because they guarantee that the mix of both languages help students get engaged with the different topics.

In addition, through the questionnaire most of the students supported the

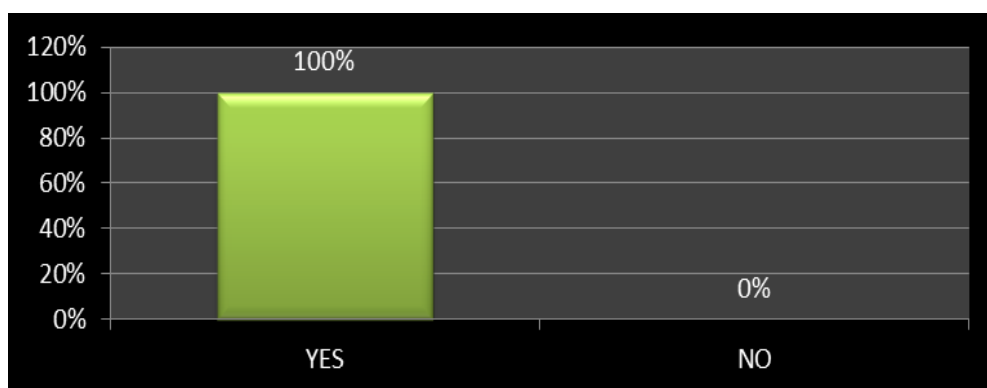
opinion of most of their teachers when they manifested that their English teachers use and speak English most of the time which help them understand, retain, and learn this foreign language in a productive way; however, there were only two students who said that their teachers do not use English in their classes, they prefer to use English and Spanish due to the fact that their teachers feel obliged to translate everything that they teach because some students do not understand when teachers just use English. While observing classes, it was proved what the two students said in their questionnaires, teachers use most of the time both English and Spanish languages which could affect the teaching and learning process.

Moreover, it was also noticed that students are accustomed to that their teachers translate everything because when teachers only used English for teaching or training their students many of them were not enthusiastic, confident, and lively in learning and participating during the lessons.

In summary, most of the teachers are aware of the importance of using the English language in each lesson in order to improve their English knowledge and level.

Do teachers plan their lessons?

Graph 7



Author: Luis Mena.

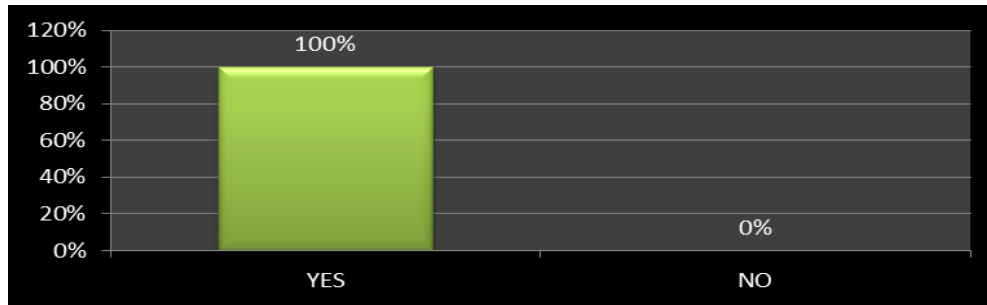
Source: Teachers' questionnaire.

Graph 7 shows that teachers (100 %) in the survey stated they always plan their lessons in order to guarantee their instructional content which is interesting and motivating for their students. Also, they claimed that the preparation of everyday class serves to provide a means of formalizing learning activities and a framework for them to reflect in a deeper and more creative way about how they design and structure activities for different students that help to attain constructive arrangement between theory and practice.

However, during the observations it was not seen what they exactly said in the questionnaire; on the contrary, in almost all classes they did not bring or have an exact plan for the lesson that allowed them to pace themselves properly because they seemed to be in blank since they had to figure out what they had to do in each lesson so the instructions of the activities were given into Spanish and even the lessons usually finished ten minutes before or ten minutes after the established high school schedule (class period) so they were becoming frustrated not so much with the lack of understanding that their students had on the different topics and activities but more so with themselves because they did not appear to be able to communicate the complex and abstract in simple and concrete ways. With regard to this, Arabit, Inlayo, & Boiser (2003) say that the importance of planning each lesson cannot be over emphasized. No teacher can go to class unprepared and successfully teach. Teachers must know exactly what they will teach and how they will teach it; that is, the lesson plan should be organized on paper and used as a guide whenever teachers introduce the lesson.

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

Graph 8



Author: Luis Mena.

Source: Teachers' questionnaire.

Graph 8 demonstrates that the fifteen observed teachers (100 %) from the selected public high schools consider aspects such as discipline, timing, feedback, and instruction when they teach their lessons in order to address classroom instructions and contents successfully. For this reason, they explained that once they have their learning objectives in order of importance, they design the specific activities that will be used to get students understand and apply what they have learned. Because they know that their students have diverse learning styles and different academic and personal experiences, they may already be familiar with some themes; that is why teachers generally start with a question or activity to gauge students' knowledge of the subject. Therefore, teachers highlighted that these aspects help them to have an idea of the students' familiarity with the topic; and also have a sense of what to focus on.

