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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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We dedicate this research study to our wives, sons, and parents. Thanks for your love, patience and support during all these years. You have been our inspiration and strength in this long path to achieve our goal.

Carlos Edison Galarza Peñaherrera   Pablo Antonio Lemos Trujillo

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

Factors that affect the English language teaching-learning process in Ecuadorian public high schools is the theme of this research and its purpose is to analyze the factors that influence the English language teaching-learning process.

The data was collected in eight public high schools in Quito, Tabacundo, Tumbaco, and San Miguel de los Bancos in Ecuador. In each high school, English teachers were interviewed and observed during the teaching process. In addition, one student from each class participated in this research.

The quantitative method was applied in this research to calculate the percentages of answers given by teachers in relation to the variables analyzed. In addition, surveys and note-taking were the techniques and observation formats and questionnaires were the instruments applied in this research.

Main factors that affect the English language teaching-learning process in the observed high schools are class size, classroom space, seating arrangement, teaching resources, lesson design, managing learning, and students' lack of attention. This means that teachers work in overcrowded classrooms and they neither manage learning correctly nor use English language and resources for motivating students to learn.

INTRODUCTION

English is an important tool that brings people access to up to date and useful information needed in work and academic areas. Specifically, students who enter the university need to possess good English language skills in order to achieve academic success and to obtain international scholarships. But some evaluations done to public high schools have revealed that students who graduate from high schools do not possess good English knowledge and that is a limitation in their path to attain academic goals.

Therefore, the title of this research is Factors that affect the English language teaching-learning process and it has three main objectives; first, to determine the classrooms conditions in which English lessons take place; second, to identify characteristics of in-service English teachers; third, to determine teachers' instructional competence.

The importance of this research relies on the actions and policies that would be implemented as a result of the findings obtained. In that way, it would be possible to improve the current situation of the English language teaching-learning process in Ecuador.

A lot of research has been carried out in other countries for studying the factors that influence the English language learning and teaching. While revising the literature, three studies were found and considered as the more relevant to be presented here.

First, Subedi (2003) did a study to investigate the effects of resources and class size on students' achievement. As a result of the analysis little effect of class size on average classroom achievement was found. However, this research was limited by some factors such as teachers' commitment and socioeconomic status influenced the results.

Next study is the one by Wright, Horn, & Sanders (1997) to explore the influence of teachers, class size, and context on students' achievement. The researchers found that the class size and context had little effect on students' achievement, but the most important result showed that teachers' effectiveness in teaching influenced greatly students' academic growth. Nevertheless, teachers were not observed while they taught English and it was a limitation of this study.

Third study was carried out by Akbari &Karimi (2010) with the aim of investigating teaching style, teachers' sense of efficacy, and teacher reflectivity in relation to students' achievement. Main findings revealed that there was a high correlation between teacher reflectivity and students' achievement. In addition, teachers' sense of efficacy and teaching style influenced also students' achievement. But teachers' opinion of interpersonal rapport and efficacy in students' achievement limited the results of this study.

The information provided by this research is of great benefit for teachers and educational authorities who work in the English language teaching field because they will be aware of the aspects that need special attention in order to teach successfully. In addition, pre-service English teachers will also be benefited by the results of this research because they will have a better approach of the factors involved in the teaching-learning process.

The current research was limited by the number of observations carried out in each class. One observation per class does not provide enough information about instructional strategies and the results cannot be extrapolated to all teachers. Increasing the number of class observation would bring reliable information for supporting the

analysis of results. In addition, the sample of students selected for answering the questionnaire was small; for future research, the same instrument could be applied to a whole class in order to obtain accurate information of learners' opinion about the teaching process.

METHOD

Setting and participants

Six public high schools in Quito, Tabacundo, Tumbaco, and San Miguel de los Bancos were selected for carrying out this research. The participants were fifteen in-service teachers and students who answered questionnaires to know their opinions about the English language teaching-learning process. Learners receive one hour of English classes per day that is five hours per week, and they were teenagers aged from 12 to 17 years old; their social and economic background was medium-to-low.

Procedure

The quantitative method was applied in this research to calculate the percentages of answers given by teachers in relation to the variables analyzed. In addition, surveys and note-taking were the techniques used to gather data; and, observation formats and questionnaires were the instruments applied in this research.

Revision of the literature was the first step to carry out this research. Therefore, it was necessary to gather theoretical information from different sources such as books, articles, newspapers, magazines, and the Internet.

After all the bibliography was revised, the next step consisted on writing the literature review that was the theoretical background for this research. Thus, main theories were considered to provide support for the analysis and interpretation of results.

After the literature review, it was necessary to gather data for the analysis. Then, three classes were observed in each of the high schools selected for this research and important points were recorded in observation formats. In each class, the teacher and one student were asked to answer closed-ended questionnaires. In addition, teachers were

interviewed using an open-ended survey. That technique was used to collect information about teachers' profile and their level of language proficiency in relation to the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for languages).

Once the process of gathering data finished, the answers of the teachers' questionnaires were counted and processed using Microsoft Excel to obtain statistical graphs that were part of the analysis of results.

The study of results consisted on analyzing the percentages obtained from the statistical process in relation to the data gathered in the observation process and from students' questionnaire. Besides, theories from the literature review section were used also to support the findings. The analysis took into account the study of these aspects: teachers' level of education, language proficiency, teaching methods and techniques used by teachers in class, percentage of English used by teachers in class, lesson design, and managing learning, learners' need and English level, class size, classroom space, seating arrangement, and classroom and teaching resources, class observation and lesson design monitoring. Those factors were classified into variables related to teachers, students, classroom, and institutions.

DISCUSSION

Literature Review

Nowadays English is an important language that influences the level of development of a country. In Ecuador, the Ministry of Education confirms its importance and it has developed a state policy to give English a new place in the education curriculum of Ecuadorian high schools. Besides, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (SENESCYT) have developed a program for English teachers in order that they acquire better language skills by receiving intensive training in foreign universities. According to the government, this will "ensure quality in teaching this language to students in public schools in the country".

Despite all the efforts being made to improve the teaching of English in Ecuador, this process is affected by several factors related to teachers and students which are going to be reviewed in this section. In addition, five studies were selected to support this theoretical framework.

Teaching approaches and methods

Through history many different methods and approaches have been developed by expert linguists, each of them with their own characteristics that help teachers to achieve learning objectives. For instance, Harmer (2007) sates that the Grammar-translation method is a method in which grammar rules are explained using students' native language. On the other hand, the Communicative language teaching (CLT) method gives importance to communication in the target language; the author mentions that students learn to use certain functions of the language such as agreeing, inviting, suggesting, or

disagreeing, etc. This author also describes the Task-based language (TBL) as a variation of CLT but the difference is that teaching emphasizes task development using the target language.

Other methods and approaches are Whole language teaching and Content-based instruction. Richards & Rodgers (2001) explain that student-centered learning, reading real texts, focus on real and natural events are some of the characteristics of the Whole language approach. With reference to the Content-based instruction, the authors explain that language is taught through content subject matter because in that way learning becomes motivating for learners but this approach can be challenging for teachers because they need to acquire knowledge in the subject matter. Finally, the authors mention that Whole Language approach makes emphasis on using language naturally in the same way students learn their native language. In addition, learners use language functions such as apologizing or for egocentric thinking just as the way people do it in everyday life.

To summarize the importance of the methods and approaches mentioned above, Salandanan (2008) expresses that they provide teachers with teaching devices and oriented them to follow the correct path in lesson activities. Even more, methods and approaches also bring ideas about how teachers have to arrange the classroom in order to work effectively and the type of material more suitable for each lesson.

Teaching techniques

Teaching techniques are very important elements in the teaching process. The importance of techniques is mentioned by Carrasco (2004, p. 85) who says, "The teaching technique is the didactic resource used to specify a moment in the didactic unit

or method in the learning process." According to him, each method provides a set of techniques and their specifications to be used in each stage of the lesson as follows: expositive technique, to explain general aspects of the lesson; group work technique, to work in the different parts of a lesson; presentation of conclusions, to expose students' work; summarizing, to remark important points of the lesson; memorizing, to learn the important points that were summarized.

There are also other techniques that Dhand (2008) mentions, for example: autobiographies, brainstorming, case study, debate, visiting museum. He mentions that autobiographies are good techniques to teach students to describe individual characteristics. About brainstorming, this technique is used to promote on students creativity because they are encouraged to give original ideas about a particular topic. Next, case study is useful to teach students how to elaborate conclusions based on important details. Debate is useful to promote speaking abilities and criticisms about interesting topics. Finally, visiting museum gives students rich experience because they are exposed to real facts of important events in world history.

More techniques are described by Diaz (1999) who presents participation techniques as important tools to create interaction between students and teachers, some of those techniques are: display, dictation, drama, individual work, and group work. Display is used to encourage students to explain elements or characteristics of certain topic. Dictation is used to practice writing skills. Drama is useful to develop students' communicative skills. Individual work develops learners' independence and self-confidence; it fosters calm and peace between students. And group work promotes interaction, cooperation, and communication between students.

Finally, McLeod, Fisher, & Hoover (2003) explain that there is a popular technique known as whole-group instruction that consists on the teacher working with the whole class by doing lectures, giving instructions, or involving students in debate sessions about a topic. According to these authors, this technique is preferred by teachers because it is easy to deliver information and demands less effort from teachers since they do not have to prepare lessons for individualized teaching.

Managing learning

Students demonstrate engagement in performing activities when they understand teachers' instructions. Scrivener (2005) states that English is a complex language, it requires that teachers give instructions using simple structures and physical demonstrations. In addition, he explains that waiting for students' attention, making eye contact, giving a gesture to start instruction, and demonstrating patience and security are some important steps before giving instructions.

