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Factors that affect the English language teaching-learning process in  
Ecuadorian public high schools

Trabajo de fin de titulación.

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## DEDICATION

I lovingly dedicate this thesis to my family  
who supports me on each step of my life.

Stefanía Karolina Acosta Pico

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## *Abstract*

This research work is based on the aim of analyzing the factors that affect the English language teaching- learning process. This study was carried out with the collaboration of five Public high schools in Quito including students from eight grade to third year baccalaureate. Student groups were from 12 to 25 years old depending on the school's schedule. This research work followed a data gathering process that included three elements. First, techniques such as surveys and note-taking were used. Secondly, observation formats and questionnaires were part of the instruments. In fact, there were a teachers' questionnaire and a students' questionnaire. Moreover, an observation sheet was completed to compare the results obtained. Third, primary and secondary information sources were used during the whole researching process. As a result, the application of qualitative and quantitative research methods contributed to the analysis and interpretation of the results from this study. To conclude, this study presents the factors that influence the teaching- learning process of a second language acquisition in Ecuadorian Public high schools determining classroom conditions, English teachers' features and teachers' professional ability.

## *1. Introduction*

At present, English is one of the most used languages in the world. Latin American countries are increased in their number of students who learn English. In addition, Ecuador has developed since 1992, a curriculum with the aim of improving all high school students' English proficiency.

Nevertheless, Ecuadorian Public high schools students do not have a well-founded background in the English language. Despite of the application of the Curricular Reform Aimed at the Development of the Learning of English in Ecuadorian Schools (CRADLE) project there is an evidence of the lack of proficiency in English language in Public high schools' community. In fact, students and teachers present some difficulties such as problems in their pronunciation when they talk. Besides, students presented a weak use of language when answering questions done by the teachers.

Consequently, the objectives of this work are: to research on the factors that affect the English language teaching- learning process determining the classroom conditions in which English lessons take place; and identify the characteristics of the in-service English teachers' professional performance. This study has the purpose of contributing to Ecuadorian Public high schools education.

Ecuadorian society is in a process of becoming aware of the importance of the English language. This phenomenon happens all around the world. Countries such as Vietnam, Thailand, Korea, Nigeria and others develop studies related to this topic.

To this respect, there are some studies related to the factors that influence teaching process of a second language that need to be considered. That is why this document



presents the following information that shows valuable aspects contributing to this research.

First, Aduwa - Ogiegbaen and Iyamu (2006) identify specific problems on English language teaching in Nigeria's Public secondary schools. These problems are related to the use of teaching resources, language teaching methods, and teaching-learning atmosphere. In addition, the methodology of this study is divided in two instruments. First, an observation scheme is set. Secondly, a survey based on Likert scale is held.

As a result, Nigeria's teaching English level on Public secondary high school is behind the normal progress line. In fact, statistics have shown that the learners' failing level is between 55% and 75% (Olaboopo, 1998). In addition, secondary school students who attempt to study in the University have a disadvantage because of their poor academic background.

Another study proposed by Al- Haj (2011) argues about the lack of motivation in EFL classrooms of secondary schools based on understanding the motivation concept, maximizing its usefulness in secondary schools in Gezira State- Sudan, planning activities to promote motivation in class, showing good teachers' features, and promoting teachers to reach high motivated classrooms.

To this respect, the methodology applied in this study is based on three tools to define students' behavior in secondary schools in Gezira. First, direct observations are applied. Secondly, guided interviews are held. Third, relevant documents are examined.

As a result, teachers in Gezira are not qualified enough to promote motivation in classrooms. Besides, researcher states on his study that in most of the EFL secondary

schools teachers do not have interest in what they are teaching. Then, they do not respond to their students' needs. Indeed, teachers do not call their students by their names. In addition, they do not use learning activities like games, debates, speeches while they are teaching; when students do not learn, they are not re-taught.

Consequently, teacher - student interaction is not positive. The researcher also claims that teachers depend entirely on the text-books. Finally, the author establishes that teachers do not have a passion for teaching.

Another study contributing to this work is Sariçoban and Sakizli (2006), the authors examine the factors and solutions for successful classroom management. Moreover, according to the author, learners' characteristics, school environment and teachers' features are factors that affect classroom management. In addition, the methodology used in this study was the conceptualization of each factor.

On one hand, learners' characteristics guide class management. For example, age, personality, attitude and motivation mark the difference when teaching. Likewise, environment impacts teaching process. Indeed, seating arrangement and class size enables teacher build a positive surrounding for students' progress.

On the other hand, social environment factors can influence effective learning. Moreover, teachers should prepare materials according to their students' and abilities.

In contrast, educational environment includes teachers' features such as lesson design, teacher's voice, and teacher's body language.

In conclusion, the author suggests that classroom management influences on learning process success. Thus, factors related to students should be considered in order to reach educational goals. Besides, school features also implies teacher interest on

reaching learners community, and social aspects should be organized before instruction. Finally, teachers have creative tools for managing a class according to the group's needs.

This research work is helpful for some groups: the Ministerio de Educación del Ecuador, the researcher, English students and English teachers who daily contribute to the correct building of a well-educated country. First, The Ministerio de Educación del Ecuador can use this research to have a global vision about the real situation of the English language Teaching- learning process in Public high schools. In addition, this information provides valuable data about the factors that influence the education process, as well as strategies to improve the English language teaching-learning process in these schools.

Secondly, the researcher enriches her academic, social and cultural knowledge about the reality and variety of environments where English is taught. Besides, the investigation process let the researcher build a strong background to argument the study. Indeed, the researcher shares conversations and experiences with teachers and students from the visited Public high schools. This fact contributes to the construction of a connection between the researcher and the purpose of the study, it becomes part of a discovery that is not going to finish until the researcher gets all the answers.

Third, English students community will be able to find a current study about Ecuadorian English teaching-language process in Public high schools. Therefore, this study becomes a contribution to the National Education System.

Finally, English teachers are the ones who can use the most this study. Because this document becomes the spark to the correct way for improving the English language teaching - learning process.

Consequently, as a researcher I hope this document serves as a basis for people who want know about the aspects that influence the English teaching - learning process in Public high schools. Besides, this study provides the background on the educational situation in these schools. This research contains information about the most common reasons considered as a key factor in language teaching. Additionally, this document also shows the way in which teachers from Public high schools work despite of the lack of resources.

On the other hand, the limitation of this study was the little time for gathering all the information from Public high schools. Besides, not all the visited schools were open to contribute to the development of the study. For instance, Principals from more than five Public high schools felt threatened by the possibility of being observed. Indeed, schools' Principals rejected or did not even answer the request for developing the observation and research process there.

Finally, five Public high schools accepted the invitation to be part of this research, but the schedules of the chosen teachers made hard to get to an satisfactory interaction. This fact, produced discomfort in two of the interviewed teachers because they felt interrupted and not prepared for an interview or an observation class.

## *2. Method*

The core of this research process were qualitative and quantitative research, the researcher started the process with the formal invitation to Public high schools to be part of this investigation. Indeed, the schools invited had to answer to the request. Given that academic situation in Ecuadorian Public high schools presents a weak development in the English language proficiency, the researcher felt the need to understand the circumstances beyond the evidence obtained in the bibliographic research.

The questions to be answered were: How do students from Public high schools learn English? How do teachers from Public high schools teach English? Is there something affecting the teaching- learning process?

In this line of research the observation played an important role in the data gathering process. Based on that, the researcher identified specific behaviors from students in Public high schools. Moreover, the researcher interacted with the teachers and students while they were in EFL classrooms.

To achieve the purpose of this study the researcher used four research instruments:

- A teacher's questionnaire
- An observation sheet
- A students' questionnaire
- An interview script for teachers (to determine the teachers' English proficiency)

Then the researcher based the data collection and evaluation from the specific questions proposed. Besides, the researcher had the chance to develop observation notes to specify the qualitative aspects from the case study.

### *Setting and Participants*

The research was done in Quito in five different Public high schools in afternoon and evening schedules. The study includes students and teachers from the Public high schools. The students, who were part of this study, were male and female from 12 to 25 years old depending on the school's schedule.

The researcher considered 15 teachers, from different ages, degrees and experience on teaching English as a second language.

The observed participants belong to Public high schools in the south of the city of Quito. The economic situation of students is between middle and middle-low class.

Therefore, the researcher outlined the procedure to apply the research instruments. Firstly, students were surveyed, they were asked individually about their like of English language, their motivation and perception about the way their teachers teach. To this respect, they were asked about the discipline control, activities teachers develop in class, feedback, instruction clearness and resources. Besides, students were inquired about their comfort in class. To this respect, they were asked about the number of classmates, the class size, and the adequate environment to learn.

On the other hand, teachers were surveyed and interviewed. The first technique was the survey; the teachers' form was structured with objective questions about their performance. To this respect, they were asked about their level of education, their methods, their abilities, and the use of English in class, the classroom management, and the resources they use. Finally, they were inquired about classroom factors; such as seats arrangement, class size, and the ideal number of students for a class.

The second technique was carried out in order to identify the level of English's language proficiency according to the Common European Framework of References for Languages (CEFRL).

The observation sheet was filled by the researcher while the class was observed. Besides, the researcher made notes completing the analysis of the observation form. The teachers' questionnaire and the students' questionnaire were done simultaneously, and the interview with the teachers was carried out at the end of the observed class.

From all this information collected, the researcher tabulated all the data and presented the results organizing them according to the following items:

- Factors concerning teachers
- Factors concerning students
- Factors concerning classrooms
- Factors concerning educational institutions

To analyze the data, the researcher codified each instrument used for the investigation process. Therefore, all the information was entered into the selected software worksheet. To process this information, another worksheet was created containing a table with the data and the graphic selected. Each question was presented in a pie diagram which later was interpreted. Finally, conclusions and recommendations were made.

The data analysis was carried out by tabulating the information gathered during the process using the software Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

### 3. Discussion

#### 3.1 Literature Review

Teaching English as a Foreign Language in Ecuador has been influenced by many aspects. The Ecuadorian government has tried to develop an educational revolution, promoting a change in the National Curriculum for all the subjects including on English language. Despite the effort, there is a short percentage of people that master English and a shorter one that even like it, the general thought is that English is a hard subject to learn and teach.

Asamblea Nacional del Ecuador (2011) through the *Ley Orgánica de Educación Intercultural (LOEI)* states that English is one of the most used languages around the world. Furthermore, the Educational system in the country has developed a project to improve the curriculum. In fact; Ecuadorian Education Department has established English as an essential subject to learn.

On the other hand, the Curricular Reform Aimed at the Development of the Learning of English in Ecuadorian Schools (CRADLE) project is developed since 1992 by a bilateral agreement between Ecuadorian and British governments in order to improve English teaching - learning process in the country. In fact, this includes the application of a new study program with five hours of English classes per week to all high school courses since eighth grades. However, Ministerio de Educación Del Ecuador (2001) mentions that the project's deadline is already completed since 2006 and there is not another project with a similar aim since then on.



Therefore, the Secretaría Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnología SENECYT (2012) through the Subsecretaría de Calidad Educativa did a public teachers' evaluation in the year 2011. The results showed that a 60 % of evaluated teachers had a grade between level A1 and A2 according to the Common European Framework of Reference. For that reason, SENECYT established that high school and university education of English language in Ecuador has not an adequate proficiency level; this limits graduate students the chances to study in English spoken countries. SENECYT also claims that it is clear that the knowledge of English language is very important in all the teaching stages so it is necessary that teachers train on methodologies to have better results in public high schools.