On the other hand, teachers said that they establish a signal when they want their class to stop what they are doing to attend them, doing this from the first day, so

that their students become accustomed to it right away. This has helped teachers to establish good atmosphere within the classes which is essential for the students not to feel anxious, avoiding in this way noise and behavior problems.

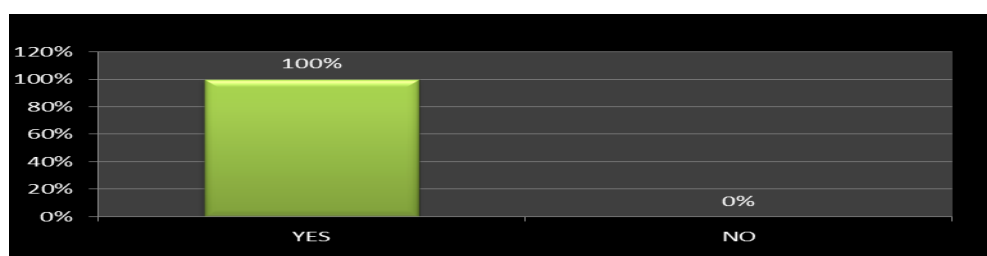
However, in the observations it was noticed that teachers had problems to control their students' discipline since teachers were explaining the classes and students were doing other things. Although, students in the survey stressed that their teachers have discipline control in the classroom.

In regard to the importance of managing learning Laslett & Smith (2002) suggest that whatever the subject or topic each lesson should start with some activity which keeps every student quietly occupied. Moreover, managing learning should reinforce previously acquired skills, review earlier work or set the scene for new learning. This warming-up period might only last four or five minutes. Additionally, or sometimes, it is vital that all work must finish in good time 'two minutes precisely' for material to be collected, put books away and still give opportunity for some revision or feedback, summary and recapitulation of what has been covered during the lesson in order for the students can achieve higher levels and reach deeper understanding.

Factors concerning students

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

Graph 2



Author: Luis Mena.

Source: Teachers' questionnaire.

Graph 9 represents the results obtained through the survey applied to teachers. This graph shows that 100% of the teachers assure that they recognize their students' needs and preferences (age, personality, attitude, aptitude, motivation, and learning styles) when planning their English classes. However, from the observations of the class, it is showed that most of the teachers planned their lessons focused only on their course book, old methods such as Grammar Translation Method, and poor teaching techniques as repetition and choral practice; getting as a result, the lack of motivation and interest from part of some students in learning English.

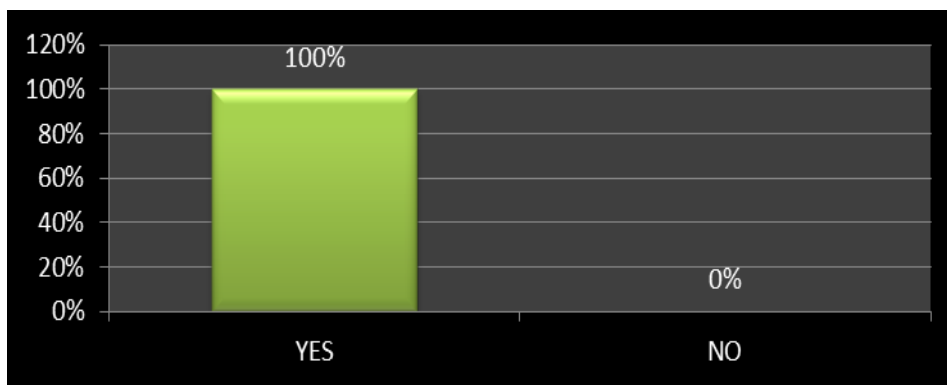
Moreover, it is important to highlight that from the students' surveys it was found that most of them would like to continue learning English by means of different activities such as games and group work because these activities help them to understand better the theme of the class and participate during it. According to Oxford & Scarcella (1992), if language classroom activities are perceived as uninteresting or irrelevant, the learner might decide, with a greater or lesser degree of conscious choice, to tune out or to reduce the level of involvement. Clearly, the attitudes of the learner directly affect the behaviors, and both aspects are integral to the concept of motivation.

Finally, it can be said that most of the teachers do not do their best when they teach because they do not vary the activities that they use in their classes; even though, in the surveys they said that they do it. As a result, during the observations it was noticed that the students' needs are not considered because teachers do not modify instruction for student differences; teachers do not make adjustments to

classroom management to meet the needs of different students. For example, some students had a lot of problems with vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation because they could not do the tasks well just by learning long lists of words and repeating mechanically ;consequently, this aspect did not promote class participation, interaction, motivation during the teaching-learning process.

Do teachers consider Students' level to teach English successfully?

Graph 10



Author: Luis Mena.

Source: teachers' questionnaire.

From graph 10, it is noticed that 100% of the teachers mentioned that they pay special attention to their students' level when they prepare their lessons because it lets them get good results during the development of the classes. The majority of the students do the tasks without any problem and even in a lot of cases they do not need the guidance of their teachers for doing the activities from the textbook.