Feedback is another aspect in managing learning, Luna (2006) explains that it is an old term that refers to the guidance or help provided to individuals to correct behavior. Its aim is to teach people to be aware that their behavior affects others in the context where they interact daily. This author gives some tips to provide effective feedback in education: feedback should promote positive reactions to corrective actions; it should be specific; it must be given at the appropriate time; it need to be required by the student rather than imposed; feedback must be given clearly.

Timing is important in managing learning because as Richards & Lockart (1996, p. 171) say, "The amount of time that students spend on classroom activities has been identified as one of the most important factors affecting student learning." They mention

three ways of timing: allocated time, time-on task, and academic learning time.

Allocated time is the amount of time that students need to perform a task. Time-on task

is the real time when students are engaged in an activity. Academic learning time refers

to the proportional time to complete an activity correctly.

Lesson design

Lesson design helps teachers to be successful in teaching a lesson. Concerning

this, Spratt, Pulverness, & Williams (2005) explain that a lesson plan gives teachers

ideas about lessons and how to teach them. They list these components of a lesson plan:

aims, they specify what students and teachers are going to obtain from the lesson;

procedures, they indicate how students and teachers will achieve the objectives of the

lesson; *level and number of learners* refer to the amount of individuals in the classroom

and their language level; *assumptions* describe students' previous knowledge of the

topic; *anticipated language problems* refer to possible difficulties that may rise during

the lesson and the strategies to solve them; *teaching aids* are the resources used in the

lesson; *timing* is the amount of time for each learning activity; *interactive patterns* refer

to the way in which students are going to work; and *homework* are the tasks that students

will do after the lesson have finished. Similarly, Harmer (2004) considers that a lesson

plan must have these elements: learning objectives, description of the students,

procedures, anticipated problems, and extra activities / materials.

The last point of view of lesson design is given by Milkova (2011) who argues

that a lesson plan gives teachers the correct direction to learning objectives. She

remarks the importance of fixing clear objectives; writing a short introduction about the

lesson; planning learning activities; planning for checking understanding; developing

conclusions of the lesson; assigning realist time for each learning activity.

Class size

There are different assumptions about the influence of class size in learning. One

point of view is given by Harmer (2004) who mentions that class size influence the type

of activities that teachers plan for a lesson. For example, teachers use pair work or group

work to promote interaction between students in large classes while in small classes

teachers are able to individualize teaching according to students' needs.

 Large or small classes are the center of debate according to Blatchford (2003). It

is considered that small classes provide more opportunities for better learning but

implementation costs are higher. On the contrary, Squire (1977) explains that

authorities in schools claim that class size does not have any type of influence in

students' achievement but the author mentions that some research have proved that in

small classes there is significant increase in achievement.

Classroom space

There are different opinions about the influence of classroom space in learning.

For example, Dudek (2005, p. 29) who declares, "The classroom is a shared space and a

balance needs to be struck between the needs of the teaching staff, the needs of children

and the resources available."; he considers important to assign enough space to teachers

and students personal possessions, to circulate adequately, and to work effectively.

Also about classroom space, Konza (2003, p. 24) says, "The physical environment

you establish for your students communicates a great deal about your expectations." He

suggests that and adequate use of classroom space wakes up students' motivation and

interest in the learning process. Similarly, Dimmock (2000) remarks that classroom space is an important factor to create good conditions for learning because it influences the emotional state of students therefore teachers must be aware of furniture distribution to give enough space to develop activities.

Other important factors about classroom space are described by Harmer (2001). He explains that a lot of research has proved the effects of the physical space on students' achievement and mention four points. In the first place, this author mentions that Earthman (2004) refers to some environmental conditions such as temperature, heating, and air quality affect students' achievement. Noise is other factor that may hamper students' learning success because if affect learners' cognitive skills. A third aspect is the colors of the classroom, there is evidence that young students learn better in spaces painted with brighter colors while adolescents perform well in classrooms decorated with subdued colors. The fourth and last factor is visual displays; students perform better when they can see their progress displayed in a graphic from.

Seating arrangement

Seating arrangement refers to the distribution of students' desk in a classroom and some authors consider that it is a factor that influences learning. Some declarations about this are given by Richards & Rodgers (2001) who argue that class progress better when classroom arrangement is attractive for students. They mention that not all seating arrangements are suitable for all activities; for instance, to watching a movie the traditional row arrangement is good or for discussion is recommendable to arrange seats in semicircle or circles.

Jonson (2002) also gives some recommendations about the importance of the type of seating arrangement in relation to the type of work planned for the lesson. She suggests that row format is suitable for beginner teachers because they can identify students to have more control over them. Experimenting with different types of seating arrangement is recommended for more experienced teachers; some formats are hollow circles or u-shape to discuss and debate topics; square to work in groups or also discussing topics. In addition, Muijs & Reynolds (2005) mentions that enough space in the classroom helps both teachers and students in working and moving adequately. They mention that teachers must select the appropriate seating arrangement in accordance with the type of activities planned for the lesson. Grouping students around tables is a good strategy for whole class discussion and active participation.

Classroom and teaching resources

Dash & Dash (2007, p. 122) says, "Teaching aids are those materials which are quite helpful in improving the quality of teaching and learning." On their point of view, teaching resources are important for providing learners with unforgettable experience that stimulate their senses. In addition, the use of teaching materials is appropriate to explain abstract meaning and reduce time of teacher's explanations.

Harmer (2004) states the importance of teaching resources to maintain learners motivated and comprehend meaning. Among some materials mentioned by this author are: pictures, overhead projector, realia, language cards, boards, and Cuisenaire rods. Teachers can use pictures to encourage students to make predictions, to learn new words, or to talk about some topic. Overhead projectors can be used to display students'

worksheets, concept maps, pictures, etc. This author suggests also that boards may be

used in different ways such as a picture frame or to play games.

In addition to the materials mentioned above, Patel & Praveen (2008) classify

them into: visual aids, audio aids, audio visual aids, language laboratory. Each of them

has different types of resources such as boards, charts, audio cassette player, television,

computers, etc. The authors explain that materials are important because they help

teachers to teach effectively.

Classroom observation

Classroom observation is used in educational institutions to evaluate the process of

teaching and learning. Slack (1997) explains that classroom observation gives clues

about the influence of school' organization in relation to students' improvement. In

addition, Calvo (2005) mentions that classroom observation also gives teachers

information about students' behavior and events that take place in the classroom. This

author describes advantages and disadvantages of non-participative, participative,

structured, and unstructured observation. Non-participative observation gives valid

information but it is limited in quantity. On the contrary, in participative observation the

observer interacts in the process but sometimes objectivity is not possible. The positive

aspect about structured observation is its freedom; on the other hand, it does not allow

working with big amount of information. At last, precision is the advantage of

unstructured observation since it is based on a quantitative approach. Other types of

observation are quantitative and qualitative observations. As is said by Wragg (1999),

the first type analyzes quantities and the second type analyzes behaviors.

About the advantages of classroom observation, Milanowski, Prince, & Koppich (2007) mention that it can be applied on institutions that use an outcome system and the results cannot be applied to each individual. It also is useful to determine how individuals achieve their outcomes. It also helps teachers to relate their performance to the salary being received. In addition, classroom observation provides teachers the necessary support when circumstances are advert such as low scores in student tests. Finally, classroom observation provides formative feedback to help teachers understanding how to get better outcomes.

On the contrary, Langley (2012) mentions two negative aspects of classroom observation. The first is bias; it may impede the normal process of observation because people sometimes impose their personal beliefs. And the second aspect is unreliability since teachers' performance during the process of observation is affected by different factors such as teachers' emotional state, observers' assumptions of the process, students' behavior (they usually behave well when they are observed).

Student's motivation

Many authors define motivation as a factor that influence language learning. Richards & Bredfeldt (1998) explain that motivation reflects students' attitude in relation to learning and describe concepts of these types: general, specific, extrinsic, and intrinsic motivation. The authors explain that general motivation do not change in time; on the contrary, specific motivation varies in relation to the theme studied in class. Concerning extrinsic motivation, it depends on students' external factors; on the other hand, intrinsic motivation depends on learners' personal objectives to achieve something.

More specifically, Saville- Troike (2006) explains that in foreign language contexts it is common to identify integrative and instrumental motivation. This author explains that learners, who study because they are interested on the foreign culture or in travelling around the world, demonstrate integrative motivation. On the other side, learners who study a language for different reasons such as desire of getting a better job or salary are driven by instrumental motivation.

Motivation to learn, according to Woolfolk (2007), goes beyond student's interest for learning. It is characterized by student's mental effort to complete and activity and to acquire learning. Therefore, this author explains that teachers have three goals in teaching. First, they have to create a state of motivation to learn; this means that teachers must involve students in learning activities. The second goal consists on teaching students to being motivated for a long-term in order that they integrate it to their life. In third place, teachers must teach students to think deeply about the contents they study; this means, to teach them to be cognitively engaged in learning.

Learning styles

Students' differ in many aspects such as personality, motivation, and of course learning styles. For that reason, Gross (2009) explains that the way in which students or individuals learn is determined by different styles for organizing, recalling, or interpreting information. In order to maximize learning this author recommends varying teaching methods and learning activities according to students' learning styles.

The most common classification of learning styles includes visual, auditory, and kinesthetic ways of learning. Murphy (2008) explains each of them: visual students like to learn by writing or reading; auditory students prefer listening and speaking; and,

kinesthetic students learn by doing tasks or touching objects. Other classification of

learning styles defines enthusiasts, oracular, participator, and rebel. According to

Harmer (2001), students who work to achieve the general goal of a group are

characterized by an enthusiast style. Similarly, students who learn according to the

goals of their group are participator learners. Opposite to this are the rebel learners who

like to learn according to their own objectives.