### *3.1.1 Teaching Approaches and Teaching Methods*

Diaz- Rico & Weed (1995) suggest total physical response is based on the model of how children learn their first language. It is centered on three points. First, the principal skill developed is listening; it happens before speaking. Second, the body movement promotes understanding. Third, speaking is a voluntary process. Besides, instructors express a command followed by the action until they notice students understand instructions.

In addition, Richards & Rodgers (2001) mention that the total physical response method developed by James Asher had as its aim teaching a language based on physical activity.

Moreover, Richard – Amato (2003) establishes this method is based on techniques where students react to given commands. According to the author, the teacher uses

imperative phrases; through this method students have the opportunity to use their body, their brain, and their senses to learn a target language.

On the other hand, Richards & Rogers (2001) propose natural approach as a traditional teaching method where instead of grammatical organization of language the learner practices the target language in daily life situations. As well, the authors claim that natural approach seeks for an evolution in the learning process.

In addition, Richard – Amato (2003) establishes that students should acquire a second language through natural circumstances. According to the author, natural approach is based on four principles. First, brain programming comes before actions. Secondly, there is an evolution in the progress of students from the simplest word to the most complex structures. Third, the curriculum of the subject should promote second language training. Finally, activities should establish respect and distance .

In addition, Diaz -Rico & Weed (1995) claim natural approach is recommended for beginner language students. Likewise, the method proposes that listening skill is the most important one to start learning (Terrell, 1982). Indeed, there are three techniques offered by Terrell. First, total physical response should be practiced. Second, students might describe the characteristic of in- class realia to help students association of concepts. Third, the teacher uses pictures descriptions in class.

Richards & Rodgers (2001) establish that cooperative language learning uses activities based in pair work and group work so that students motivate themselves to learn a second language. Likewise, the authors mention that the main goal of this approach is cooperation in order to promote communicative competence.

On the other hand, the instructor should keep features that contribute to the teaching- learning process. For instance, Richards & Rodgers (2001) propose that in-class positive relationships, balance the academic level of the course. Furthermore, cooperative learning has flexibility in the use of curriculums.

Richard-Amato (2003) proposes cooperative learning is a method based on team work; generally with this method, students are organized in groups of four to five people in order to reach a common objective. The method is adaptable and recommended to most levels of foreign language. Likewise, the author mentions that students feel motivated to develop individual skills and face challenging situations in order to get a reward.

Richards & Rodgers (2001) suggest content- based instruction as a method to teach a second language focusing on the syllabus that the group will learn. The authors mention that content- based instruction has two principles. First, learners acquire a foreign language with the purpose of getting information. Second, this method contributes to prepare learners for academic purposes.

Diaz- Rico & Weed (1995) establish that content - based instruction has as priority teaching content mainly when students are at a beginner level of a second language.

Richard & Rodgers (2001) indicate that communicative language teaching stresses its importance on reaching Communicative Competence Hymes (1972). This theory advises the patterns a person needs to know in order to face communicative situations in a positive way. Moreover, this is an approach where interaction is essential.

Diaz- Rico and Weed (1995) suggest that communicative approach let teacher and students work together to reach the goal of meaningful knowledge. In addition, as

(Breen & Candlin, 1979; Taylor, 1983) mentioned that curriculum content is organized by learners.

Richard- Amato (2003) states that “Grammar –translation method was the most popular method of foreign language teaching in Europe and America from about the mid- nineteenth to the mid - 20th century”. Likewise, the main purpose of this method is to make students able to read and write in a foreign language by translating classical text.

Diaz- Rico & Weed (1995) state grammar – translation as the most traditional method to teach a second language. Indeed, this method suggests students’ word by word translation of literature texts and focus on grammar and vocabulary.

Richards & Rodgers (2001) establish whole language approach as a method for children to improve their reading skill but nowadays this method is used in all levels to teach ESL. In addition, the whole language approach states that reading occurs naturally when learners have the purpose to communicate and writing takes place as a desire to express their ideas.

Richards & Rodgers (2001) indicate that this approach attempts to be personalized focusing on learners’ needs, capability, interests and goals instead of covering the curriculum.

Richards & Rodgers (2001) also consider that Task-based language teaching TBLT refers to an approach where learning occurs through interaction. In addition, teachers focus on the tasks planned according to student’s needs.

### *3.1.2 Teaching Techniques*

Through the years teachers have been responsible not only of students' academic formation but teaching them values. Teachers' role contributes to build the society. Likewise, teaching is a difficult task because managing a group of people implies not only the knowledge of the subject but their ethical background well established to guide a group of students to the main goal of being integral human beings.

Then, teaching techniques appear to achieve meaningful results on teaching - learning process in any subject. Besides, when teaching a language teachers open students a window to new cultures.

Teaching techniques can be helpful to communicate concepts of a second language, and they influence on students motivation to learn. Some techniques examined by Echevarría, Vogt, and Short (2008) include the use of signs and visual material when explaining a topic orally so that the group have the opportunity to gather the information as exact as possible. Under this line, teachers must reach a meaningful communication level with their students. This way, students will understand the concepts and instructions easily. Besides, teachers have to establish specific rules so students feel stability in their teaching- learning process.

On the other hand, Echevarría et al. (2008) present the use of technology as another way to reach students' comprehension. Besides, repetition of teaching techniques reveals good results for language learning.

In contrast, Lightbrown, and Spada (2011) argue that there are six teaching techniques for second and foreign language teaching. First, give students the opportunity to practice communicative skill in daily life context. Second, listening comprehension is

a way to support meaningful learning. Third, constructive feedback brings positive results. Fourth, motivation plays a role that promotes the need of communication. Fifth, planning involves a process that helps teachers and learners to reach the academic content goal. Finally, teacher might provide clear information to students since the beginning of the course so that learners do not have any doubt.

### *3.1.3 Managing Learning*

Manage learning is part of a teaching strategy in which teachers use all their inner resources to manage a class features such as students attitude, personality, willing to teach, and their knowledge; all of these simultaneously. On one hand, Gower, Philips, and Walters (2005) suggest that one of the teacher's tasks when managing a class is to give feedback to encourage students to evaluate their progress. Feedback implies activities such as correction, whole group discussions, and regular tests.

Time is also an important element when it comes to manage learning; Baker & Westrup (2005) consider that the time established for activities and instructions depends on students' needs, culture and expectations a teacher might have on the group. In addition, timing also depends on the curriculum progress. Moreover, when teachers need to give instructions or feedback they might have a planned guide that defines activities and strategies to be applied according to the group and the time they manage.

These authors also suggest that instructions in English classes should be 'doubled' or given in the students' mother tongue. In fact, they mention that when instructions are orally given, they should be supported by a gesture to make the message clear.

### *3.1.4 Lesson Design*

Penny Ur (2002) offers a wide concept of a lesson defining it as “a social event that occurs in all cultures.” The author states that a lesson plan is an organized document that can be adapted according to the needs of the students. Additionally, a lesson is limited by factors like time, schedules, topics, objectives. Therefore, the document should be prepared within a considerable time ahead the class.

Burke (1999) states that reaching the meaningful learning is the main goal of planning a lesson. In addition, the author mentions that the teacher should establish standards of what students should learn on each lesson. A teacher have to plan all the activities, resources, time and assessment he or she will develop during the lesson in order to reach meaningful learning.

Woodward (2009) proposes the importance of planning a lesson before a class takes place. According to the author, the instructor must consider some elements in an organized way; providing a guide for the teacher about the place, materials, and activities according to each skill.

### *3.1.5 Class Size*

Douglas (1968) refers to class size as a factor that influences in the positive language learning. Likewise, the author establishes that the number of students in a class is hardly ever ideal. In fact, near the 50 % of the classes are overcrowded especially in basic levels of high school. There are 30 students or more in a class. Furthermore, there is a problem with teachers' salaries creating an increase of English teachers' demand. Finally, the author remarks that teaching in a large class implies lack of attention; that is why, it is recommended to reduce the number of students for English classes.

Mathison and Wayne Ross (2008) state that class size reduction improve students' performance. In fact, the author claims that smaller groups of students show positive effects in English language classes. Specially, if there are classes with less than 20 students. In addition, smaller classes' teachers spend less time on discipline, increasing the possibility of personalized teaching.

Baró (2010) argues that the class size is a factor that helps on the evaluation of an educative system. In fact, the author claims that class size is one of the factors that influence the most on teacher- students' interaction. According to the author, the effects on students' performance can vary among learners groups.

#### *3.1.6 Classroom space*

Douglas (1968) suggests that the needs of the educational system have increased constantly; this has developed physical needs for students. Indeed, according to the author, there are new trends for classroom space and equipment. For instance, he mentions that creative shapes for classrooms promote teaching-learning process. In contrast, he states that class space depends on the number of students. Indeed, schools might organize classes so that the students feel a comfortable learning environment.

McLeod, Fisher and Hoover (2003) state that classroom space is an important factor that influences on teachers instruction program. According to the author, teachers make an effort to give students an attractive and comfortable environment in order to enhance learning process. Classroom space also determines the way students will move inside the class.

Hadi- Tabassum ( 2006) suggests that classroom space defines the spatial organization of the class. In fact, the author considers that classroom organization also



influences in social interaction. On the other hand, the author claims that it represents the willing of teachers to reach the best result on the teaching learning process.

Therefore, to get an adequate classroom distribution depends on schools dimensions.

### *3.1.7 Seating Arrangement*

Gower, Philips, and Walters (2005) state that seating arrangement depends on two factors: the number of students, and the physical space. According to the authors, a teacher should consider reaching academic goals and cultural factors; then, class organization will be easier. Besides, seating arrangement defines students' interaction and contributes on in-class activities. For instance, horseshoes can be done to produce face to face interaction. Likewise, changing the seat places is valuable depending on the interaction desired.

Burke (1999) proposes that the 'U' shape is a recommended way to arrange seats in a class. In fact, this option promotes class integration. On the other hand, students can easily form groups, and teacher has a higher control of the class. If teachers have space they can try with geometric figures arrangements.

Richard- Amato and Snow (1992) suggest that classroom environment should be set in order to reach academic purposes. In addition, teachers should plan seating arrangement focusing on simplify activities. Besides, teachers choose different arrangements such as private work station to work on individualized classes. In contrast, teacher use the circle or 'U' shape seating arrangement to work with groups.

### *3.1.8 Classroom and teaching resources*

In relation to resources use, Baker and Westrup (2005) establish that it is useful and increases students' interest on learning. Furthermore, the authors claim that

resources are a group of tools that help teachers function. Indeed, resources can be realia, books, animals, multimedia, pictures, recyclable material, people and more. In fact, there is not a limit for teaching resources, and teachers should find the best resources according to their students' needs.

Moreover, Echevarría, Vogt, and Short (2008) state that meaningful learning occurs when students perceive the class through senses and supplementary materials give students that chance. In addition, there is a variety of materials that can be found. For example, realia, visual aids, pictures, multimedia, related literature.

Ogalde, and Bardavid (2003) states that didactic resources are tools that support teaching- learning process and promote meaningful learning even lesson plans are considered teaching resources. As well, resources can be classified as auditive, visual, written, electronic, realia and others such as language combination.