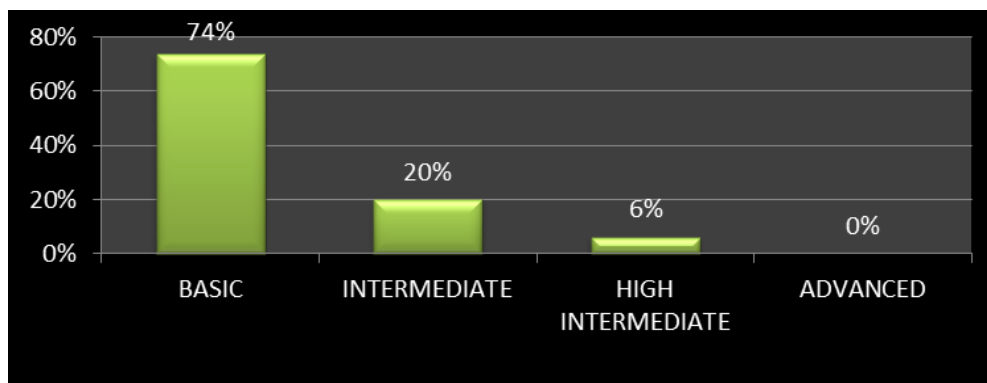
These important aspects not only were proved through the observations done but also by means of the teachers' survey. It was evident that most of the teachers knew the English level that their students had; for instance, it was seen that in the 1st year from one public high school the teacher explained in a simple way the use of

some grammatical structures. The teacher taught these topics easily by focusing on the basic level of his students; consequently, some of them were attentive during the class because they understood it; the information was a thing that opened a conversation. This shows that teachers are always worried about the level of their pupils.

Lastly, those ideas above can be summarized to the explanation given by Graham (2011) when he points out that most of the teachers recognize that within any class, some learners learn more quickly than others and may attribute this to 'natural ability'. That is, some learners memorize items in the first place later; they subsequently retrieve them when needed. So, aptitude, while an important learner characteristic, perhaps needs to be treated with some caution when making decisions about who, what and how to teach.

Which is the level of the students?

Graph 11



Author: Luis Mena.

Source: Teachers' questionnaire.

Graph 11 demonstrates that 74% of teachers said that their students have a Basic English level; 20% of surveyed teachers stated that their students have an

intermediate level; 6% of teachers said that the English level of their students is high Intermediate; lastly, all the asked teachers reported that nobody of their students (0%) have an advanced English level.

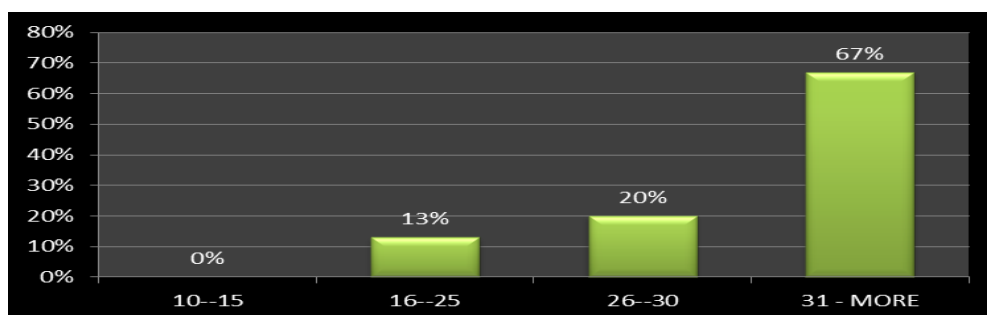
In the surveys, it is noticed that teachers agreed that most of their students have a low English level; however, teachers do not recognize that it is due to the fact that most of them miss creativity and interest to enhance the learning outcomes in their students; so, this does not provide a positive classroom environment; that is, teachers are not committed to teach well. Then, it is evident that there are not quality standards in many public high schools.

Lastly, it was found that the textbooks that teachers used were not according with the level the students had, since most of them had a basic English level, but their textbook contained information related to intermediate, high intermediate, and advanced level, which provoked students' insecurity and frustration in doing the activities that the textbook contained.

Factors concerning classrooms

How many students do teachers have in the observed class?

Graph 12



Author: Luis Mena.

Source: Teachers' questionnaire.

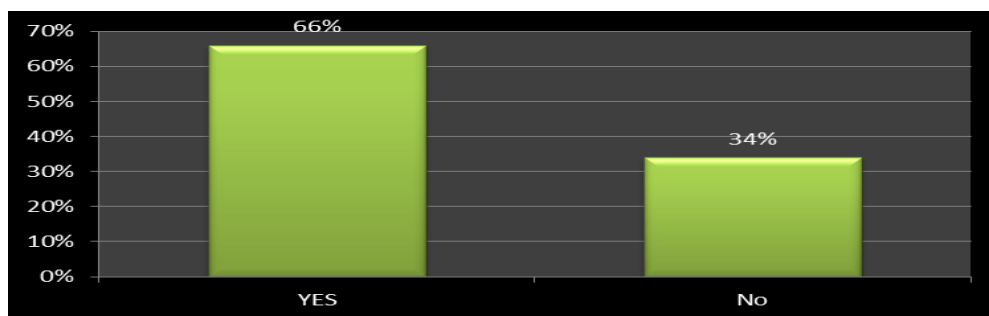
Graph 12 shows that the number of students in none of the observed classrooms (0%) was about 10 to 15. On the other hand, in two classrooms there were around 16 to 25 (13%), in four classrooms there were about 26 to 30 students (20%); lastly, in nine of the observed public high schools there was an average of 31 to 50 students per class (67%).