Students' intelligence or aptitude to learn English

The potential that a student demonstrates in learning English is known by many

authors as aptitude to learn. One of them is Ellis (1999, p. 73) who says, "It has been

suggested that people differ in the extent to which they possess a natural ability for

learning an L2. This ability, known as language aptitude" This author mentions that

learners' ability has four components such as phonemic coding, grammatical sensitivity,

inductive language learning, and rote learning.

Intelligence is other aspect that influences students' learning. Khanna, Verna, &

Sinha (1998, p. 30) says, "Intelligence tests generally consist of abstract and quasi

mathematical problems and it is often difficult to say whether they measure recent

learning, genetic transmission of knowledge or early infant experience" Similarly,

Stanfield (1989) explains that foreign language aptitude is apparently different from

intelligence or general aptitude because there are some aptitude tests that have

demonstrated learners ability such as the modern language aptitude test (MLA) which is

widely used in many English speaking countries.

Other author who relates the meaning of ability and intelligence is Kyriacou

(2009). He explicates that ability is a term associated with intelligence because it refers

to the ability to apply current knowledge as a result of learning and meeting cognitive demands. This author also mentions that research on intelligence have stated that intelligence establish differences among learners specifically in developing cognitive and intellectual tasks. In consequence, this author refers indistinctively to general ability or intelligence.

The themes presented above have showed important information of some factors that may influence the English teaching and teaching process. In order to reinforce the theory of different authors, five studies are proposed next.

The aim of the first study was to investigate the effects of resources and class size on students' achievement. This study was done by Subedi (2003) and consisted on selecting a sample of teacher from 30 different high schools in Nepal who answered questionnaires to gather information of their teaching practices in all the classes; they also answers a final survey based on the feedback provided by the questionnaires. The analysis of the results showed that there was little effect of class size on average classroom achievement. Besides, the effects of teaching resources on the learning process were positive but decreased as the class size increased. Therefore the researchers conclude that achievement increases when teaching resources are used appropriately but class size affects negatively the learning process.

In this second study, Hoxby (2000) wanted to prove the effects of class size on students' achievement. With that aim, this author set two scenarios for the investigation. In the first situation, she considered class size with a normal variation in population that depended on the amount of students enrolled in schools. In next set-up, class size was affected by unexpected changes such as reducing or increasing the number of

classrooms by effects of enrollment. Then, the researcher gathered the results of the achievement standard test administered at the beginning of the year and established a relationship between scores and class size; in addition, a survey was delivered to each school to collect information about their class size' policies, teaching aides, and mixed-grade classes. The results showed that the maximum class size was 25 and the minimum was 15, teaching aides were used with pedagogical purposes but not for managing large classes. It was also observed that teachers do not change their teaching strategies when class size change; for instance, teachers who used to manage large classes continued using the same methods in small classes. The researcher concluded that reduction in class size had no effect on student achievement.

The third study explored the influence of teachers, class size, and context in on students' achievement; Wright, Horn, & Sanders (1997) conducted this research. These researchers used test scores of five subjects from students of third, fourth, and fifth grades. In addition, two class-size groups were used: small and large. The researchers found the class size and context had little effect on students' achievement but the most important result showed that teachers' effectiveness in teaching influenced greatly students' academic growth. In consequence, the authors of this study concluded that teachers do make the difference in student achievement.

The aim of the fourth study was to investigate teaching style, teachers' sense of efficacy, and teacher reflectivity in relation to students' achievement. This study was done by Akbari &Karimi (2010) and it consisted on apply three questionnaires to 30 EFL teachers in Iran. The first questionnaire intended to investigate the affective, cognitive, metacognitive, practical, and critical dimensions of teachers' reflectivity. The

second questionnaire was designed to measure teachers' sense of efficacy in relation to instructional strategies, efficacy for classroom management, and efficacy of students' engagement. The third and last questionnaire evaluated teaching style in terms of intellectual excitement and interpersonal rapport. Moreover, students also were evaluated at the end of the year in the areas of spelling, vocabulary use, language functions, pronunciation, reading comprehension, and scrambled sentences. The results showed a high correlation between teacher reflectivity and students' achievement. Other variables that also influenced students' achievement were teachers' sense of efficacy and teaching style. Students commented that their teachers demonstrated knowledge of language structures and had good skills in classroom management therefore they felt motivated to learn the L2. In conclusion, the researchers state that the three studied variables had a powerful effect in students' achievement.

The last study was done by Atanda & Jaiyeoba (2011) to investigate whether school-based quality factors influence students' achievement. This was a descriptive survey research in which participants were teachers and principals of secondary schools from Nigeria. The instruments applied in this study were school-based quality factors inventory (SQIFI) answered by principals and the school- based quality factors questionnaire completed by teachers. Main findings of this study revealed that quality of instruction influenced students' achievement significantly. Supervision of instruction also affected students' learning because teachers improved their practices as a result of observation. In addition, instructional materials had an effect on students' performance; the more materials the more learning improvement. The researchers brought to a close

that school-based facilities (specifically materials and supervision) influence students'

achievement positively.

Description, Analysis, and Interpretation of Results

In this section, the results will be described, analyzed, and interpreted. With that aim, statistical graphs will show the percentages obtained in the teachers' questionnaire. Then, those percentages will be analyzed using information from observation formats, students' questionnaire, and notes. Finally, interpretation will be carried out carefully with the support of the information from the literature review section. It is important to mention that the data presented here is classified into factors related to teachers; factors related to students; factors related to classrooms; and, factors related to institutions.

Factors concerning teachers

Which level of education do teachers have?

Graph 1
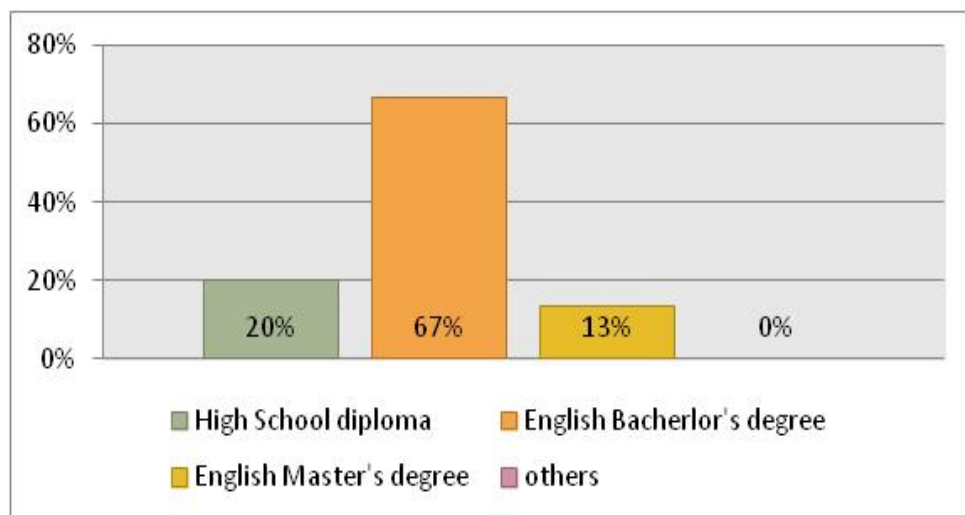
Source: Teachers' questionnaire
Authors: Carlos Galarza Peñaherrera and Pablo Lemos Trujillo

It is observed that 67% of the teachers have an English Bachelor's degree; 20% of these participants have only high school diploma; and 13% of the teachers have an English Master's degree. All teachers were interviewed and some of their most important characteristics show that they have been teaching English for an average of 5

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or 10 years. All of them were Ecuadorians and they learned English in their native country for an average of five years at different institutions or universities. Only one teacher learned English in the United States due to the time he lived in that country but he did not have an English bachelor's degree.

About the skills easier for teachers to teach, all the participants agreed on saying that reading and writing do not represent great difficulty for them to teach, but they must give special attention to the four language skills for preparing students in case they need to take an international exam like FEC or TOEFL. Also, teachers commented that they would like to continue studying. According to many teachers, an advantage of teaching English in a non-English speaking country is that students learn grammar structures of language and acquire good skills in reading and writing. On the other hand, the negative aspect of teaching English in a non-English speaking country is mainly the lack of opportunities to use the language for communication.

About the problems a teacher faces when teaching English in Ecuador the participants explain that students' lack of motivation and interest in learning English; number of students in the classroom; lack of teaching resources, are some difficulties that they deal with.

Since the interview made possible to identify teachers' language proficiency, the accuracy of the answers showed that less than half of teachers have a B2 level within the CEFR. Other important segment of teachers has a C1 level, and a minority of participants was catalogued with B1and C2. The CEFR indicates that B1 and B2 denote learners with acceptable communicative skills who are able to express ideas and opinions. However, C1 and C2 are levels in which people is able to communicate within

academic contexts and it would be the appropriate level for teachers working in the

English teaching field.