### *3.1.9 Classroom observation*

Van Note Chism and Chism (2007) states that classroom observation lets teachers and authorities gather information about teaching progress. Moreover, observation was established to improve teaching quality. Besides, through classroom observation teachers can learn from others.

On the other hand, observation implies successful learning purposes such as the way teachers work, their weaknesses and strengths.

Classroom observation allows instructors notice real needs from their group of students. In addition, this becomes a means to dialogue and correct mistakes not just in the class but in all the educational aspects. Besides, observation guides teachers and authorities on the way a teacher work with a group.

### *3.1.10 Student's motivation*

Ur (2002) states that motivation provides an internal willing to learn. This factor makes teaching easier and productive. According to the author, there are some characteristics such as student's ambitions, academic goals, perseverance, and tolerance. Likewise, there are four kinds of motivation: integrative, instrumental, intrinsic, and extrinsic.

Saville -Troike (2008) associates motivation to the effort learners invest for their second language proficiency. The author considers, motivation influences on the learners' achievement. Moreover, there exists integrative motivation, and instrumental motivation. Integrative motivation is based on inner desire to learn and instrumental motivation focuses on practical use of language for increasing prestige or enhancing job opportunities.

Woolfolk (2007) suggests that motivation guides and maintains students focus on their goals. Besides, motivation establishes the passion a person employs on achieving an objective. Furthermore, there exists intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. First, intrinsic motivation involves natural desire to learn. Second, extrinsic motivation includes practical academic purposes.

### *3.1.11 Learning styles*

Lou Leaver (1998) agrees on Keefe's (1979) definition of learning style that considers it as the global way a learner acquires knowledge. In addition, according to the author, learning styles are classified in four areas. First, environmental preferences refer to physical conditions for learning. Second, sensory modalities reflect the way learners

perceive events through senses. Third, personality involves relationship management. Finally, cognitive styles are the way of process information.

Woolfolk (2007) suggests that the way a person choose for learning indicates his or her learning style. According to the author, students can choose deep or surface - processing approach. On one hand, deep processing focus on understanding. On the other hand, surface approach focuses on memory. Indeed, they are motivated by grades.

Lightbrown and Spada (2011) propose that learning style refers to Reid's (1995) definition that states the natural and personal way to acquire knowledge. Furthermore, learners are classified by their learning style. For instance, visual learners learn by graphic stimuli, aural students learn by listening, kinesthetic ones learn by movement. According to the author, learners are categorized on "field independent" learners when they are practical and "field dependent" ones consider details as a priority.

### *3.1.12 Students' intelligence or aptitude to learn English*

Herrell and Jordan (2012) suggest that multiple intelligence's (Gardner 1999) theory refers to the means through which people reach intelligence. In contrast, traditional instruction was based on two intelligences linguistic and mathematical. Though, multiple intelligence theory adds some variables such as: kinesthetic, intrapersonal, linguistic, logical, musical, visual, and naturalistic (Gardner, 2006).

Lightbrown and Spada (2011) suggest that intelligence defines academic performance. In fact, IQ scores were considered a predictive sign for success in second language learning. Nevertheless, it is related to knowledge rather than communication.

In contrast, there is Gardner's multiple intelligences theory that includes skills in different areas such as music, interpersonal relationships, as well as the verbal intelligence.

According to Woolfolk (2007) intelligence's origin involves three aspects. First, learn capability. Second, the background knowledge a learner has. Third, the versatility somebody has. Moreover, the author agrees with Sternberg's (2004) theory of successful intelligence. In fact, the theory considers. First, analytic intelligence is based on how information is processed. Second, creative intelligence is the way a person finds original solutions for new situations. Third, practical intelligence refers to the ability for finding practical sense to life situations.

In addition, there are some studies related to the factors that influence teaching process of a second language that need to be considered. That is why this document presents the following information that shows valuable aspects contributing to this research.

Aduwa - Ogiegbaen and Iyamu (2006) identify specific problems on English language teaching in Nigeria's Public secondary schools. These problems are related to the use of teaching resources, language teaching methods, and teaching-learning atmosphere. In addition, the methodology used for this study was divided in two instruments. First, an observation scheme was set. Second, a survey based on Likert scale was held.

To conclude, Nigeria's teaching English level on Public secondary high school is behind the normal progress line. In fact, statistics have shown that the learners' failing level is between 55% and 75% (Olaboopo, 1998). In addition, secondary school students

who attempt to study in the University have a disadvantage because of their poor academic background.

Another author, Al- Haj (2011) argues about the lack of motivation in EFL classrooms of secondary schools based on understanding motivation concept, maximizing its usefulness in secondary schools in Gezira State- Sudan, planning activities to promote motivation in class, showing good teachers' features, and promoting teachers in Sudan to reach high motivated classrooms.

Consequently, the methodology applied in this study was based on three tools to define students' behavior in secondary schools in Gezira. First, direct observation was applied. Second, guided interviews were held. Third, relevant documents were examined. Finally, teachers in Gezira are not qualified enough to promote motivation in classrooms. Therefore, researcher suggests activities for enhancing motivation.

Sarıçoban and Sakizli (2006) examined the factors and solutions for successful classroom management. According to these authors, learners' characteristics, school environment and teachers' features are factors that affect classroom management.

On one hand, learners' characteristics guide class management. For instance, age, personality, attitude and motivation make the difference when teaching. Likewise, environment impacts the teaching process. Indeed, seating arrangement and class size enables the teacher to build a positive surrounding for students' progress. On the other hand, social environment factors can influence effective learning. Moreover, teachers should prepare materials according to their students' abilities.

In contrast, educational environment comprises teachers' features such as teachers' attitude, including their tone of voice, and even their body language.

In conclusion, the author suggests that classroom management influences the learning process success. Factors related to students should be considered in order to reach the educational goals. Besides, school features also influence an adequate learning process. Considering the fact that teachers have creative tools for managing a class, they should use them according to the group's needs. For instance, if there are not enough resources in the school they work they can use their creativity to reach a bidirectional communication with their students and transfer them the messages. Teachers should not wait until the school provides them the necessary tools; there is a need of knowledge to be covered. If there are enough resources, teachers should use them adequately so they take advantage of what they have. All in all, they should do all their effort to achieve meaningful learning using their own resources if necessary. Teachers need to show the passion to teach. If not, there is no way possible to get positive results in language teaching-learning process because students just answer to what they get. If the teacher is not motivated how come students would be tempted to learn?

### *3.2 Description, Analysis, and Interpretation of Results*

In this section of the document, the researcher refers to the relevant information obtained on the surveys and observations applied to teachers and students from five Public high schools in Quito. The information will be described in four different categories which are the factors concerning teachers, factors concerning students, factors concerning classrooms and factors concerning institutions.

The process of gathering information was complete. First, the researcher did a previous selection of Public high schools within the city of Quito. Secondly, the researcher did the requests for each of these institutions. Third, the researcher obtained the answers to the requests. However, the answers on a first stage were not positive or even considered.

In addition, the researcher considered international standards of education as the Common European Framework of References for Languages (CEFRL) that sets the scale of proficiency level for language learners around the world. Then, the researcher compared the gathered information with this international standard.

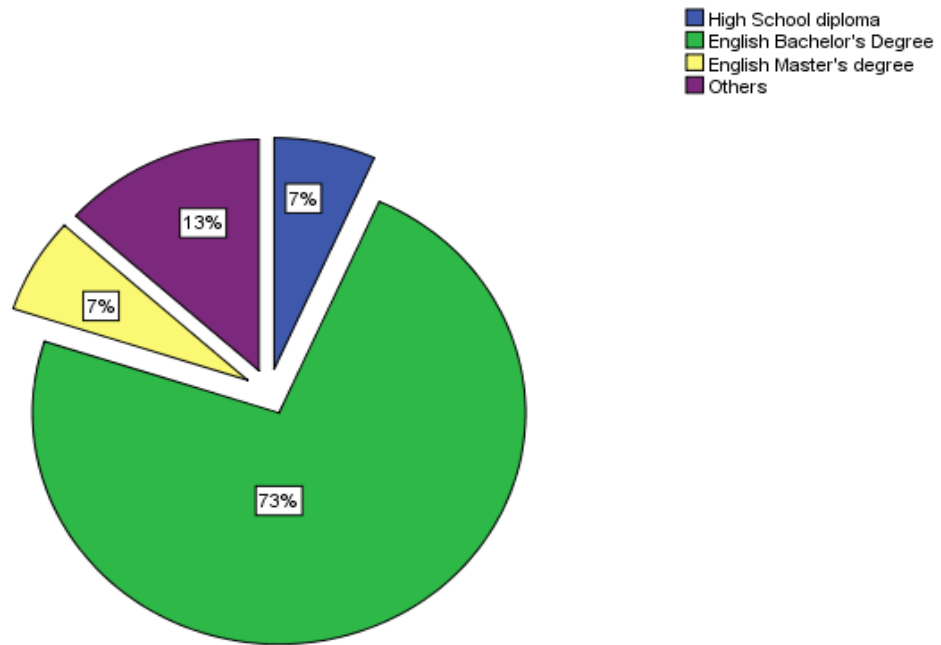
Consequently, the following section of this research shows the results of an investigation process providing specific evidence about the reality of the English language teaching-learning process in Ecuadorian Public high schools.



### 3.2.1 Quantitative Analysis

#### 3.2.1.1 Factors Concerning Teachers

*Which level of education do teachers have?*



Author: Karolina Acosta  
Source: Teachers' questionnaire

73 % of the interviewed teachers have an English Bachelor's degree in contrast to the 7 % who have a high school diploma. 7 % of teachers hold a master degree and 13 % other diplomas. Ecuadorian Government has not established the level required to teach English in Public high schools. Since 1992 with the signing of the CRADLE project, the basic level to teach English was B1. In other words, that was not a significant demand for people who wanted to be teachers because the level B2 is the one internationally recognized as the one to be an official instructor. However, on March 2013 the President

of Ecuador established the governmental agreement number 041-13. This agreement requests that all the English teachers must reach the level B2 to teach a second language. Thus, all the English teachers have to take an international recognized exam like the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) or the FCE (First Certificate in English) in order to be part of an English teacher's staff.

Nowadays, Public high schools are still using the books from the CRADLE project. Despite this project has already finished in 2006.

In addition, considering the Common European Framework of References for Languages (CEFRL) and according to the interview applied to teachers from the observed Public high schools, 60 % of them have the level B1, 13% of the participant teachers have level B2, and 27% of teachers have level A1. These results are based on the open interview applied during the research process. The script included questions related to topics from level A1 to level C2 of the CEFRL. Therefore, 60 % of the interviewed teachers reached the level B1. Meanwhile, 13 % of the participants reached up to level B2. This 13 % alerts about the situation of the English language teaching – learning process in Ecuadorian Public high schools.