Cakmak (2009) reported that one of problems with large classes is motivation, techniques and so on so; this becomes very difficult to be carried out for teachers when they have many students. However, in five of the observed high schools, in the students' survey, many of them consider that a classroom, with a large number of the students, does not stimulate them to learning. On the other hand, a few students claimed that they felt comfortable when working with a large number of classmates because they can interchange and communicate ideas openly and confidently.

Finally, during the field research it was observed that in many of the public high schools the excessive number of students per classroom causes serious problems in the teaching and learning process because teachers cannot supply the requirements and clear the doubts of each student.

Do teachers feel comfortable working with this number of students?

Graph 13



Author: Luis Mena.

Source: Teachers' questionnaire.

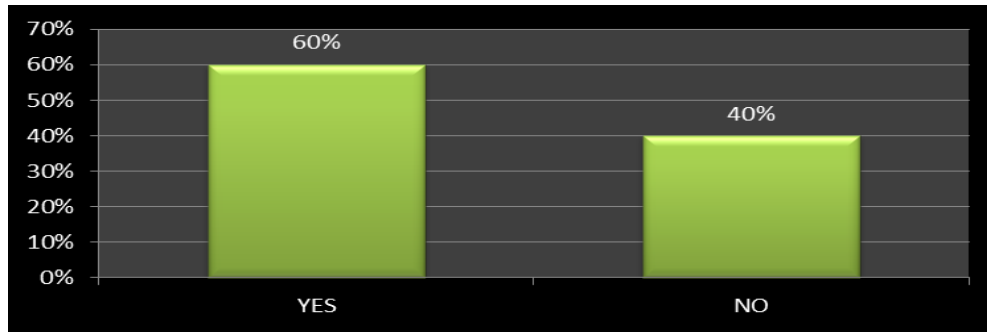
As Graph 13 clearly shows, most of the observed high schools had more than 30 students per classroom; however, (66%) of the interviewed teachers claimed to feel comfortable when working every day with this number of students into the classroom, and the other ones (34%) said to feel uncomfortable because their objectives are usually difficult and sometimes impossible to be achieved in large classes.

Similar results are shown by the students' questionnaire where most of them reported that they do not have problems when working with many classmates because they can share ideas and opinions; but, a few students claimed that they do not like to study in large classes; on the contrary, they would like to study in smaller ones in order to learn and understand the topics better and also pay more attention to the teacher.

Therefore, it is necessary to demonstrate a theory that can help us in this matter; Farrel (1999) affirms that the effective teaching is more easily achieved in smaller classes than in larger ones. It is relatively easy to be persuaded that wide differences in class size influence standards. Classes of six are likely to produce better student accomplishment than classes of 36, all other things being equal. A more difficult challenge is to determine the effect of narrower ranges of class size in public schools. If large classes of 32 make a difference between classes of 28, then class size is related to achievement.

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

Graph 14



Author: Luis Mena.

Source: Teachers' questionnaire.

Graph 14 reports that most of the teachers (60%) think that there is enough space to work with their students because students have plenty of space to move around the classroom; and only (40%) of the surveyed teachers affirmed that space is a problem for them because students spend a lot of time to receive assistance and they also believe that poorly arranged classrooms create an uncomfortable environment which put at risk the good climate that they are trying to create.

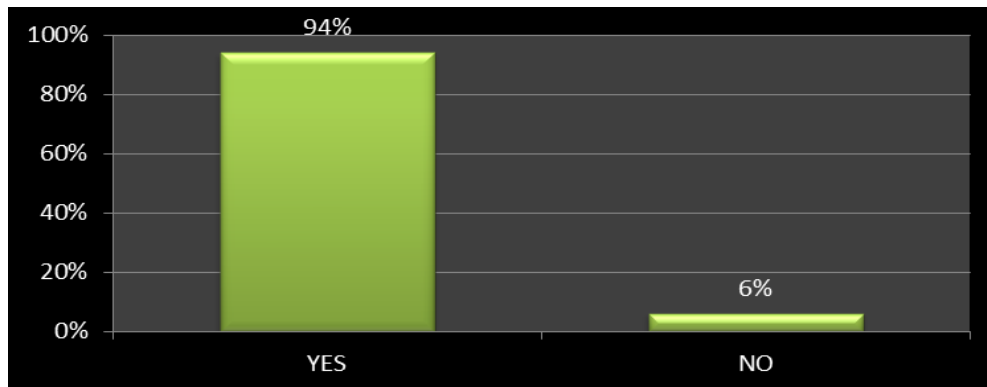
On the other hand, in the questionnaire applied to students, several of them agreed with some teachers because they said that good environments are frequently flexible since they feel free to move their chairs several times during the classes. However, most of the students assured that space in their classroom is well designed because it allows them to learn and share information and knowledge.

In conclusion, during each lesson it was observed that space of the classrooms was small because the aisles were too narrow; so many students could not move in and out of their chairs to access classroom materials, to work in small groups and even some students struggled with attention and behavior problems that were clearly the result of being in spaces that were too small, too crowded. Nevertheless, teachers can create a physical space that makes them and their students feel comfortable and

significant; that is to say desk arrangements should provide the teacher and students with access to each other.