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

Graph 2
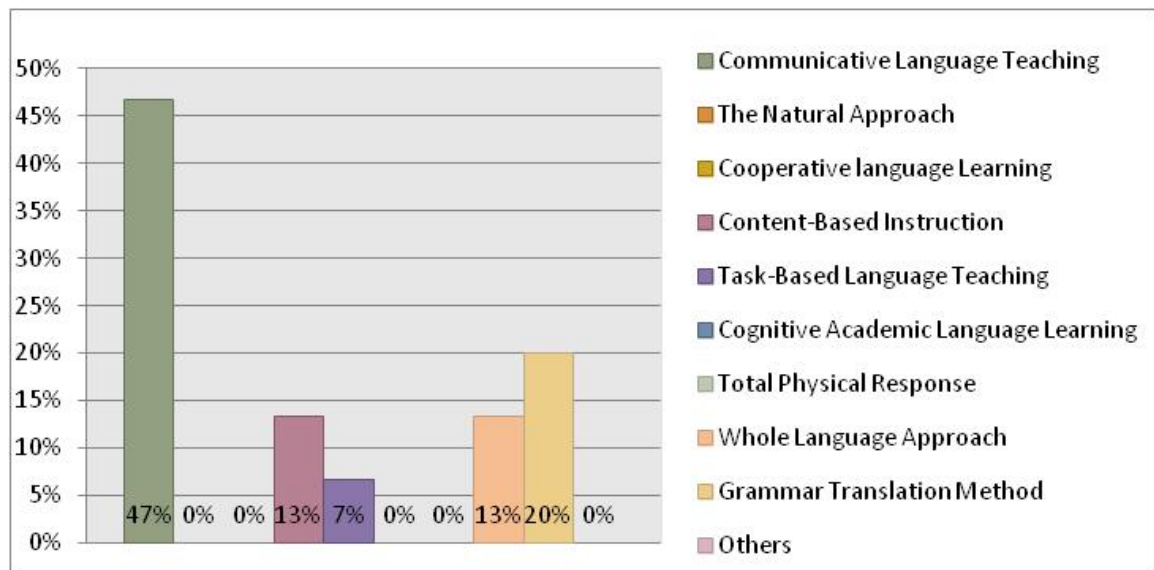
Source: Teachers' questionnaire
Authors: Carlos Galarza Peñaherrera and Pablo Lemos Trujillo

Graph 2 allows seeing that 47% of teachers answered that they use

communicative language teaching in their classes. According to Harmer (2007), the

Communicative Language Teaching method (CLT) gives importance to communication

in the target language and the use of certain functions of the language such as agreeing,

inviting, suggesting, or disagreeing, etc. However, most of the observed teachers spoke

in English 25% of the time; they gave commands in English and explained the contents

in Spanish. Students did not use the kind of functions mentioned by the author above. It

was observed that only 3rd senior year teachers from one high school spoke English

during class time. In that course, students did use functions such as suggesting or

disagreeing because they participated in a debate session.

Another result shows that 20% of teachers answered that they use the Grammar translation method because they explained grammar rules in Spanish. That is, according to Harmer (2007), main characteristic of this method. Teachers told students command in English such as "open your books", "stand up", "make silence", etc., and the subject contents were explained using students' native language. For that reason, the percentage of language used in the classroom was low.

With regard to the 13% of teachers who answered that they use Content- Based Instruction, in the observed classes, teachers taught students concepts of science and technology using the target language. Then students asked and answered questions about the topic. In that way, the characteristics of the method described by Richards & Rodgers (2001) were observed in these classes.

Similarly, 13% of teachers answered that they use whole language approach. However, the characteristics of this approach were not observed in the classes because students did not learn language in a natural way, as Richards & Rodgers (2001) describe.

Finally, 7% of teachers indicated that they prefer Task-Based language teaching. This teacher chose this method but it was observed that he used Grammar translation method because English grammar rules were explained in Spanish and students worked in activities in which they have to translate some sentences from Spanish to English.

Summarizing, it was observed that a few teachers applied the methods they indicated in the questionnaire. The way teachers used the methods in the observed classes is consistent with the theory explained by Salandanan (2008). He expresses that methods and approaches provide teachers with teaching devices and oriented them to follow the correct path in lesson activities. On the contrary, teachers who did not apply

the methods correctly showed difficulties in achieving learning goals and their teaching did not help students to achieve success in the lessons.

Do teachers use whole- group activities to teach their lessons?
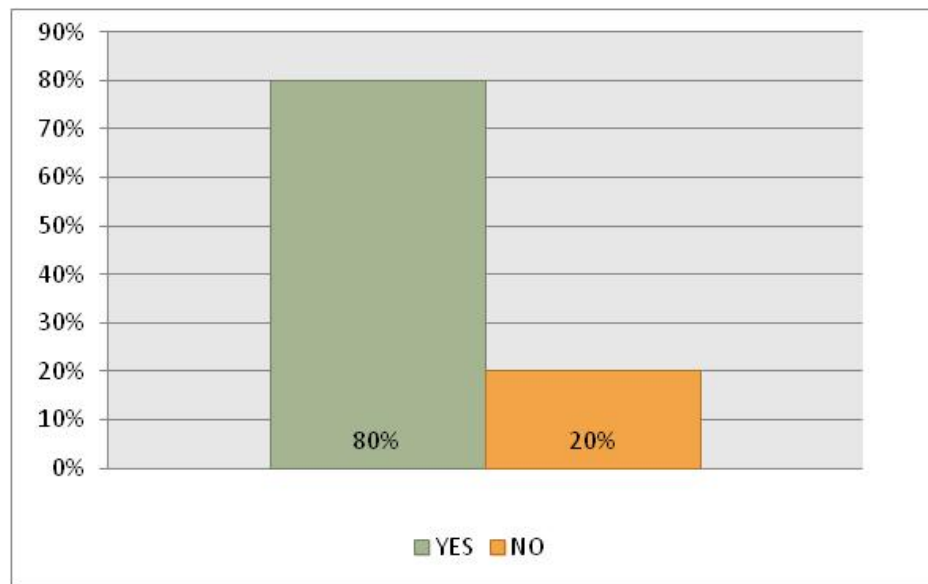
Graph 3
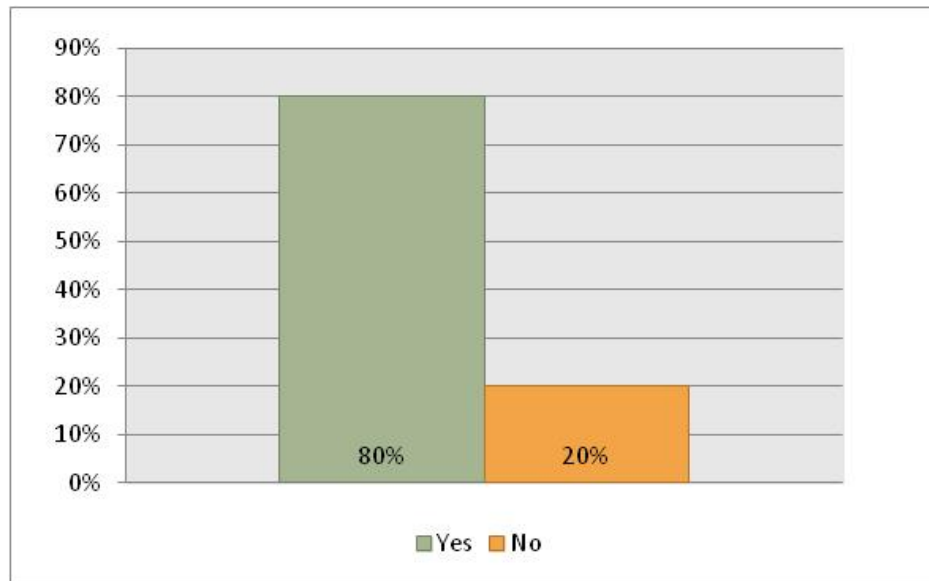
Source: Teachers' questionnaire
Authors: Carlos Galarza Peñaherrera and Pablo Lemos Trujillo

As Graph 3 shows, 80% of the teachers answered that they use whole-group and 20% of them responded that they do not use this type of activity. The activities developed by teachers in the observed classrooms have the same characteristics described by McLeod, Fisher, & Hoover (2003) because teachers usually worked with all the students by discussing about the contents of the lessons. In addition, the students read short texts and listened to the teachers when they explained important things. Besides, teachers asked questions to students and all the class participated actively. The use of this type of technique was confirmed by students in the questionnaires because they indicated that teachers do activities that allow them to interact with their peers.

The great percentage of teachers who used whole-group activity confirms that they prefer to do simple activities. As McLeod, Fisher, & Hoover (2003) explain, this technique is preferred by teachers because it is easy to deliver information and demands less effort from teachers since they do not have to prepare lessons for individualized teaching.

Do teachers use individual activities to teach their lessons?
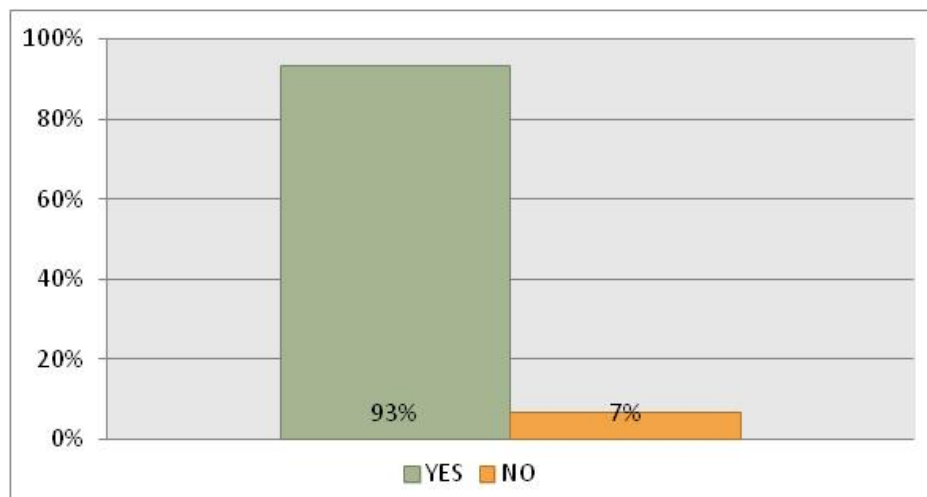
Graph 4

Source: Teachers' questionnaire
Authors: Carlos Galarza Peñaherrera and Pablo Lemos Trujillo

In graph 4 it is possible to see that 80% of the teachers answered that they use individual activities and 20% of them responded that they do not use this type of activity. Observations carried out in the classes showed that more than half of teachers used individual activities in the lessons. The activities consisted on working in tasks assigned by the teachers that students had to do alone. Some of those tasks were focused mainly on providing students with practice of grammar structures with exercises such as

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filling on the blanks with correct verbs; correcting or rewriting sentences; changing verb tense; etc. Regarding students' opinions about the activities used in class, learners consider that tasks are easy and motivate them to learn English. In addition, while the observed students worked individually disciplinary problems diminished. About individual work, Diaz (1999) highlights that it develops learners' independence and self-confidence; it fosters also calm and peace between students. Concerning the results analyzed previously, it can be said that individual work used by teachers in the observed classes helped learners in the way that the author above explains.