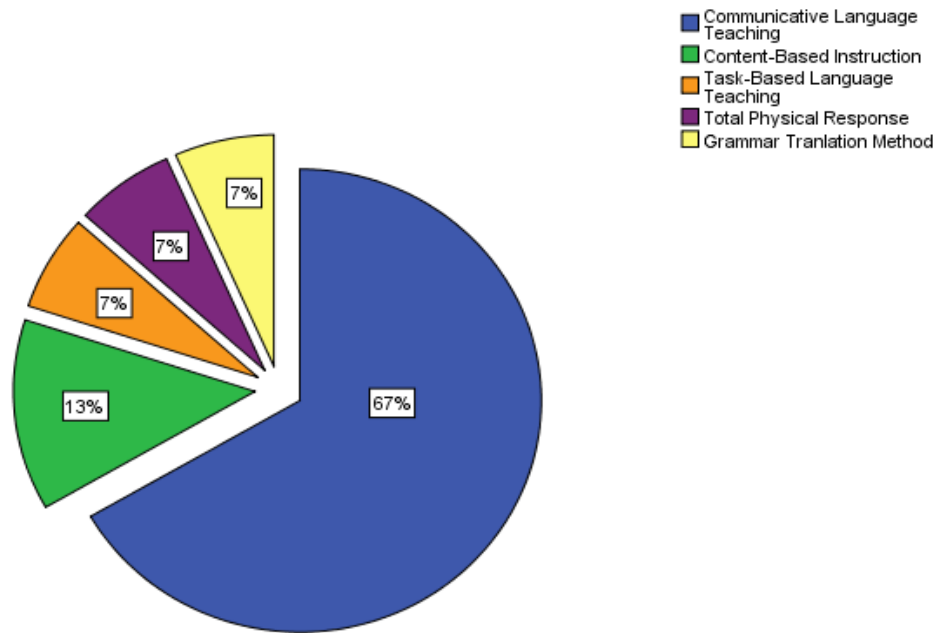
Furthermore, the 27 % of the interviewed teachers reached up to level A1. This fact shows the deficient proficiency level of English language in the Public Education system.

In contrast to the results presented before, 87 % of the teachers reached up to level B1; showing that most of the interviewed teachers must improve their English language proficiency.

To this respect, these results show the real situation of Education in Public high schools regarding foreign language acquisition. In addition, the English level of Public high school teachers is not encouraging since this is an evidence of the lack of highly qualified teaching training. Indeed, the level of English teachers in these high schools limit them on building significant background English knowledge for students thus they lose their motivation to learn because it becomes difficult.

Finally, the researcher considers three reasons for this poor level of English language proficiency of the teachers. First, 93 % of the interviewed teachers speak in Spanish half of their class time. Secondly, the lack of practice of English ends in the lose of fluency. Third, the full-time schedule of Public high school teachers does not let take training courses, graduate programs or workshops to improve their English level. Due to the fact that teachers have to stay in the school for 8 hours; they do not have any chance to take any course by themselves mainly because they finish their routine late and exhausted. According to the interview results, they do not feel enough energy to train after work. Finally, as part of the interview notes, most of the teachers are married or have children and they are worried about their family time too. Thus, they prefer to spend time with their family than going to a training course.

*Which of the following methods was used in the observed classrooms?*



Author: Karolina Acosta  
Source: Teachers' questionnaire

67 % of the interviewed teachers use the communicative language teaching method in their classes; while, 13% use content- based instruction, 7% of the teachers use the grammar translation method; 7 % use the total physical response, and another 7 % practice the task based language teaching.

This shows the routine that teachers in observed high schools have. They avoid the usage of methods such as total physical response and content based instruction because they represent a waste of time. To this respect, most of the visited high schools had overcrowded classes giving the teacher a small space to apply the total physical response. Besides, whether the teacher proposed a physical activity, students took more

time than the expected to go back to their places. This fact definitely reduces meaningful learning time. Regarding to the content based instruction is practiced in a lower percentage; teachers focus on topics as the verb to be, and simple tenses like present, future and past. They do not go beyond these limits because that represents more time and a higher proficiency level.

In fact, according to the observation sheet results, only a 7% of the teachers use the total physical response method.

On the other hand, 13% of the teachers use the content- based instruction method in a small part of the class, because their English level is limited. Moreover, they focus on what they have in the book without a further explanation.

Furthermore, the observation sheet results reflect that teachers focus on two methods: 33 % on the grammar translation method and 33 % on the communicative language teaching. First of all, the grammar - translation method is based in the translation of texts and vocabulary taught in class. In fact, teachers use the grammar translation method when the students need explanation on grammar rules.

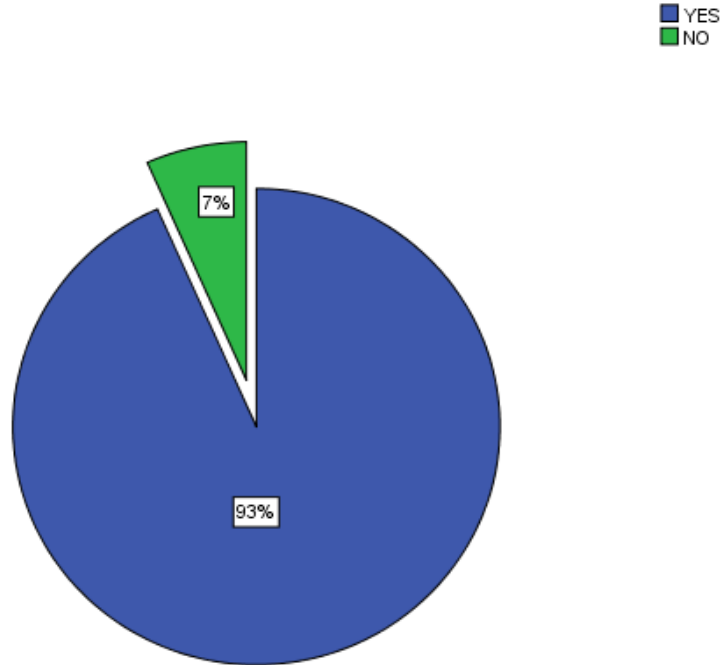
In the second place, the communicative language teaching method attempts to promote communication and interaction between teacher and students. The 33 % of the observed teachers apply it.

On the other hand, students have a good attitude related to communicative language method because they feel themselves practicing what they have learnt in theory.

Unfortunately, education community members such as teachers, students and Public high schools are involved in an endless cycle, where the teacher thinks that

students cannot go further, students do not demand a better quality of teaching, and the academic curriculum does not offer further improvement in the language abilities. In addition, according to the official results from SENESCYT English tests; English teacher's proficiency is not good enough; they need to improve their language skills.

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



Author: Karolina Acosta  
Source: Teachers' questionnaire

93% of the surveyed teachers use whole group activities. In contrast, according to the observation sheet results, the 80% of interviewed teachers use whole group activities, and the 20 % use group work activities. There are two reasons for this to happen. First, because of the short time teachers have for developing activities in the class. Second, the number of students in a class influence on the development of these activities.

Indeed, a large class does not let teachers divide the group to work in tasks that involve them to move the benches or organize smaller groups. Then, teachers used whole group activities as a way to evaluate students while they are in class.

In addition, teachers also have the option of whole group activity because that is the way they find to make the whole group participate during the class. Moreover, the observation notes reflect that teachers in Public high schools use whole group activities when the class starts. Indeed, 47% of the observed teachers use warm up activities that involve whole group work.

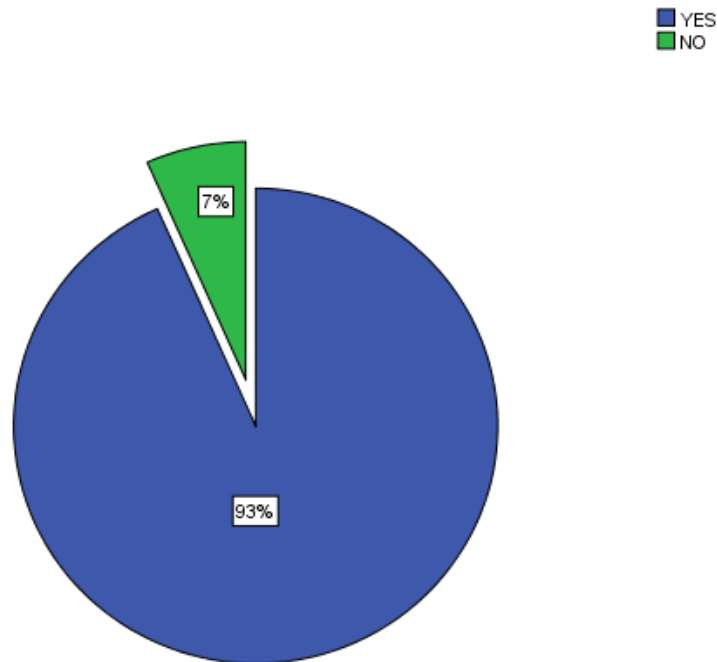
On the other hand, Students feel motivated with the development of whole group activities, where they can show the learnt skills. They consider whole group activities as entertaining and out of the routine. Besides, this kind of activities reduces students' level of stress and influence on their attitude to the teaching-learning process.

According to the observation sheet results, 80% of the participant teachers use whole group activities through the warm-up activities, oral class participation, oral presentations. Including, singing with students. In fact, these activities are easily assessed. Therefore, the teaching-learning process becomes more spontaneous.

According to the researcher teaching experience and the observation notes; when students interact in a different language they increase their self-esteem. Indeed, they feel part of a community where the teacher comprehends and motivates them to participate in the building of meaningful learning process.



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



Author: Karolina Acosta  
Source: Teachers' questionnaire

According to the graphic, 93 % of the interviewed teachers point out the use of individual activities to teach their lessons. According to the observation sheet questionnaire, teachers consider the students' needs when teaching a class. In addition, in the observed classes' teachers focus in the use of group work activities and whole group activities. Indeed, teachers develop individual activities in 7% of the observed classes. The possible reason is that one observed class is not enough to see and develop all the variety of activities in one class.

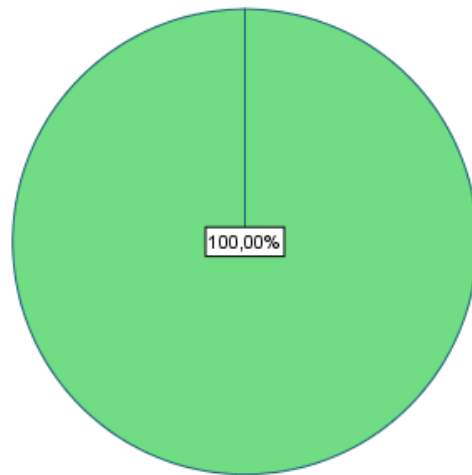
Moreover, the observation notes reflect that 93 % of the teachers in Public high schools do not spend more than fifteen minutes developing individual activities because they tend to lose their students' attention. In fact, individual work is used in class while students copy the class from the board or answer questions in their notebooks.

93 % of the surveyed teachers develop individual activities. Though, according to the observation notes, these individual activities turn into group activities or whole group activities. For instance, one of the observed teachers gives students ten to fifteen minutes to develop individual activities following an instruction. At the end of the fifteen minutes, the teacher picks up randomly one work per column, and then two works are chosen to be checked with the teacher. Finally, the individual work turns into a whole group activity. The rest of the observed teachers develop similar activities. For example: peer correction, where students correct each other following the instructions of the teacher.

On the other hand, teachers believe in the power of the homework and for them this is individual work, though. In the class there is not enough time to manage individual activities. In addition, 93% of the students prefer working in groups, so teachers consider this as a possible peer correction process where students have the chance to practice their knowledge of English. However, individual activities are not a priority for 93% of the observed teachers because they feel the need to make the class of more than fifty students work at once or in groups.