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

Graph 15



Author: Luis Mena.

Source: Teachers' questionnaire.

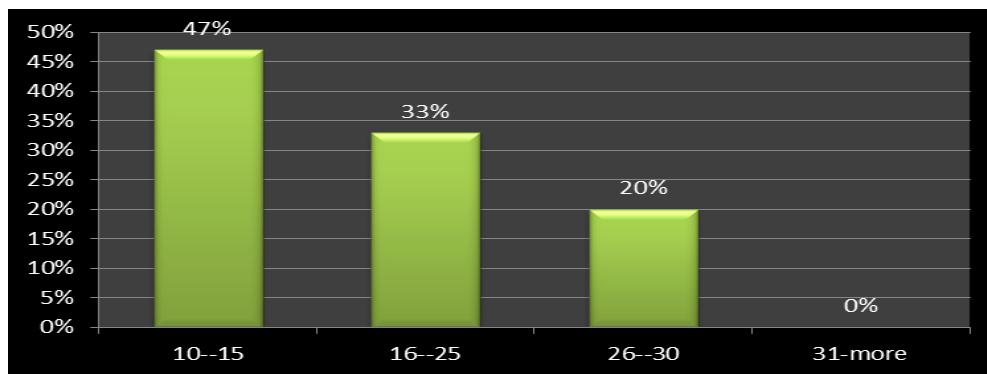
Graph 15 demonstrates that there is only one teacher (6%) who claimed that he did not arrange the seats in relation to the activities; nevertheless, fourteen of them (94 %) confirmed that they did it. They affirmed that they often arranged the seats in different ways such as rows, groups or semi-circles with the purpose of facilitating positive academic and behavioral outcomes. Additionally, they said that students display higher levels of appropriate behavior during individual tasks and makes it easy for them to get to students for one-on-one interaction when they are seated in these ways.

Moreover, teachers' opinions are supported with the opinions of students because in the surveys they affirmed that these seating arrangements let them see each other and have debates and discussions amongst themselves. The students also

said that they can give ideas on how they want to do the activities and they feel able to work together doing projects and activities, and as Nath & Cohen (2011) mention, it is crucial for teachers to understand the implications of furniture arrangements in the classroom. Seats arranged in rows with all students facing the front of the class may prove adequate for teacher or student presentations and demonstrations and audio or visual presentations made to the entire class, but this arrangement does not encourage interactive learning. Semicircles, a horseshoe pattern, and a circle formation are best suited for whole-class discussions and interactions.

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

Graph 16



Author: Luis Mena.

Source: Teachers' questionnaire.

In Graph 16, based on their experience, several teachers suggested that the ideal class size is between 10 to 15 students (47 %); some thought that the appropriate students' number is 16 to 25 (33 %), another group of teachers stated that an average 26 to 30 students per class (20 %) is the correct number to teach English; finally, none teacher (0%) said that 31 or more students is the correct number.

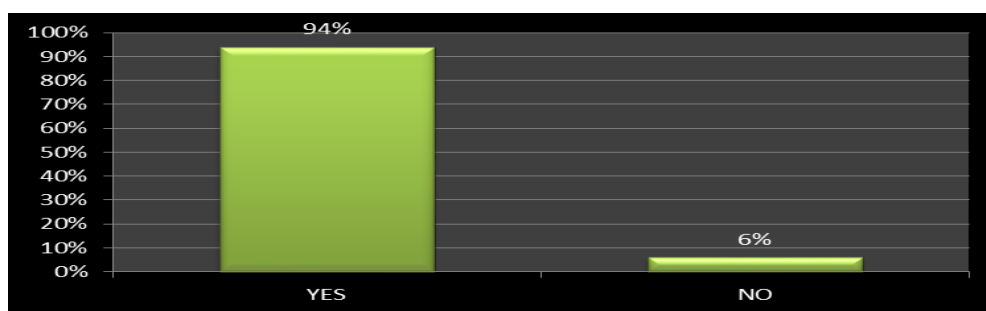
However, Tyagi (2011) explained that large classes can be as effective as

small classes for certain educational outcomes; for instance, large classes can be superior to small classes for retention of factual information as assessed with achievement tests. Nonetheless, large classes are simply not as effective as small ones for retention of knowledge, critical thinking and attitude change.

On the other hand, in the surveys applied to students, some of them stated that they preferred classes of 25 to 30 students because they can learn to interact favorably with many other classmates which conduct them to a cooperative learning. Meanwhile, other students claimed that they would like to have from 10 to 15 classmates in their classrooms since, in this way, all of them can learn faster and they can socialize with their partners and develop a better relationship with their teachers. In addition, they argued that a small students' number allows them to be more able to focus on the tasks and to have opportunities to participate; therefore, these aspects contribute to teachers be more attentive to the learning progress of each student.

Do teachers use teaching resources (TV, tape /Cd recorder(s), projector(s), smart board, and supplementary material)?

Graph 17



Author: Luis Mena.

Source: Teachers' questionnaire.