Do teachers use group work activities to teach their lessons?

Graph 5

Source: Teachers' questionnaire
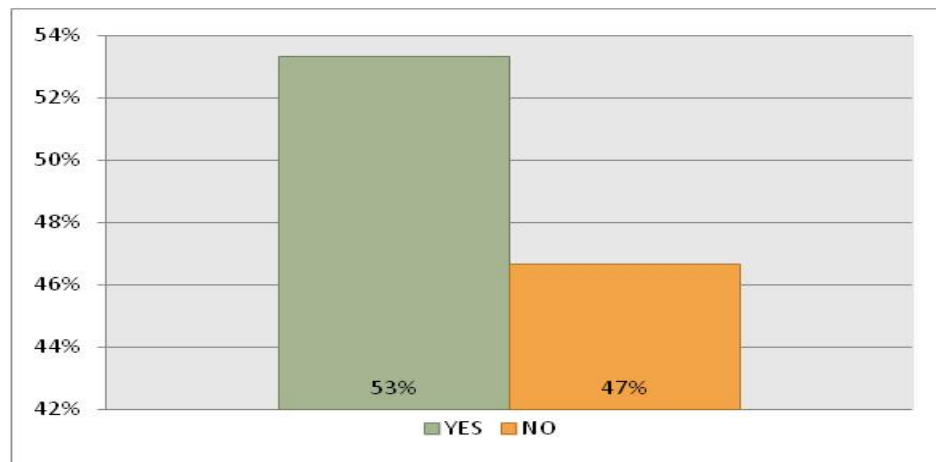Authors: Carlos Galarza Peñaherrera and Pablo Lemos Trujillo

Graph 5 shows that 93% of teachers answered that they use group work activities to teach their lessons and 7% of teachers indicated that they do not use group work activities in their classes. In addition, teachers stated that group work is useful because students help each other, they have opportunity to learn from others, and learners are

able to exchange opinions using the target language. Besides, some teachers mentioned that it is important to vary the type of activities to avoid routine in the classroom. About this question, students confirmed that teachers design a variety of activities that allow them to exchange information and interact between them.

During observation, teachers used this type of activity twice. Effectively, it was observed that students collaborated and exchanged opinions but they usually spoke in Spanish. There was only one class where students worked in groups correctly because the teacher spoke in English and motivated students to use the target language assigning them communicative activities such as debates and displays about lesson topics. In that class, group work promoted interaction, cooperation, and communication between students as Diaz (1999) describe.

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

Graph 6

Source: Teachers' questionnaire
Authors: Carlos Galarza Peñaherrera and Pablo Lemos Trujillo

Graph 6 reveals that more than half (53%) of teachers answered that they use English most of the time in their classes and about half (47%) teachers indicated that

they do not use the target language in class as they should. These results do not agree with observations did in the classes since eight teachers spoke in English 25% of the time, three of them spoke in English 50% of the time, and only four teachers were able to use the target language the whole class time. Even more, there were classes in which teachers explained contents, assigned activities, and provided feedback using only the Spanish language. In those classes, teachers wrote grammar structures or vocabulary in the whiteboard but they did not explain the class using English.

It is important to remark that as a result of the interview teachers' language proficiency was identified as B2 and C1 which means that they were able to communicate contents adequately. However, teachers did not use English in class and preferred to translate or teach contents in Spanish to facilitate students' comprehension. As a result, an important amount of students with basic level was evidenced not only in basic years but also in senior years.

The results of the students' questionnaires in relation to the question show that teachers did use English in the class, but this result contradicts the information gathered during the observation process. It seems that students refer only to the fact that teachers use English to give instructions or explain grammar; learners do not considered the percentage of time that teachers should speak the language in class.

Therefore, low percentage of English used in the observed classes impede that learners receive appropriate language input and it is an important reason for which students are not able to progress in their language level. In that way, high amount of students with basic level is caused partly by this situation.

Do teachers plan their lessons?
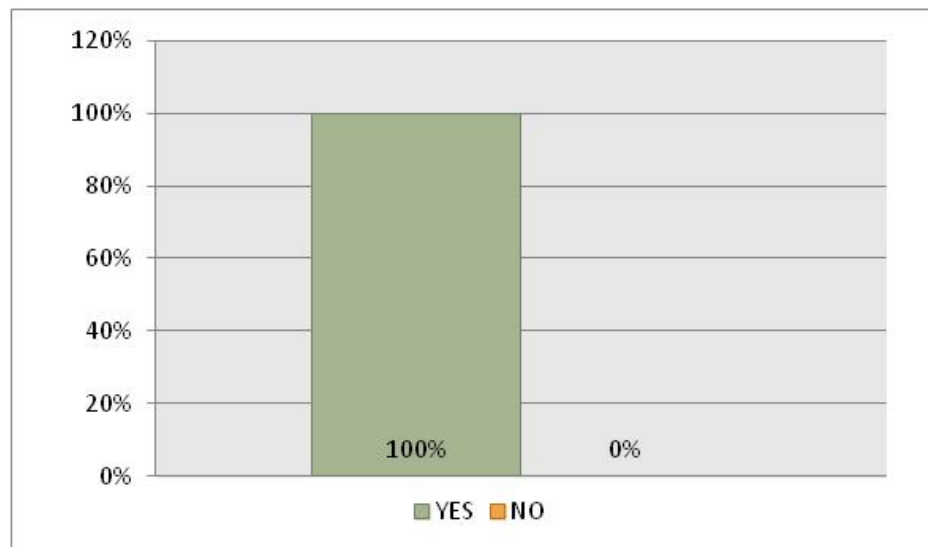
Graph 7
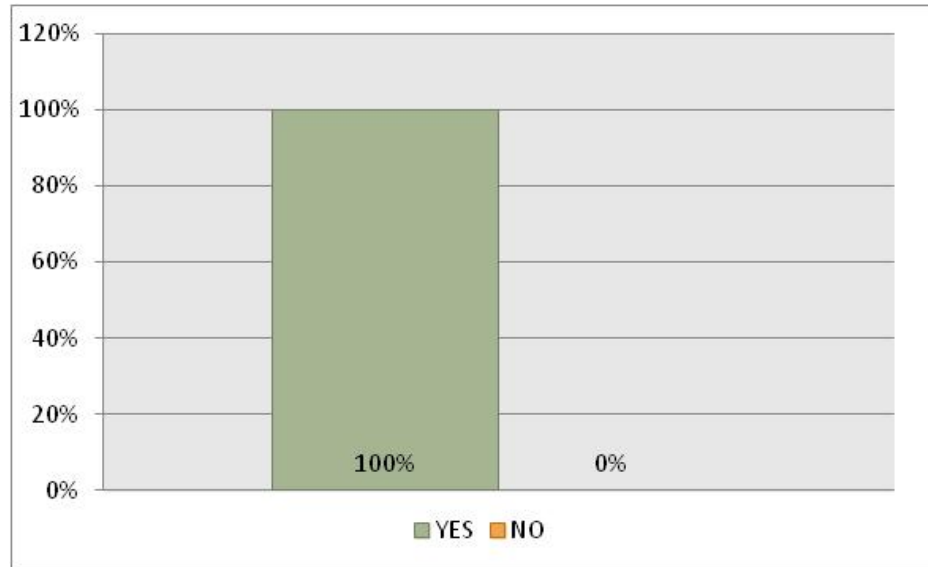
Source: Teachers' questionnaire
Authors: Carlos Galarza Peñaherrera and Pablo Lemos Trujillo

In graph 7 all 100% teachers answered that they plan their lessons. However, it was observed that most of them did not have the lesson plans with them. Instead, they worked using list of topics elaborated by them that did not follow any specific format; the purpose was to review topics taught the previous year and provide students feedback before teach them new topics. Moreover, some teachers were observed planning the lessons minutes before the class started and their only guide was the textbook. Only, the teacher who worked with students in the international baccalaureate section had a formal lesson plan. In that class, the teaching process was perceived as more organized than in the rest of the observed classes. Therefore, that teacher was in the correct path to achieve the objectives of the lesson and he was aware of the contents to be taught, as Spratt et al (2005) and Milkova (2011) explain.

In conclusion, the majority of observed teachers did not plan their lessons as they should.

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

Graph 8

Source: Teachers' questionnaire
Authors: Carlos Galarza Peñaherrera and Pablo Lemos Trujillo

The graph above shows that 100% of teachers answered that they consider aspects such as discipline, timing, feedback, and instruction to teach their lessons. It was noted through observations that the majority of classes had over 31 students and it was difficult for teachers to control discipline. Since most of the teachers did not plan their lessons, review of topics were boring for students and teachers did not use teaching aids or warm ups for awaking students' interest on lessons; therefore, students were not engaged in lessons and talked a lot between them.

Regarding time management, almost all teachers assigned time to the activities and prevented students about the remaining minutes to finish. In this sense, teachers

distributed time as Richards & Lockart (1996) mention, specifying the allocated time and controlling time on task.

Feedback was another aspect that most of the teachers provided well. It was observed that teachers help students with their doubts individually and they also worked with the whole-class reviewing topics and correcting errors and mistakes. Also, some teachers applied feedback to control discipline because students, who were not paying attention, were asked for explaining what to do in each activity. Therefore, in agreement with Luna (2006)' description, teachers used feedback for promoting positive reactions and guiding students' behavior.