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

■ YES



Author: Karolina Acosta  
Source: Teachers' questionnaire

According to this graphic, 100% of the interviewed teachers use group work activities. Although, the observation sheet results reflect that 20 % of these teachers use group work activities to teach their lessons. Indeed, these percentages of teachers develop group work activities considering this as a tool for improving team work, leadership, time management and organization. In addition, observed teachers plan group work activities but the level of the students has an influence on the management of the class because students do not understand instructions so the teacher is pressed to stop and explain as many times as the students need until they understand. In fact, 93 %

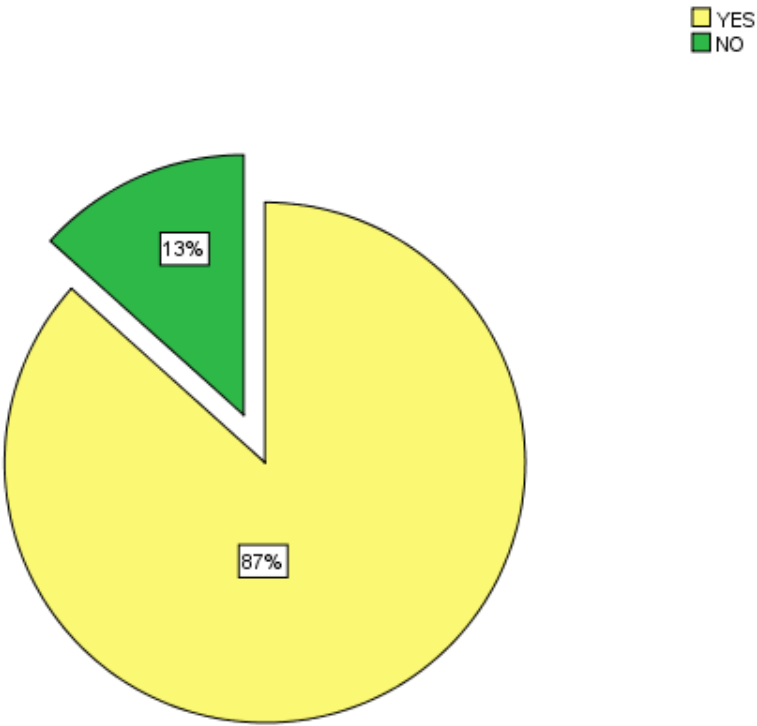
of the teachers tend to explain the instruction of an activity in Spanish fact that also affects the English language teaching- learning process.

In contrast, 80 % of the teachers use whole group activities when teaching. In fact, when working on group work activities teachers promote classmates interaction and they have the chance to evaluate group by group students' performance.

On the other hand, group activities imply the movement of the bench or the movement of the group of students to other places and there is not enough space in the class or time to do it. Indeed, in 93% of the observed classes when the teachers ask students to move the chairs they turn noisy and distracted. Then, teachers take five minutes to control the group again and continue with the class.

In conclusion, surveyed students consider that group work activities are part of a different alternative to learn in class. They appreciate to form groups because they share with their classmates. In other words, they feel protected and supported by their friends. In addition, students consider group work activities as an opportunity to reach a better grade. However, 20 % of the observed teachers develop group work activities due to the lack of time. The researcher supposes that during the rest of the year teachers have the chance to do group work activities.

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



Author: Karolina Acosta  
Source: Teachers' questionnaire

According to the graphic 87% of the interviewed teachers use English in class. In contrast, observation sheet results reflect that none of the teachers use 100% of English in their classes. Indeed, 93 % of the interviewed teachers use 50 % of English in class, and 7% use 25 % of English in class. It can be inferred that teachers in Public high schools have to use Spanish while teaching because the level of the students is basic. In addition, the students' level do not let teachers develop the whole class in English. In

fact, teachers have to explain grammar rules, classwork instructions and control discipline using students' mother tongue otherwise they do not understand.

The fact that 93 % of the teachers do not use English their time in class. This affects students' teaching- learning process because they do not have the immersion in the language as they should so they do not have the chance to practice the second language they learn.

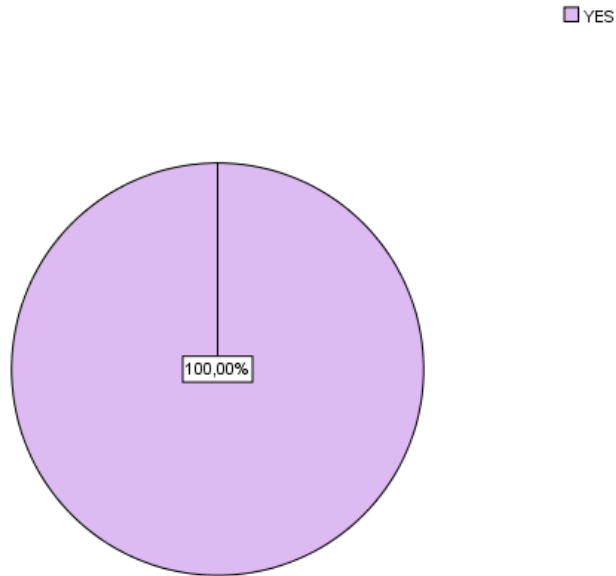
In addition, the use of Spanish reduce students possibilities of finishing high school with a better English level than the one they start with. Spanish is students' mother tongue and teachers have to be committed to the immersion process in English. It is a persistent work between the teachers and students. 100 % of the students speak in Spanish when they are in an English class so teachers have the task to train students to speak in English and reduce step by step the use of Spanish in class. However, this is also affected by the English level of teachers and students.

According to the students' questionnaire results, 87 % of the students perceive that their teachers use English most of the class time. In contrast, according to the observation sheets' results teachers 93 % of the participant teachers use English only half of the class time not most of the time.

In addition, 100 % of the students are satisfied with the way the methodology the teacher uses. It means they feel satisfied the teacher tends to speak in Spanish when the students need. Besides, 93 % of the surveyed students have a basic level.

In conclusion, English teachers should speak in English all the time due to the conditions of the students' English level and their own level. In addition, a good teacher can make the difference by not giving up due to the limitations and thinking about new strategies to avoid the use of Spanish in class time. Indeed, teachers can use non-verbal communication.

*Do teachers plan their lessons?*



Author: Karolina Acosta  
Source: Teachers' questionnaire

According to the graphic, 100 % of the interviewed teachers plan their lessons. In addition, each teacher develops the lesson plan according to his or her level of education. Indeed, 7 % of the observed teachers have their lesson plan printed while 93% of the teachers appeal to their experience more than having the lesson plan printed in class. Moreover, most of the teachers show an organized class, with warm up activities and feedback exercises that let them realize about the progress of their students.

According to the observation sheets results, 33 % of the observed teachers include in their lesson plans new topic introduction. 47 % of the participant teachers include warm-up activities, 20 % considers the lesson topic. In contrast, other aspects from the



planning such as objectives, time, guided or individual activities, review, evaluation process, feedback, and supplementary materials are not considered in the planning lessons of the observed teachers.

Woodward (2009) on his book, *planning lessons and courses*, proposes the importance of planning a lesson before a class. The instructor must consider some elements in an organized structure providing a guide for the teacher about the place and activities according to each skill.

The planning is a process that teachers should develop to guide their work along the academic year because managing an annual content without organization will lead to the failure of the teaching-learning process. The development of a lesson plan allows the teacher to optimize resources. Besides, planning a lesson ahead helps the teacher reach the objectives set at the beginning of a topic. It is important to consider the supplementary materials for the class, assessment activities and reinforcement ones. Moreover, the lesson plan must propose activities to let a progressive change of topics.

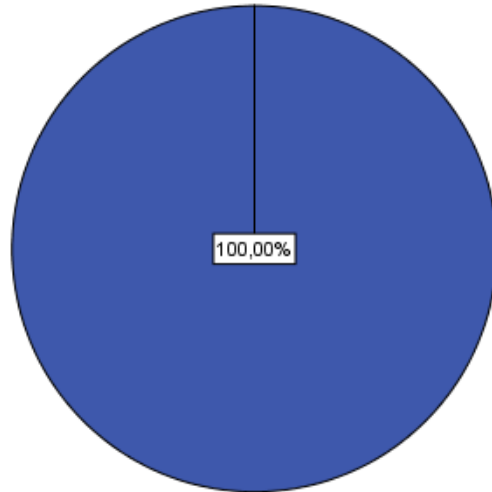
7% of the observed teachers, that is one of the participant teachers showed evidence of the planning lesson without considering aspects such the detail for each the activity. The remaining 93 % of these teachers performed their classes based on the experience and improvisation.

100 % of the surveyed teachers affirm to plan their lesson at the beginning of each academic year. Though, the researcher did not have the chance to observe that evidence.

Finally, Burke (1999) states that planning a lesson main goal is to reach a meaningful learning.

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

■ YES



Author: Karolina Acosta  
Source: Teachers' questionnaire

The graphic shows that, 100 % of the observed teachers consider discipline, timing, feedback, and instruction to teach their lessons. In addition, of the teachers surveyed 53 % consider discipline when teaching while 47% consider feedback.

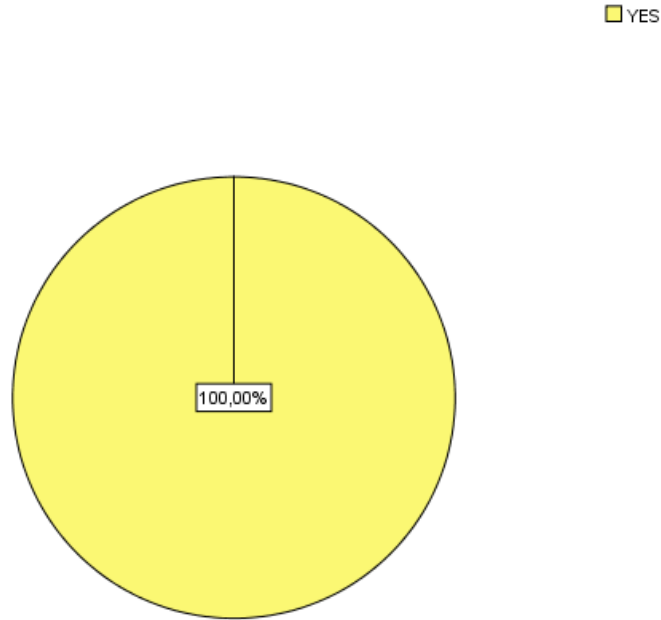
According to the students' questionnaire results related to discipline, 100% of the students consider that teachers control the discipline in the class. Indeed, observed teachers use a different tone of voice to grab the attention of the students. Moreover, according to timing results, 100 % of the surveyed students answer that teachers give a

specific time for each activity. According to the feedback results, observed teachers develop feedback and students feel the support and the guide to correct their mistakes. Finally, according to observation sheet results, 100% of the surveyed students consider teachers' instructions clear enough to make their performance easier. Besides, Baker & Westrup (2005) state that oral instructions in English class should be supported by a gesture to make the message clear.

To conclude, the importance of these activities in the teaching learning process in Public high schools is mainly based on the detailed organization of the lesson plan. A complete planning helps the teacher find activities to improve students training on English language proficiency.