The results in graph 17 show that 94% of the teachers claimed that they used

teaching resources such as CD players and TV and supplementary materials such as the whiteboard and pictures to support their classes due to the fact that their use help students to assimilate the new lessons better through visualization and encourage them to participate actively and to demonstrate their skills and abilities in the learning process. In contrast, a small number (6%) of teachers still believe that teaching should be only followed by the textbook-based materials, and it was noticed during the observations that this is the most common used material, but with poor outcomes.

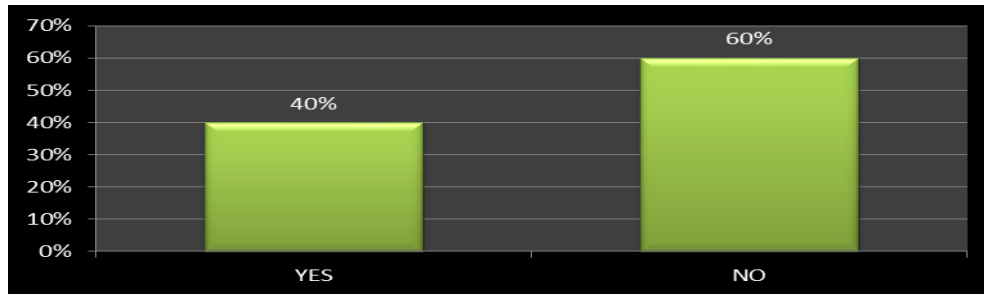
On the other hand, in the surveys applied to students, it was found that a small group of them would have liked that their teachers would have worked with some other teaching resources (computers, projectors, and smart boards) and different kinds of supplementary materials (videos, flashcards, websites, stories, and songs) because these types of resources and materials get them interested in the classes and give them a great opportunity for absorbing information in their preferred way.

However, most of the surveyed students pointed out that the teaching resources and supplementary materials that teachers use get them connected and engaged to the topic. Hence, these opinions confirm that not all students learn in the same way, and as Bender (2003) said each student has his/her own learning style; that is some students learn and understand the information by listening, others by seeing, and still others by touching and moving about.

Then, if teachers include a variety of activities in their lessons, they could address a variety of learning styles, adapt their teaching to fit the needs of their students and even to assure that more students will be successful and they will be interested and concentrated in the class.

Do teachers consider appropriate the recourses they have in class?

Graph 18



Author: Luis Mena.

Source: Teachers' questionnaire.

The last graph illustrated that teachers are conscious about the importance of using appropriate teaching resources during their lessons, even if it is not always possible for them to use many materials, due to this they have to stick to resources and materials provided by the high school as well as the teaching aids that contain the textbook they are using.

Consequently, the graph 18 demonstrates that lots of teachers (60%) do not consider appropriate the resources they have in class because those materials do not motivate students in their learning process or these materials do not help students to express themselves; thus, these teaching tools prove not to be helpful and useful for the teachers to fix the English knowledge in the students' mind.

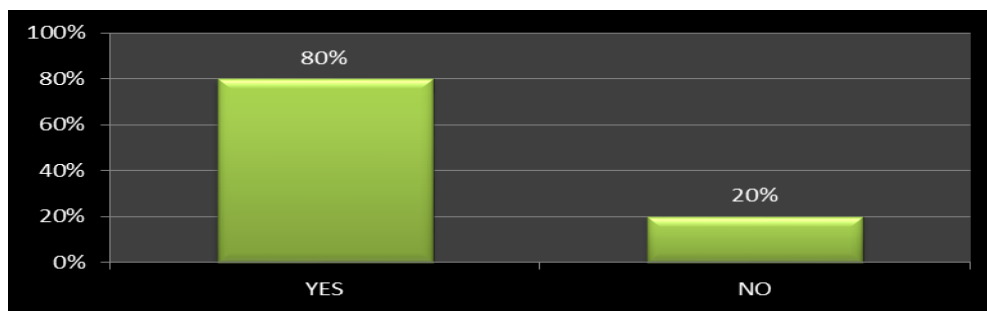
Nonetheless, 40% of the surveyed teachers assured that the resources that they have at hand or inside the classrooms are appropriate to teach because these supporting materials help them to clarify and explain students the contents of the lessons and the students can practice some activities in a way more productive and enjoyable.

Lastly, in the five observed public high schools , students, when interviewed, asserted that they would like that their teachers use different types of teaching aids more often, because they believe these resources help them to comprehend better the different themes, encouraging them more in their learning process.

Factors concerning educational institution

Does the institutions review teacher´s lesson plans?

Graph 19



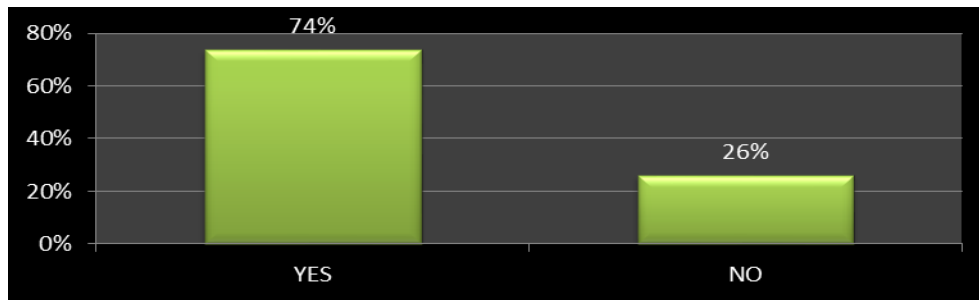
Author: Luis Mena.