About instructions, some teachers wrote them on the board and explained students the details by writing examples on the board or modeling what students had to do. After that, teachers asked students questions to verify whether they understood. In addition, all the observed teachers began the lesson saying, "attention please!" and then they gave instructions without observing whether all students were paying attention. It was observed that in many of the classes while teachers were explaining the activities some students were talking or focused on other issues. Therefore, some aspects that Scrivener (2005) describes such as making eye contact and giving a gesture to start instruction were not taken into account by the observed teachers.

Finally, the results of students' questionnaires confirm the events observed in class because the majority of learners indicated that teachers control discipline, assign time to activities, provide feedback, and provide clear instructions.

Factors concerning students

Do teachers consider students' needs to teach English successfully?

Graph 9
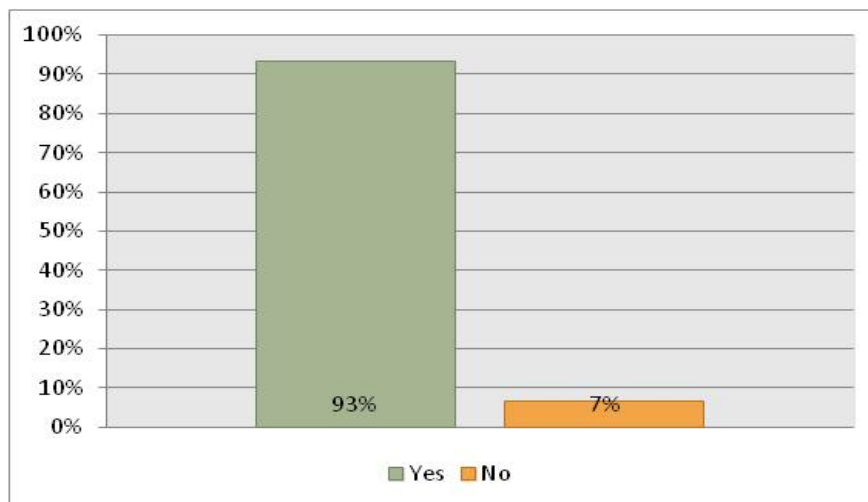
Source: Teachers' questionnaire

Authors: Carlos Galarza Peñaherrera and Pablo Lemos Trujillo

In graph 9 the results show that 93% of teachers indicated that they consider students' needs to teach English successfully and 7% of them answered that they do not take into consideration students' needs to teach their lessons. These results coincide with students' answers because learners indicated that they like to study English and activities assigned by their teachers motivate them to learn.

To explain better the results, it is important to review what Gross (2009) explains. For this author, the way in which students or individuals learn is determined by different styles for organizing, recalling, or interpreting information. In order to maximize learning this author recommends varying teaching methods and learning activities according to students' learning styles. In addition, Dash & Dash (2007), teaching resources help teachers to provide learners unforgettable experience that stimulate their

senses. However, it was observed that teachers used lecture technique to teach the majority of classes and they did not use teaching aids or vary teaching techniques. Moreover, teachers used only the whiteboard and the assigned textbook. As a result, students were not able of acquiring knowledge in a meaningful way through their preferred learning style.

In consequence, answers given by teachers and students do not agree with information gathered during observations; it can be said that teachers did not consider students' needs to teach their classes.

Do teachers consider Students' level to teach English successfully?

Graph 10
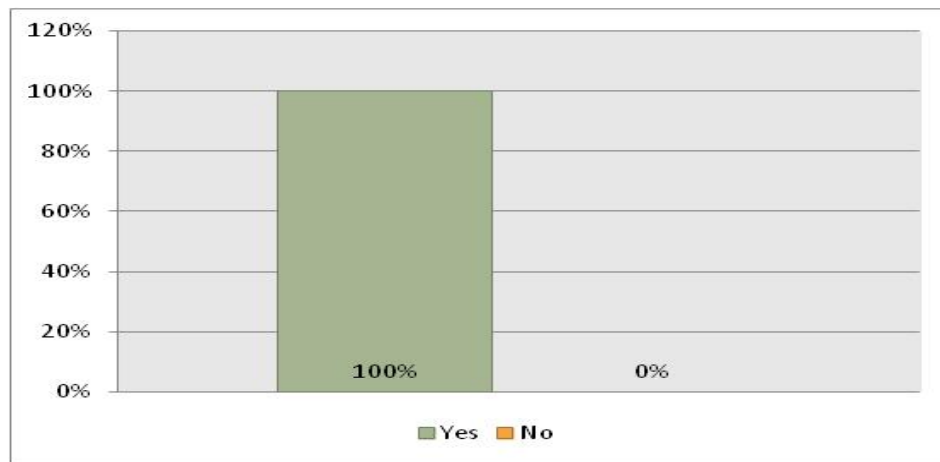
Source: Teachers' questionnaire
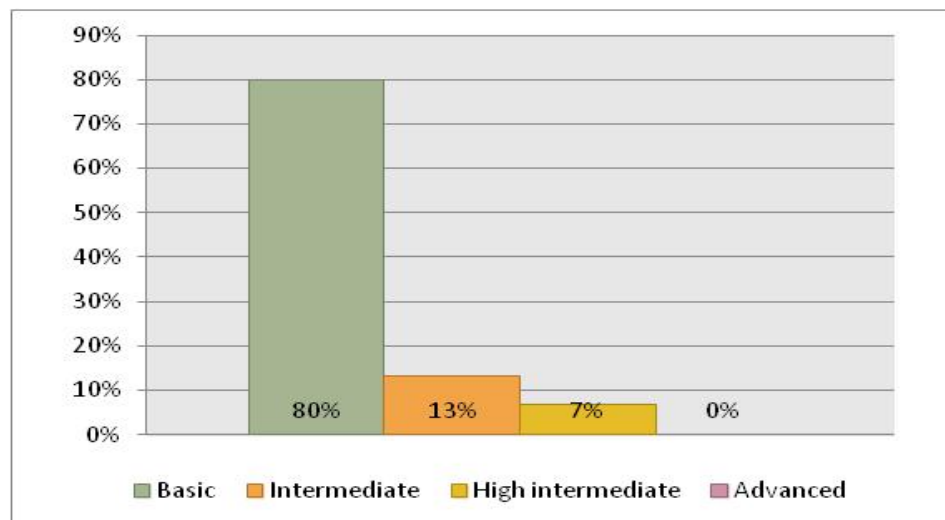Authors: Carlos Galarza Peñaherrera and Pablo Lemos Trujillo

As graph 10 shows, 100% of teachers indicated that they consider students' level to teach English successfully. In addition, students indicated in the questionnaires that learning activities are easy to develop. It was observed that institutions assigned to all teachers a textbook graded for each level, and they adapted the contents to facilitate students' comprehension of language structures and vocabulary. For instance, teachers

had students working in mechanical language drills to practice the use of grammar structures such as present progressive, simple past, future with going to and will and past progressive. Also, students completed sentences with the correct tense of verbs or vocabulary. Other activities consisted on rewriting pieces of short tenses in past tense or plural form.

In conclusion, there was a tendency to teach simple and specific language structures related to students' language level.

Which is the level of the students?

Graph 11

Source: Teachers' questionnaire
Authors: Carlos Galarza Peñaherrera and Pablo Lemos Trujillo

As graph 11 shows, 80% of teachers consider that students have basic level; 13% indicated that the level of their students was intermediate, and 7% indicated that students had high intermediate level. It is important to mention that students' level was identified using the information gathered in observation formats and observing the teaching activities assigned to students in classes. Therefore, it was found that all learners had

basic level because teaching activities consisted on writing sentences on the board about simple past such as "I was born on September 15th" or asking and answering questions about personal information such as "How old are you?"; "Where do you live". In addition, teachers revised concepts about the use of tenses such as present progressive, simple past, future with going to and will and past progressive. All the activities described previously were not a challenge for the students who answered the questionnaires because they indicated that activities were easy to do.

Factors concerning classroom

How many students are there in the observed classes?

Graph 12
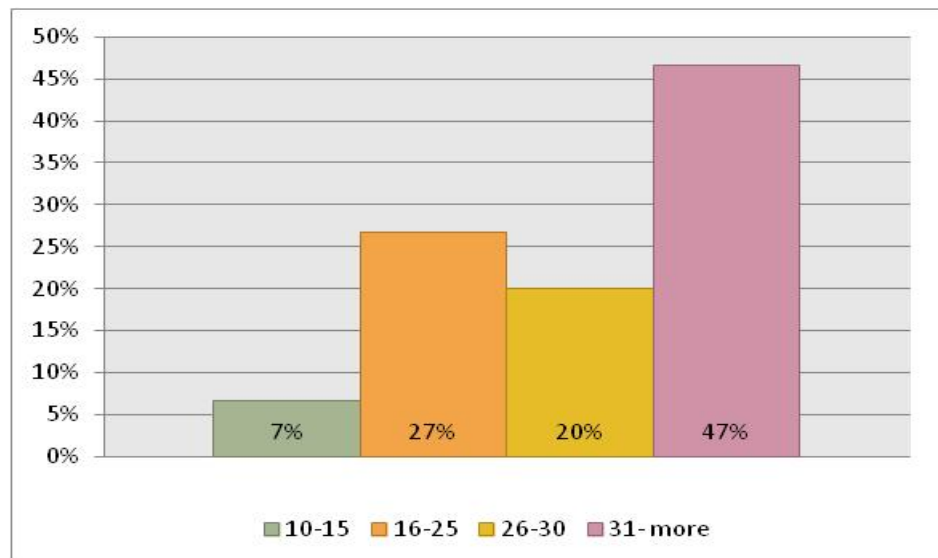
Source: Teachers' questionnaire
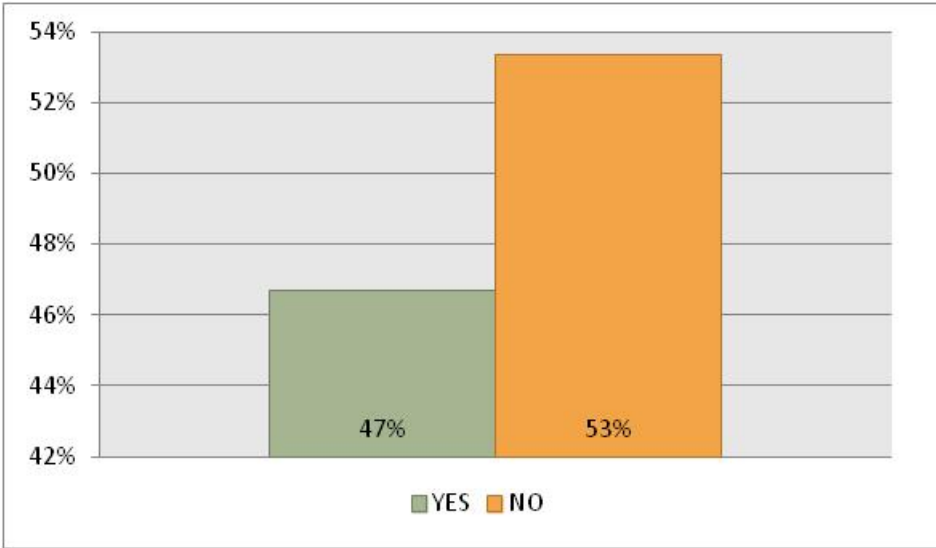Authors: Carlos Galarza Peñaherrera and Pablo Lemos Trujillo