### 3.2.1.2 Factors Concerning Students

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



Author: Karolina Acosta  
Source: Teachers' questionnaire

This graphic shows that, 100% of the teachers consider students' needs to teach English successfully. Indeed, teachers vary their strategies according to their students' age, level and other needs. For instance, teachers from basic levels use games to increase the interaction. In contrast, teachers from senior levels use strategies focused on real life situations. Indeed, teachers look for the topics their students are interested in. For example, female teenagers are interested in fashion.

Among other observed needs is the correct management of the class size, where the teachers adapt strategies to the class number of students. Moreover, teachers make an

extra effort to manage overcrowded classes because they have to prepare material for large classes, employ more energy and time in controlling a class, or developing activities.

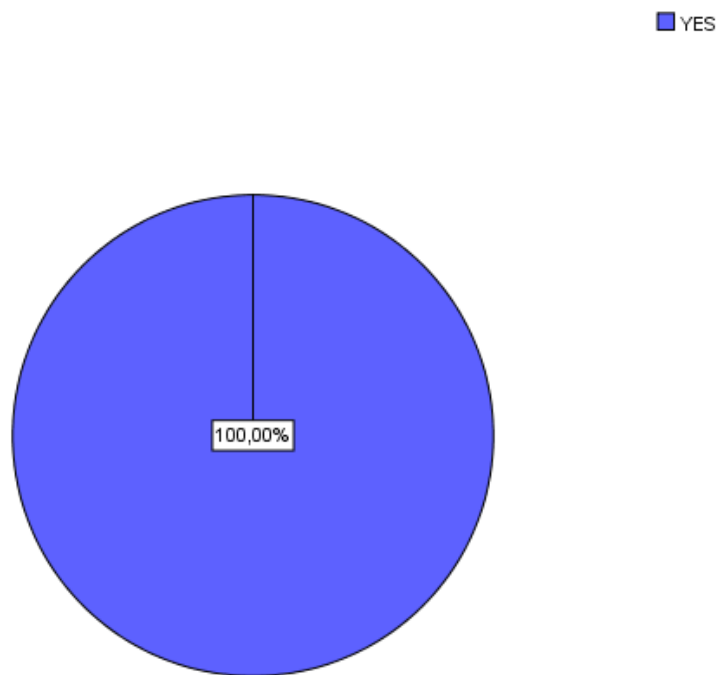
In Public high schools, it is important to consider multiple needs and learning styles. Herrell and Jordan (2012) suggest that multiple intelligence's (Gardner 1999) theory refers to the means people reach intelligence. In contrast, traditional instruction was based on two intelligences linguistic and mathematical. Though, multiple intelligence theory adds some variables such as: kinesthetic, intrapersonal, linguistic, logical, musical, visual, and naturalistic (Gardner, 2006). Therefore, teachers create situations where multiple intelligences are involved. In the observed classrooms, teachers developed activities such as singing a song with all the students, grammar contests, spelling contests.

In addition, surveyed students state that teachers use a variety of activities to make the class interesting and motivating for them. In fact, most of them think activities are easy to complete. Besides, according to the observation notes, Public high school teachers are interested on getting a TOEFL<sup>1</sup> certification because this implies the improvement of their skills in order to support students to reach a meaningful learning. In addition, with TOEFL certification, teachers will maintain their jobs, increase their salary and face the request from the Ministerio de Educación.

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<sup>1</sup> Test of English as a Foreign Language

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



Author: Karolina Acosta  
Source: Teachers' questionnaire

According to the graphic, 100 % of the surveyed teachers consider students' level to teach English successfully. In fact, interviewed teachers expressed that they develop a diagnostic test at the beginning of the school year; through this test teachers identify the level of their students. The results of the tests provide a guide for the teachers on the lesson plan topics.

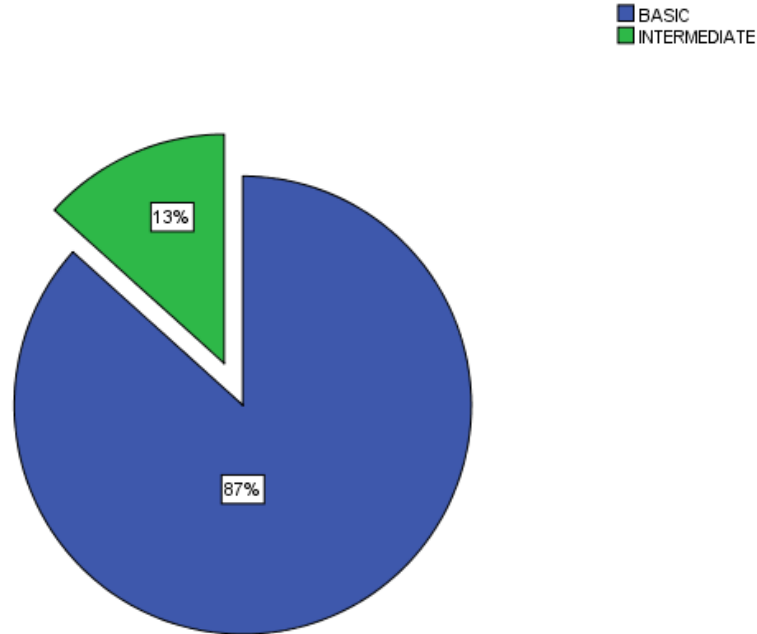
93% of the observed students have a basic level. This fact makes teachers consider about the development of activities easy to understand, to explain and easy to perform.

In addition, 80% of the surveyed students consider that activities teachers prepare for a class are easy while 20% are considered as very easy. Moreover, most of the teachers start their classes with a review and feedback from the last class. This activity reflects that teachers think about their students' needs and motivation.

Teachers consider students' level during the whole teaching-learning process. In fact, since they develop feedback until they introduce a new topic. Besides, teachers try to make a connection between previous knowledge and the new concepts. They are contributing to enrich their students' English background without pending topics.

In conclusion, considering students' level is important because this determines the possibility of covering the academic curriculum. For instance, if the students' level is weak, the curriculum progress gets stucked. For this reason, the tutor goes back to the point the students need and the time to teach the curriculum gets shorter. Finally, it can be seen that teachers in Public high schools are challenged to change their planned activities because of their students' level.

*Which is the level of the students in the observed classrooms?*



Author: Karolina Acosta  
Source: Teachers' questionnaire

According to the graphic, 87 % of the students have a basic level of English while 13% reach an intermediate English level. The evident difference observed in the level of students shows the real situation of students in Public high schools. Their basic level is based on their social environment. Indeed, educative community does not give too much importance to the acquisition of a second language. In fact, teachers and students do not make a commitment with the immersion of a new language; they tend to speak using their mother tongue.



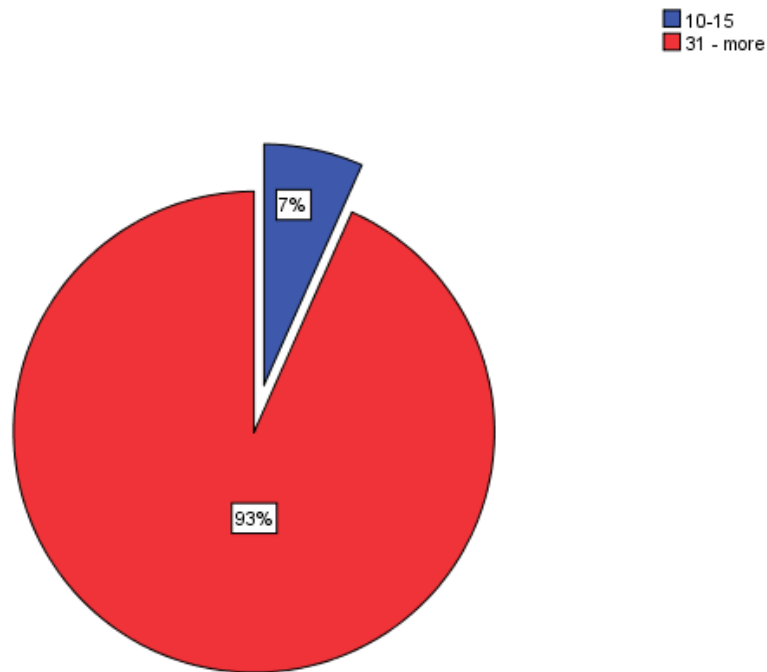
Despite the agreements from the CRADLE project in Ecuador 1992, the English level of students has not been improved. In addition, experts from SENECYT Secretaría Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnología (2012) established that training of English teachers from Public high school is showing problems in methodology and oral expression.

Consequently, lack of preparation of English teachers contributes to the basic level of students in Public high schools.

According to the basic level managed in the observed Public high schools, 80 % of the surveyed students consider that activities developed in class are easy. Indeed, these activities do not demand too much effort from students.

### 3.2.1.3 Factors Concerning Classrooms

*How many students do teachers have in the observed classrooms?*



Author: Karolina Acosta  
Source: Teachers' questionnaire

The graphic shows that, 93 % of the observed classrooms have more than 31 students; while, 7% of the observed classrooms have between 10 -15 students. In fact, most of the classrooms in Public high schools are crowded. In most of the observed classrooms, there are between 45 and 50 students per class. Depending on the schedule the class was observed the number of students may vary.

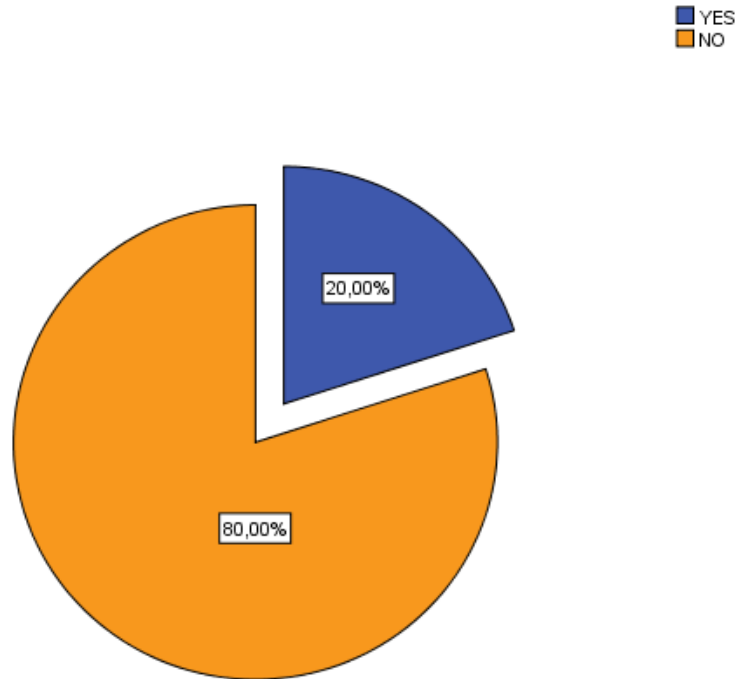
Douglas (1968) refers to class size as a factor that influence in the positive language learning. Likewise, the number of students in a class is hardly ever ideal. But,

Mathison and Wayne Ross (2008) state that class size reduction improve student performance.

According to the surveyed students, 60 % of them consider that class size does not let them learn English. In other words, they are not comfortable with the number of classmates. This factor, affects the teaching- learning process. In fact, according to the observation notes, students' attention, motivation, concentration decreases. Under these conditions, neither teachers nor students can work efficiently.