Source: Teachers´ questionnaire.

The results in Graph 19 indicate that in the questionnaire done to the teachers, most of them (80 %) stated that their educational authorities used to review their lesson plans, also they claimed that normally they have to present the lesson plans weekly; however, there were some public high schools where teachers had to show their lessons plans monthly. On the other hand, three teachers (20 %) explained that they do not presented their lessons plans when the school year starts; the reasons are because their respective high schools do not have an English Area Director who reviews teachers´ lesson plans or the vice-principals are not able to review lesson plans in English because it is difficult for them to comprehend what these contain.

Do the institutions monitor the teacher´s classes?

Graph 20



Author: Luis Mena.

Source: Teachers' questionnaire.

Graph 20 shows that most of the teachers (74 %) pointed out that the educational institutions monitor their teaching normally once a month; however, a few teachers (26 %) stated that they are not monitored since monitoring is not usual in their respective public high schools.

Nevertheless, many of the observed teachers agreed that they need support in their classroom management. This maybe includes the observation of other teachers who monitor the lesson plans and provide opportunities for relevant, coherent and effective general education, training and continuous professional development of teachers.

According to Kral (1994), one way teachers can gain awareness of their teaching is to observe other teachers. Teachers can see their own teaching in the teaching of others, and when teachers observe others, they gain self-knowledge; so they have the chance to construct and reconstruct their own knowledge.

Conclusions

- For the five observed public high schools the most important thing is not to have as many students as possible in their classrooms because the main consideration for them is the reduced opportunity that students have for an effective participation, which, they think, is critical for a successful teaching-learning process.
- Most of the teachers from the observed public high schools adduced that they are qualified teachers; nonetheless, it was noticed that they do not demonstrate an adequate knowledge of the English language because they prefer to teach using their own way; that is, their teaching is focused on common and repetitive methods as well as old techniques that make classrooms unmanageable.
- It was found that 14 out of 15 teachers who are in - service are in A1 and A2 level and 2 out of 15 teachers are in B2 level. This is a clear evidence that the observed teachers do not comply with international standards because they have little English language knowledge which affects the whole teaching-learning process.
- Some of the fifteen observed teachers sometimes went to class completely in blank because in some lessons they forgot what activity they were supposed to do; as a result, most of the time they did not know how to teach correctly their classes which clearly shows that they do not plan their lessons as they assure to.
- This study demonstrates that in the observed public high schools a few teachers do not consider their students' needs and preferences when planning

their English classes because the activities and teaching resources that they use not always are according to the students' needs and preferences since during the lessons it was seen that most of the students lost control easily and they ended up disturbing the teachers and the other students.

Recommendations

- The classroom, and how the content of the lessons and furnishing are arranged, can be a powerful teaching tool, or an undirected and unrecognized negative influence on teaching and learning process. Thus, teachers should establish a classroom environment that is nonthreatening, friendly, motivating, positive, and really conducive to learning and enhanced student behavior.
- Teachers should remember that a productive lesson plan is not one in which everything goes exactly as planned, but one in which both students and teachers learn from each other. Therefore, it is important that teachers recognize that a good lesson plan gives them as teachers with a general outline of their teaching goals and learning objectives about what they want to do and how they want to do it.
- Teachers should do their best effort for improving their English language teaching proficiency and avoid using their first language during the classes because students are there to learn communication strategies in English, and giving them translations or explanations in their own language deters them from becoming independent learners.

REFERENCES

- Arabit, P. D., Inlayo, I. F., & Boiser, D. C. (2003). *Handbook on student teaching: Classroom management*. Quezon, PH: Rex Printing Company, Inc.
- Abbs, B., Barker, C., & Freebairn, I. (2008). *Postcards 4*. New York: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Bender, Y. (2003). *The new teacher's handbook: Practical strategies & techniques for success in the classroom from kindergarten through high school*. Norwich, VT: Nomad Press.
- Brophy, J. E. (2010). *Motivating students to learn* (3rd ed.). New York: Routledge.
- Butt, G. (2006). *Lesson planning* (2nd ed.). London: Continuum International Publishing Group.
- Çakmak, M. (2009). The perceptions of student teachers about the effects of class size with regard to effective teaching process. *The Qualitative Report*, 14, 1-14.
- Carpenter, J. M. (2006). Effective teaching methods for large classes. *Journal of Family & Consumer Sciences Education*, 24, 1-11.
- Dhand, H. (2008). *Techniques of teaching*. New Delhi: APH Publishing Corporation.
- Erickson, B. L., Peters, C. B., & Strommer, D. W. (2006). *Teaching first-year college students: Revised and expanded edition of teaching college freshmen*. San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Farrel, M. (1999). *Key Issues for Primary Schools*. New York: Taylor & Francis Group.
- Fromkim, V., Rodman, R., & Hyams, N. M. (2011). *An introduction to language*. Boston, MASS: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning.
- Good, T. L. (2008). *21st century education: A reference handbook*. Thousand Oaks,

CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Goodwyn, A., & Branson, J. (2005). *Teaching English: A handbook for primary and secondary school teachers*. New York: Taylor & Francis Group.