The results shown in graph 12 indicated that 47% of teachers had more than 31 students in their classes; 27% of teachers teach to groups of 16-25 students; 20% of teachers teach in classes of 26-30 learners; and, 7% of teachers had a group of 10-15 students. These results coincide with information gathered through observations because

there were 45 to 50 students in almost the half of high schools while others had 35

students in the observed classrooms. Therefore, almost all teachers teach in large

classes. For Harmer (2004) class size influence the type of activities that teachers plan

for a lesson. Teachers use pair work or group work to promote interaction between

students in l arge classes while in small classes teachers are able to individualize

teaching according to students' needs. Nevertheless, it was observed that teachers in

large classes used only whole-group activities due to lack of space for arranging seats;

only teachers in small classes used group work activities. Consequently, the theory does

not coincide with the information gathered during observations, because it was easier for

teachers to promote interaction in small classes than in large ones.

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

Graph 13

Source: Teachers' questionnaire

Authors: Carlos Galarza Peñaherrera and Pablo Lemos Trujillo

Teachers' comfort in relation to the number of students they work with is shown

in graph 13. 47% of teachers stated that they feel comfortable working with the number

of students assigned in class. This group of teachers worked with less than 26 students as the results in graph 12 indicate. In addition, the students answered that class size helps them to learn better. In fact, it was observed that interaction between teachers and students flew effortlessly and there were not behavior problems as occurred in classes with more than 31 students. Consequently, the results support what Blatchford (2003) explains about small classes, they provide more opportunities for better learning

On the other hand, 53% of teachers considered that class size is not appropriate for teaching English; these teachers worked in classes that had 31 and more learners. In these classes, students' answers gave evidence that class size affects their learning achievement. In fact, observations demonstrated that teachers in large classes focused their teaching in students seated in the first rows and rarely involved those learners in the last seats. This situation originated a raise in bad students' behavior because not all of them were involved in the learning process and their talking disturbed and interrupted classes; teachers asked them for making silence repeatedly but students did not obey. Therefore, teachers failed in managing large classes and this affected the teaching-learning process because teachers looked stressed and students' level of attention diminished.

Large or small classes are the center of debate according to Blatchford (2003) because small classes demand high costs. On the contrary, Squire (1977) explains that authorities in schools claim that class size does not have any type of influence in students' achievement. This information coincides with the situation in the observed high schools because the majority of classrooms had over 31 students, therefore, authorities do not concern about the number of students they should place in each class.

This is a problem that has affected Ecuadorian public high schools for many years; there is not a balance between the high number of students who demands educational needs and the low number of institutions available. As a result, teachers usually complain about the excessive number of pupils they have to deal with.

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

Graph 14
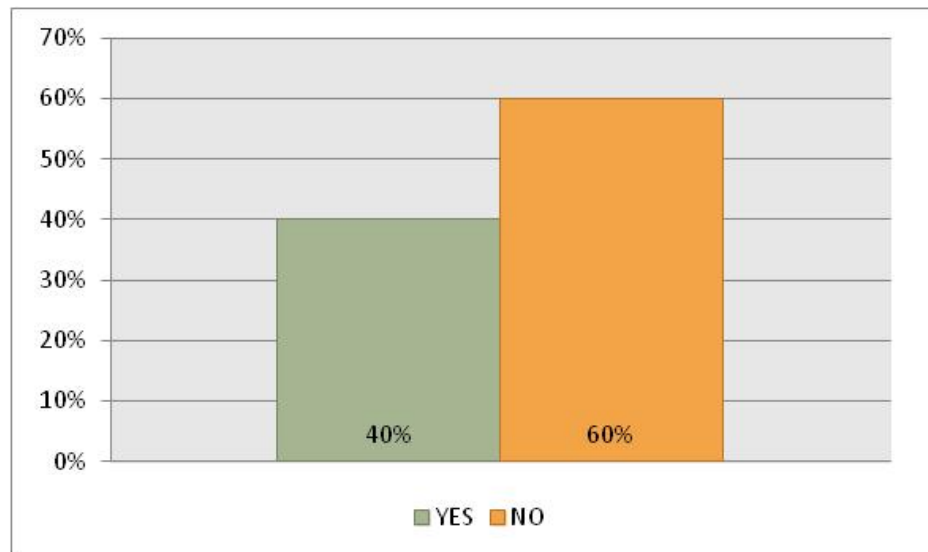
Source: Teachers' questionnaire
Authors: Carlos Galarza Peñaherrera and Pablo Lemos Trujillo

Graph 14 shows that 60% of teachers do not have enough space to work with the group of students they have been assigned. These results coincide with observations because half of the classrooms looked overcrowded due to the number of students. In large classes, it was supposed that the amount of students should not exceed 30 but there were 35, 40, and 50 students in some classes; as graph 12 shows, 47% of teachers had more than 31 learners. Teachers and students were neither able to circulate free in those

classrooms nor work or interact among them. About this situation, students commented in the questionnaire that classroom space was not adequate for their learning process. Dudek (2005) considers important to assign enough space to teachers and students' materials, to circulate adequately, and to work effectively. But it was not possible for teachers to provide students those requirements mentioned by the author. In consequence, teachers did not have enough space to work with students in classrooms with more than 31 students.

On the contrary, graph 14 shows also that 40% of teachers indicated that they have enough space to work in the classrooms. This group of teachers worked with less than 26 students as graph 12 indicates and they feel comfortable with this number of students as it can be observed in graph 13. In fact, information gathered through observation showed that teachers had enough space to work with students and it agrees with the answers given by learners in the questionnaires.

There are other important factors about classroom space that are described by Harmer (2001). He explains that classrooms decorated with subdued colors benefit adolescents because they perform well in those environments. Besides, environmental conditions such as temperature, heating, air quality, noise, and colors may hamper students' learning success because they affect learners' cognitive skills. Although it was not possible to know students' opinion about the physical appearance of the classroom, it was observed that more than half of the classrooms looked old, deteriorated, and walls have lost their color. In those conditions, it is probably that the environment affected students' learning process too.

Considering the reasons given above and the fact that Muijs & Reynolds (2005) mention that enough space in the classroom helps both teachers and students in working and moving adequately; classroom space does not favor the English language teaching-learning process in classes with more than 31 students in the observed high schools.

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

Graph 15
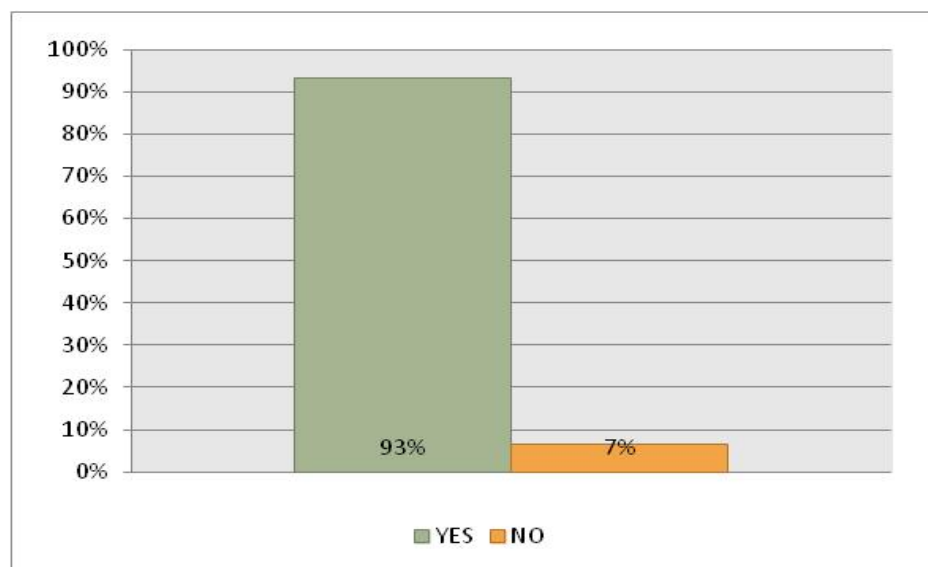
Source: Teachers' questionnaire
Authors: Carlos Galarza Peñaherrera and Pablo Lemos Trujillo

What is interesting about the results of graph 15 is that 93% of teachers indicated that they arrange students' seats in relation to the activities planned for their classes and 7% of them disagreed. Furthermore, almost all students indicated that they like the way their teachers accommodate seats to work in the learning activities. About seating arrangement, Richards & Rodgers (2001) mention that class progress better when classroom arrangement is attractive for students. In addition Jonson (2002) and Muijs & Reynolds (2005) agree that some seat configurations such as hollow circles or grouping

students together are very helpful for promoting active participations between learners. However, the answers given by teachers and students contradict the observations done in the classes because a few teachers arrange seats in relation to the activities for promoting active learning or making classroom more attractive for students.