The remaining 40 % of surveyed students have not considered the class size as a factor that influence to learn English. To conclude, overcrowded classes do not lead to a positive and meaningful learning.

*Do teachers feel comfortable working with the number of students in the observed classrooms?*



Author: Karolina Acosta  
Source: Teachers' questionnaire

According to the graphic, 80% of the observed teachers do not feel comfortable working with the number of the students in the observed classrooms; while, 20% of them are comfortable working with the class size they manage.

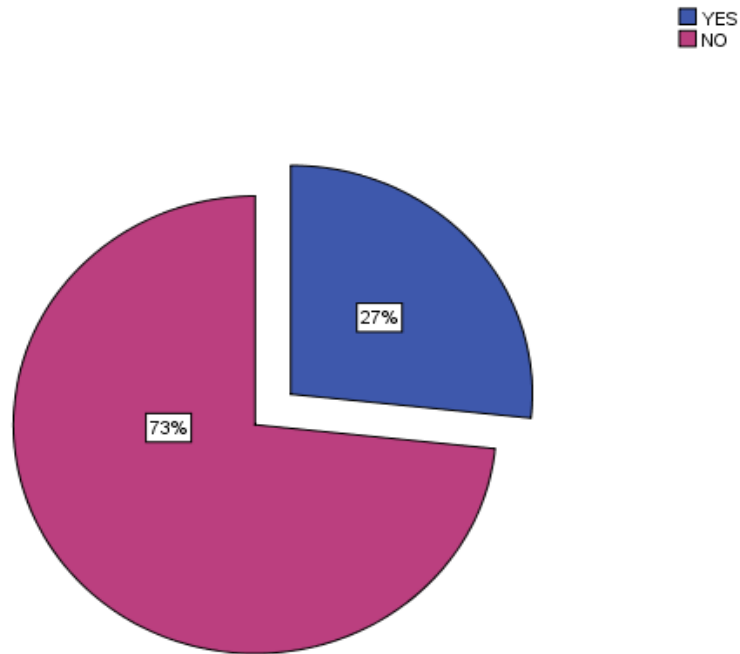
Mathison and Wayne Ross (2008) state that class size reduction help teachers in the class management. Indeed, in smaller classes' teachers spend less time on discipline, increasing the possibility of individualized teaching.

In addition, Baró (2010) argues that class size is one of the factors that influence teacher - students interaction. In fact, most of the observed teachers suggest that a class with less number of students will let them focus on a variety of activities to promote language learning, because when they work with smaller groups the results are better and teachers can focus on motivating their students to learn about the new language and culture.

On the other hand, teachers in Public high schools notice that there is a need to reduce large number of students in the classrooms. However, they have to adapt their plans and activities to the amount of students they have in the class.

In conclusion, an overcrowded class reduces the chance of interaction between teachers and students and the basic results on English language level. Therefore, a bigger number of students in a class represent a bigger percentage of students with less knowledge than others in the same group.

*Do teachers have enough space to work with the group of students in the observed classrooms?*



Author: Karolina Acosta  
Source: Teachers' questionnaire

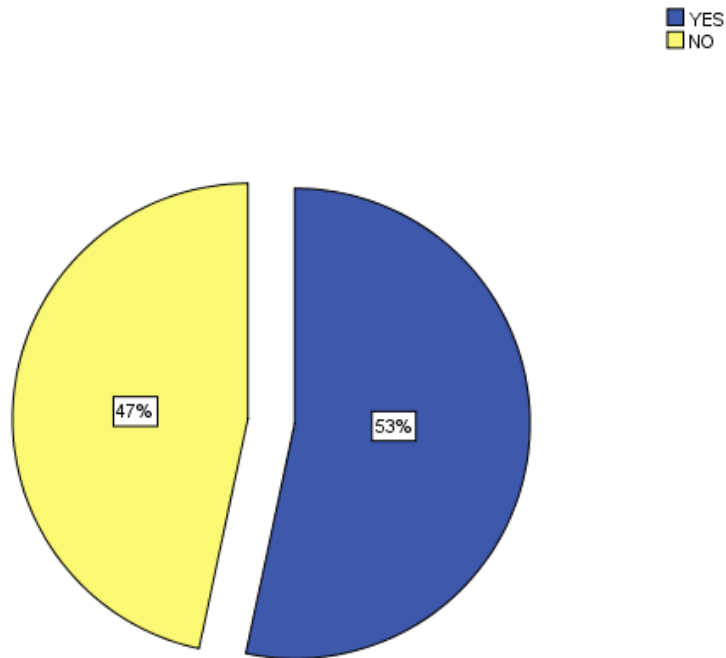
According to the graphic, 73% of the teachers do not have enough space to work with the number of students in the observed classrooms. In fact, students can barely move between columns. In addition, considering the observation sheet results, 93 % of the teachers do not have enough space to develop dynamic activities with the group. In contrast, 7% of the teachers have enough space to develop dynamic activities because of their class schedule and the lesser number of students in the classroom.

Moreover, 67 % of the students consider that there is enough space to work in the class; most of them are accustomed to the bad condition of the Public high schools classrooms.

To conclude, Douglas (1968) suggests that the needs of education system have increased constantly. This has developed physical needs for educative community. In addition, the Ministerio de Educación is proposing an educative reform tending to reach international standards. For example, Escuelas del Milenio. These schools attempt to cover students' needs of space, resources, size, and environment. Therefore, the proposal is that students have an environment that contributes for teaching-learning process.

To conclude, McLeod, Fisher and Hoover (2003) state classroom space is an important factor that influences on teachers instruction program. Besides, Public high schools authorities should create strategies to face the factor of not having enough space. For instance, principals should make an effort providing English teachers with all the resources they can such as projectors, tape recorders, language laboratories, among others.

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



Author: Karolina Acosta  
Source: Teachers' questionnaire

53% of the surveyed teachers, arrange students' seats in relation to the activities planned; while ,47% of the teachers do not arrange seats in the class. According to the observation sheet results, 93 % of the seating arrangement does not facilitate teaching, because the interaction teacher – student is reduced. In addition, according to Gower, Philips, and Walters (2005) seating arrangement depends on the number of students and the physical space.

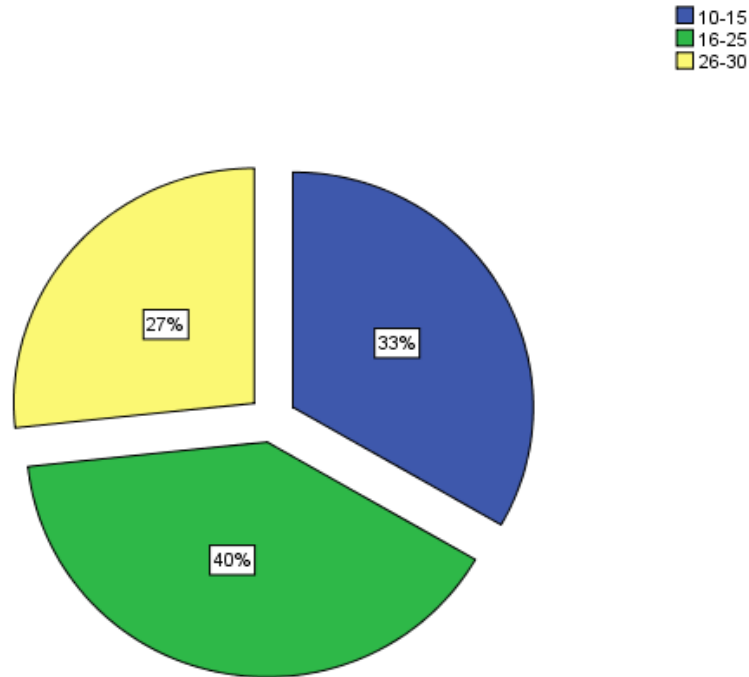
The seating arrangement of the observed classrooms is not flexible and teachers cannot try a different seating arrangement because there is not enough space and they tend to lose their class time and. However, 87% of the surveyed students consider that



teacher arrange seats in a proper way. Students cannot ask for a different seating arrangement if there is not enough space. They have to adapt to their conditions.

Therefore, teachers and Public high schools should promote interaction when organizing the classroom space. For instance, Burke (1999) proposes that the 'U' shape is a recommended way to arrange seats in a class. Finally, teachers will have higher control in the class and better results on the teaching learning process.

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



Author: Karolina Acosta  
Source: Teachers' questionnaire

The graphic shows that, 40 % of the teachers consider that the appropriate number of students in a class is from 16 to 25 students. While, 33 % of the observed teachers, consider that a class from 10-15 is an appropriate number of students, and 27% of the teachers consider that the appropriate number of students is 26-30 students.

Furthermore, interviewed teachers in Public high schools, feel that is better to have a fewer number of students in a class. Indeed, Mathison and Wayne Ross (2008) state that class size reduction improve student performance. In fact, classes with groups smaller than twenty students show positive effects in English language classes.

An overcrowded class increases pressure in the learning environment. In addition, students feel ignored and this could reduce their motivation.

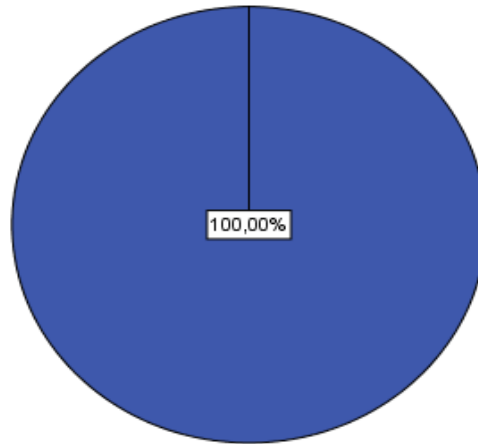
On the other hand, a large classes does not allow any flexibility in the seating arrangement, reducing the level of interaction and dynamism.

In addition, interviewed teachers consider, that Public high schools have a large number of students everywhere around the city and the country. Finally, the number of students in class, impacts in a negative way teaching-learning process in Public high schools because this factor limits the interaction between teachers and students, the chance to monitor students' progress regularly.

Finally, Public high schools, should apply strategies to face this factor. For example, they should improve teachers' salaries and rewards. Besides, English labs should be built to use the technology in the teaching-learning process. Moreover, schools should make an effort organizing classes into smaller groups so everybody can benefit of the teaching- learning methods in a comfortable environment.

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

■ YES



Author: Karolina Acosta  
Source: Teachers' questionnaire

The graphic shows that, 100% of the observed teachers use resources such as tape recorders and computers. In fact, Baker and Westrup (2005) establish that the use of teaching resources is valuable and increases students' interest on learning. Furthermore, resources can be realia, books, animals, multimedia, pictures, recycled material, people and more.

However, according to the observation sheet applied, teachers from Public high schools do not have resources available because they share the class with other teachers. Besides, they share the classroom with students from other schedule. According to the

observed evidence, they use the tools they can carry. For example, tape recorder and teachers personal computers.

On the other hand, there are high schools that do not have facilities to work with such as tape recorder or English laboratory.