Graham, H. (2011). *Exploring English language teaching: Language in action*. New York: Taylor & Francis Group.

Hammomd, L. D., Bransford, J., LePage, P., Hammerness, K., & Duffi, H. (2005). *Preparing teachers for a changing world: What teachers should learn and be able to do* (1st ed.). San Francisco, CA: John Willey & Sons, Inc.

Howe, M. J. (1976). *Learning in infants and young children*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Jonassen, D. H., & Grabowski, B. L. (1993). *Handbook of individual differences: Learning and instruction*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Klotter, E., Klotter, J. A., & Street, C. (2008). *English language learners in your classroom: Strategies that work* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Kral, T. (1994). *Teacher development making the right moves*. Washington, DC: English Language Program Division.

Laslett, R., & Smith, C. (2002). *Effective classroom management: A teacher's guide*. New York: Taylor & Francis Group.

Lindsay, P. (2000). *Teaching English worldwide*. California: Alta Book Center Publishers.

Marzano, R. J., Gaddy, B. B., Foseid, M. C., Foseid, M. P., & Marzano, J. S: (2005). *A handbook for classroom management that works*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

McCorskey, J. C., & McVetta, R. W. (1978). *Classroom seating arrangements:*

- Instructional communication theory versus student preferences. *Communication Education, 27*, 1-13.
- McCune, L. S., & Alexander, V. C. (2011). *Cliffs notes FTCE professional education test*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Nath, J. L., & Cohen, M. (2011). *Becoming an EC-6 teacher in Texas: A course of study for the pedagogy and professional responsibilities*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning.
- Oxford, R. L. (1996). *Language learning strategies around the world: Cross-cultural perspectives*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
- Oxford, R. L., & Scarcella, R. C. (1992). *The tapestry of language learning: The individual in the communicative classroom*. Boston, MASS: Heinle & Heinle.
- Randall, M., & Thornton, B. (2011). *Advising and supporting teachers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Richards, J. C. (1999). *Language teaching awareness: A guide to exploring beliefs and practices*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Richards, J. C., & Rodgers, T. S. (2001). *Approaches and methods in language teaching* (2nd ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Richards, J. C., & Renandya, W. A. (2002). *Methodology in language teaching: An anthology of current practice*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Richard-Amato, P. A., & Snow, M. A. (1992). *The multicultural classroom: Readings for content-area teachers*. White Plains, NY: Longman.
- Rodríguez, J. C., & Oxbrow, G. (2008). *L1 in the EFL classroom: More a help than a hindrance?* Retrieved from http://www.ugr.es/~portalin/articulos/PL_numero_9/7%20Carolina.pdf.

- Sakui, K. (2007). Classroom management in Japanese EFL classrooms. *JALT Journal*, 29, 1-18.
- Singh, Y. K. (2008). *Teaching practice: Lesson planning*. New Delhi: APH Publishing Corporation.
- Schurr, S. (1989). *Dynamite in the classroom: A how-to handbook for teachers*. Columbus, OH: National Middle School Association.
- Tabassum, S. H. (2005). *Language, space and power: A critical look at bilingual education*. Buffalo, NY: Multilingual Matters Ltd.
- Theobald, M. A. (2006). *Increasing student motivation: Strategies for middle and high school teachers*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Tyagi, A. K. (2011). *Psychology of teaching, learning and process*. New Delhi: Educational Publishers and Distributors.

ANNEXES



UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA PARTICULAR DE LOJA

La Universidad Católica de Loja

MODALIDA ABIERTA Y A DISTANCIA

CARRERA DE INGLES

OBSERVATION SHEET

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION:	
DATE:	
YEAR (desde 8 ^{vo} básica a 3 ^{ro} bachillerato):	

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

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

YES () NO ()

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

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

***Students' Level**

Basic ()	Intermediate ()	High Intermediate ()	Advanced ()
-----------	------------------	-----------------------	--------------

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

3. Which of the following methods are used?

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

4. Which of the following activities are used?

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

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

Time	()
------	-----

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

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

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

7. How many students are there in the classroom?

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

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

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

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

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

NOTES:

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

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

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

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

TEACHER'S INTERVIEW

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

TEACHER'S LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY:											
C2	()	C1	()	B2	()	B1	()	A2	()	A1	()



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

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION:	
DATE:	
YEAR:	

1. ¿Te gusta aprender Inglés?

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

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

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

3. Consideras que las actividades realizadas en clase son:

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

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

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

¿Por qué?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

GRACIAS!!!!



UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA PARTICULAR DE LOJA

La Universidad Católica de Loja

MODALIDA ABIERTA Y A DISTANCIA

CARRERA DE INGLES

TEACHER'S QUESTIONNAIRE

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION:	
DATE:	
YEAR:	

1. Which level of education do you have?

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

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

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

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

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

4. Which is the level of your students?

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

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

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

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

YES ()	NO ()	
Why? _____		

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

YES ()	NO ()	
Why? _____		

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

YES ()	NO ()	
Why? _____		

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

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

10. Do you plan your lessons?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

YES ()	NO ()
Which ones? _____	

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

YES ()	NO ()
Why? _____	

19. Does the institution review your lesson plans?

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

20. Does the institution monitor your teaching?

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

Thanks for your cooperation!!!!!!