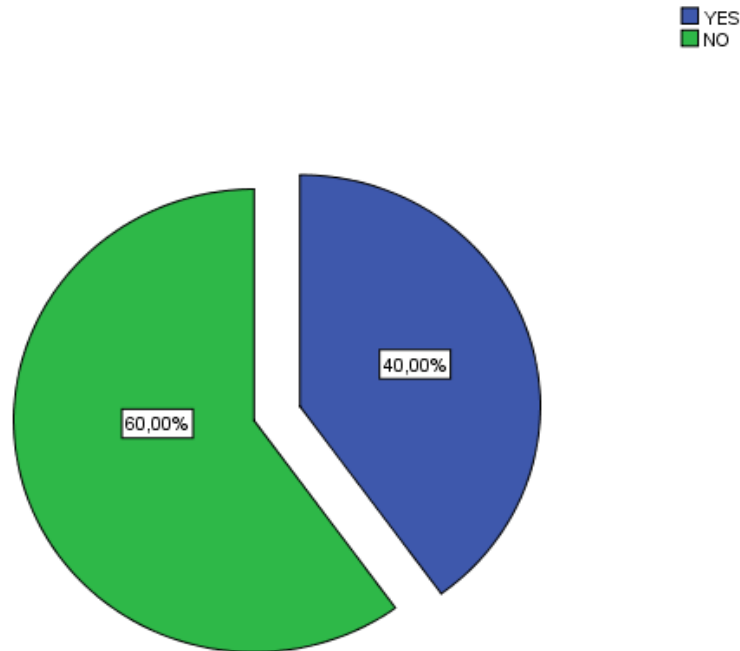
Considering the students questionnaire results, 53% of the teachers do not use teaching resources in class. Only the 47 % use supplementary materials in class. It can be understood that teachers may use teaching resources during the whole school year. In addition, the resources that teachers use the most, in public high schools, are tape recorder; computers and others. Indeed, 80 % use the tape recorder.

On the other hand, regarding others, they use realia to grab their students' attention. For instance, small toys, stickers, candies. However, the use of audiovisual resources such as projectors, computers, and television, among others; contributes to a meaningful learning.

Confirming what is stated before, Echevarría, Vogt, and Short (2008) settles that meaningful learning occurs when students perceive the class through senses and supplementary materials give students that chance.

In conclusion, the use of teaching resources is a factor that definitely helps the teaching-learning process. Through the use of resources, teachers provide an environment where students are motivated to learn.

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



Author: Karolina Acosta  
Source: Teachers' questionnaire

The graphic shows that, 60 % of the surveyed teachers do not consider having appropriate resources in their classrooms. The remaining, 40 % of the teachers feel comfortable with the resources in class. Indeed, according to the observation notes, teachers manage the resources provided by the Public high school where they work. On, on the other hand, they sub-use, and do not take advantage of what they have.

Ogalde, and Bardavid (2003) states that didactic resources are tools that support the teaching-learning process and promote meaningful learning; even lesson plans are considered teaching resources.

According to the students' questionnaire results, 53 % of the surveyed students consider that teachers do not use resources such as television or tape recorder in classes. The remaining, 43% of students reflect that teachers use resources as tape recorder.

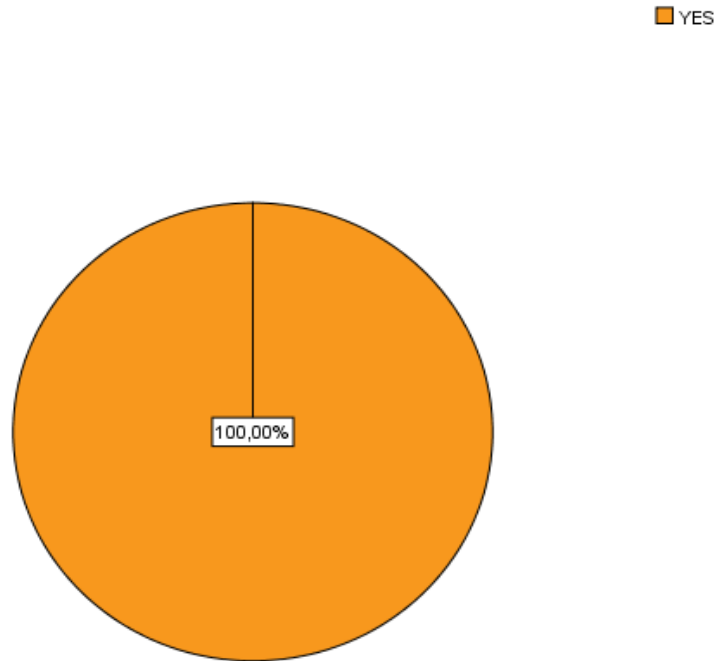
Moreover, according to the observation sheet results, 80 % of the observed teachers have tape recorder in class, 7 % of the teachers have their own computer to work in class. Finally, 13 % of them use other resources. For instance, teaching lesson plans, realia and posters.

On the other hand, there is still work to do in Public high schools. Now, there are the Millennium schools, but there are not trained teachers for using the new technology or there are not enough resources in the traditional Public high schools.

In summary, the use of resources is a key factor when maintaining high expectations about the class. Otherwise, students can lose interest on the class. Teachers should be focused on reaching students' motivation and the use of resources contributes to it. The use of resources represents a support for teaching and a recreational activity for students.

### 3.2.1.4 Factors Concerning Educational Institutions

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



Author: Karolina Acosta  
Source: Teachers' questionnaire

According to the graphic, 100 % of teachers' lesson plans are reviewed by the Institutions. However, while answering the questionnaire teachers precise that lesson plans are checked by the Institution mostly once a year because authorities that check do not understand English; consequently, they cannot give them any feedback.

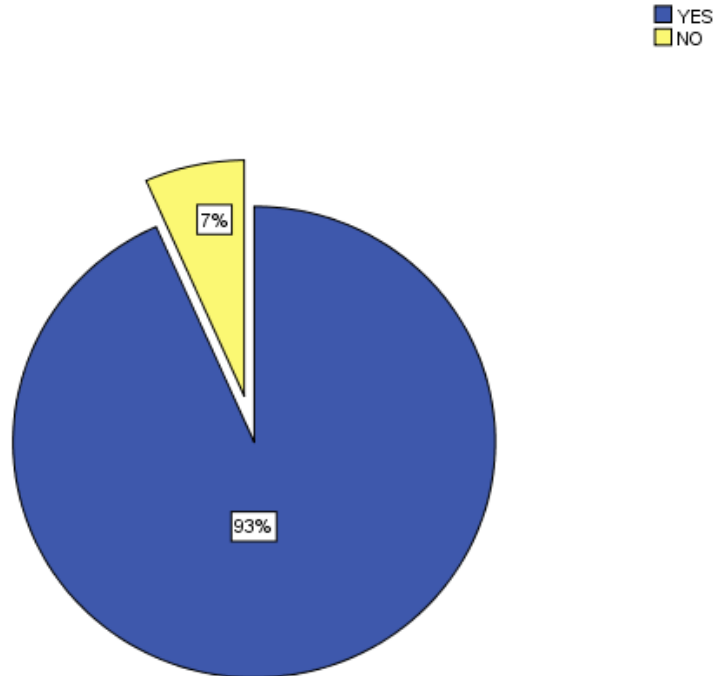
Penny Ur (2002) states, that a lesson plan is an organized document that can be adapted according to the needs of the students.



The researcher considers that lesson plans review is important, because it helps as a way to evidence the progress of teaching activity.

In conclusion, authorities of Public high schools should review lesson plans, because this gives them a vision of the progress in academic curriculum. It also serves, as support for teachers to show the way they are making a contribution to the teaching-learning process.

*Does the institution monitor teachers teaching?*



Author: Karolina Acosta  
Source: Teachers' questionnaire

According to the graphic, 93 % of the observed Institutions monitor teachers' teaching, and half of the lesson plans are checked once a month. In addition, 14% of the lesson plans are checked once a week; while, 36% of the lesson plans are reviewed in a different moment.

In addition, monitoring teaching activities is important to check teachers' performance. The fact, that authorities from Public high schools do not monitor classes regularly produces negative consequences in teachers' performance. For instance, they

stop planning ahead and looking for teaching strategies. Therefore, they do not have a guide to teach. This factor affects teaching-learning process because teachers tend to improvise instead of planning a class.

For these reasons, it is important to monitor teaching and lesson plans. In fact, teachers need a regular monitoring system, because this gives them a perspective on what they do now and what they can do better in the future.

#### *4. Conclusions*

- One of the most important factors that affect Ecuadorian Public high schools is the large number of students in each class. This factor interrupts students' concentration and limits the teacher when developing their class activity. Moreover, teachers have to make a strong effort to get the students attention in a large class like that.
- Teachers do not feel comfortable working with a large number of students in a class because they notice that some students will listen to the class in a correct way; consequently, they will not learn.
- The level of most of the students is elementary and they cannot practice the language in class because they do not feel comfortable when talking in English or developing complicated activities.
- Most of the participant teachers speak in Spanish half of their class time.
- The lack of practice of English ends in the loss of fluency, this factor reduces contribution to the teaching-learning process.
- The full-time schedule of Public high school teachers does not let them enroll in courses, graduate programs, or workshops to improve their English level.
- The use of Spanish in class is a practice that critically influences the English language teaching-learning process. In fact, teachers tend to speak in Spanish to explain students, grammar points or issues or instructions for a determined activity.
- Large classes do not allow students or teachers work efficiently and reach a meaningful learning.

- It is important to monitor teaching and lesson plans. In fact, teachers need a regular monitoring system, because this gives them a perspective on what they do now and what they can do better in the future.

## *5. Recommendations*

-The number of students in the class should be reduced so that teachers and students feel more comfortable with their group and this could enhance the teaching-learning process.

- Public high schools should ask the Ministry of Education to provide more English teachers and organize classes including a manageable number of students. Therefore, teachers will feel more comfortable and students will feel more motivated to learn a second language.

-There should be a program to increase students' level of English so they could practice in and out of class, to be able to apply it in their future life.

- Besides to what the government is doing, authorities have to support their staff and motivate them to improve their level all the time.

-Teachers in Public high schools should use English in class to encourage their students to speak and think in English when they are in class. Most of the time, teachers can set up new rules for class participation that include their persistence on expressing their ideas using English.

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# ANNEXES



**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 ( )

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

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

**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 ( )
---------	--------

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

YES ( )	NO ( )
Which ones? _____	

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

YES ( )	NO ( )
Why? _____	

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

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

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

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

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



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

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION:	
DATE:	
YEAR:	

21. ¿Te gusta aprender Inglés?

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

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

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

23. Consideras que las actividades realizadas en clase son:

Muy fáciles ( )	Fáciles ( )	Difíciles ( )	Muy difíciles ( )
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24. ¿Te gusta la forma de enseñanza del idioma Inglés que usa tu profesor?

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

¿Por qué?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**GRACIAS!!!!**





**UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA PARTICULAR DE LOJA**

*La Universidad Católica de Loja*

**MODALIDA ABIERTA Y A DISTANCIA**

**CARRERA DE INGLES**

**OBSERVATION SHEET**

<b>EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION:</b>	
<b>DATE:</b>	
<b>YEAR</b> (desde 8vo básica a 3ro bachillerato):	

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

<b>*Students' Needs</b> ( <i>age, personality, attitude, aptitude, motivation, and learning styles</i> )	
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:

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

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

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

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

### 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)?

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