It was observed that only two teachers asked students to move their seats to work in pairs and the other teachers always use row format to work with the whole-class or individually. That situation was influenced mainly by lack of classroom space, as teachers' answers indicate in graph 14. In addition, the results in graphs 12 and 13 show that classes were mainly large with more than 31 students; for that reason, it was difficult for teachers to change the position of desks.

There were two classes in which students worked in pairs and they described to each other pictures to practice the use of present progressive. In those classes, students only turned to each other and they did not accommodate seats because there was not enough space to do it. In other classes, some learning activities required that students discuss in groups about the topic of lessons but teachers adapted tasks for having students working individually.

To sum up, row format was the mostly used seating arrangement in the observed classes. Certainly, lack of classroom space impeded teachers to vary the seating arrangement in their classes; they could have promoted active participation through pair work between rows or encouraging students to work with their partners behind them in the same row. In this sense, teachers were not proactive and they did not use their creativity to deal with the problem of classroom space.

How many students do teachers think is the appropriate number to teach English?
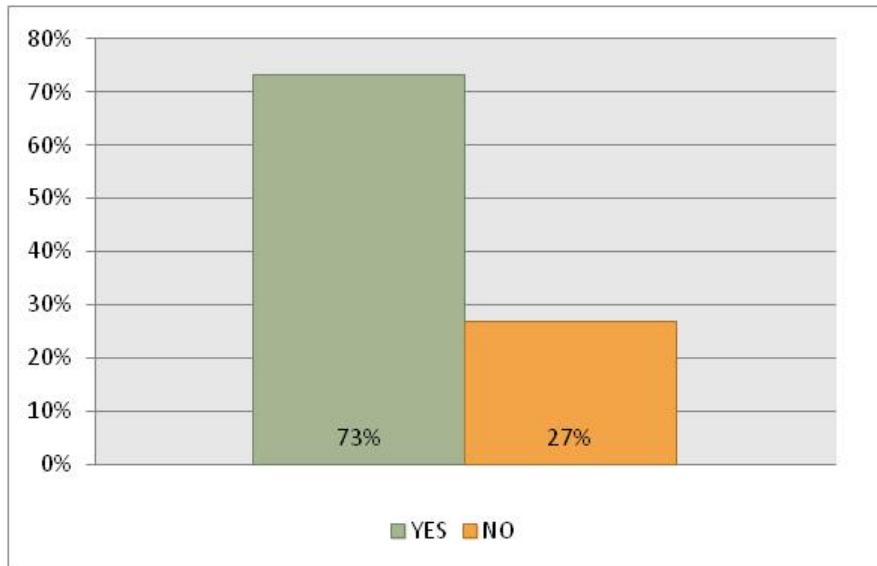
Graph 16
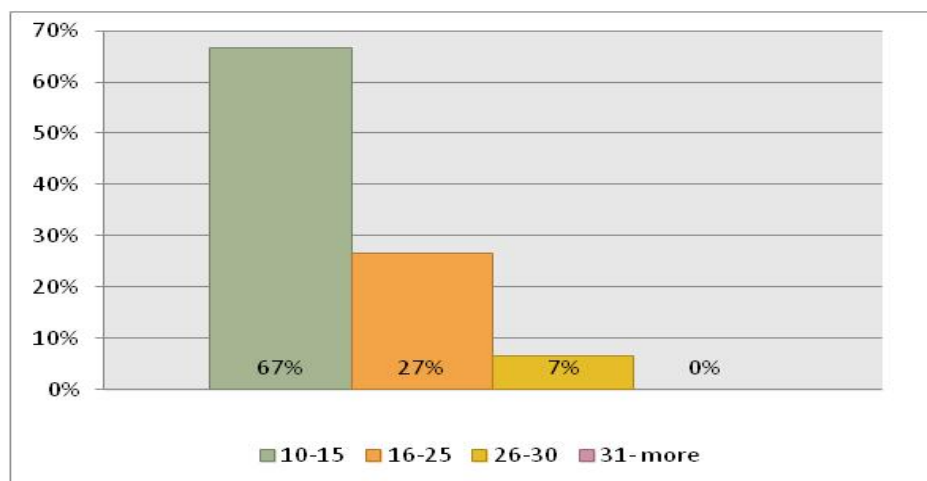
Graph 16 shows that 67% of teachers think that 10-15 students is the appropriate number of students to teach; 27% of teachers prefer to teach groups of 16-25 learners; and 7% prefer to work with 26-30 students; and, no teacher chose groups of 31 of more learners. In addition, students' questionnaires applied in overcrowded classrooms show a division in learners' opinions about the influence of class size in their learning process. More than the half of pupils expressed that the number of students does not help them to learn better while the others indicated the opposite. These results reinforce what teachers answered about large classes since they need to devote more attention to control students' behavior. In fact, it was observed that two teachers who worked with less than 25 students were able to organize students in groups to discuss about the topic of the lesson; they also monitored and provided feedback to students. Therefore, teachers' preferences for small classes agree with descriptions given by Blatchford (2003) about small classes, they provide more opportunities for better learning.

Do teachers use teaching resources (TV, Tape/Cd recorder, Computer(s), Projector(s),

Smart board, and supplementary materials)?

Graph 17

Source: Teachers' questionnaire

Authors: Carlos Galarza Peñaherrera and Pablo Lemos Trujillo

The results in graph 17 show that 73% of the teachers indicated that they use

teaching resources and 27% answered that they do not use teaching aids in their classes.

In the observed classes, teacher used mostly tape/CD recorder, whiteboard, flashcards,

pictures, and handouts. The whiteboard was used by teachers in all the observed classes

to explain contents and to write examples of the use of grammar structures; students also

used it to practice use of verbs and grammar forms. In addition, tape/CD recorders were

used by teachers in 6 different classes to help students with pronunciation skills. And,

the others supplementary materials were used only once in some classes. Even though

teachers said that they used teaching resources, students' questionnaires revealed that it

does not occur. It seems that inappropriate use of materials made the students to respond in such way.

Regarding the teachers that answered that they did not use teaching resources, they explained that the only aids available are the whiteboard, textbooks, and the seats; institutions are not equipped with the necessary resources such as tape/CD recorder, flashcards, or posters. Unfortunately, this is a common feature between public high schools in Ecuador. Though, it should not be an impediment for not using teaching resources because teachers could elaborate them for making classes more interesting. *Do teachers consider appropriate the resources they have in class?*

Graph 18
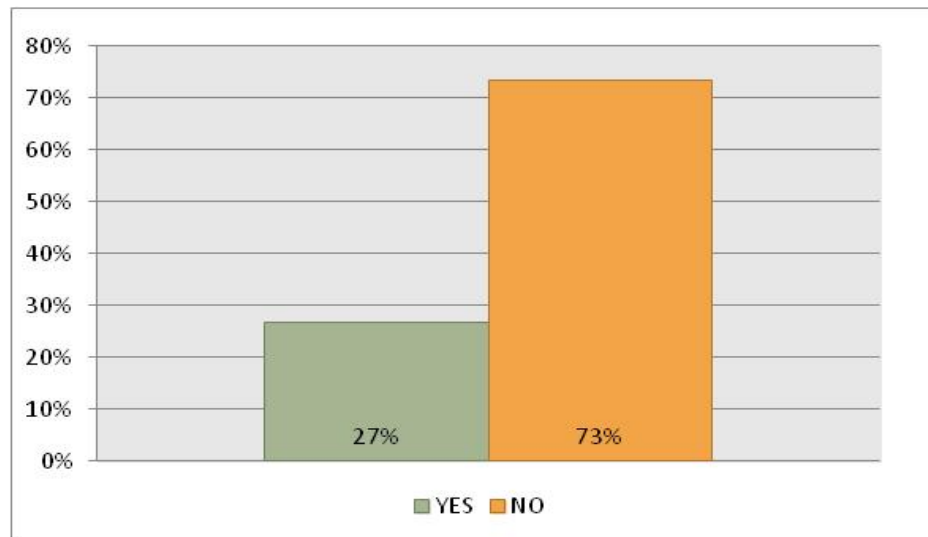
Source: Teachers' questionnaire
Authors: Carlos Galarza Peñaherrera and Pablo Lemos Trujillo

Graph 18 shows that 73% of the teachers do not consider appropriate the resources they have in class and 27% disagree. Interestingly, the same group of teachers who indicated that they use teaching materials, and in fact they did, commented that they do not consider appropriate the resources they have in class. According to them, the

number of teaching aids they currently have are not enough; for instance, some teachers argued that they need a photocopier to copy worksheets for the students. Moreover, it was observed that teachers elaborated the handouts used in class.

Regarding computers and other technical resources,teachers expressed that they would like that high schools have computers; it was observed that only one institution had a lab but teachers do not use it to teach English. Therefore, teachers consider inappropriate the resources they have in class because there are not enough supplementary materials for teaching classes.

About the teachers who consider appropriate the resources they have in class, two of them did not give clear explanations because they only wrote names of supplementary materials. The others three stated that they used technology and did not provide more information.

Factors Concerning Educational Institution

Does the institution review teachers' lesson plans?

Graph 19
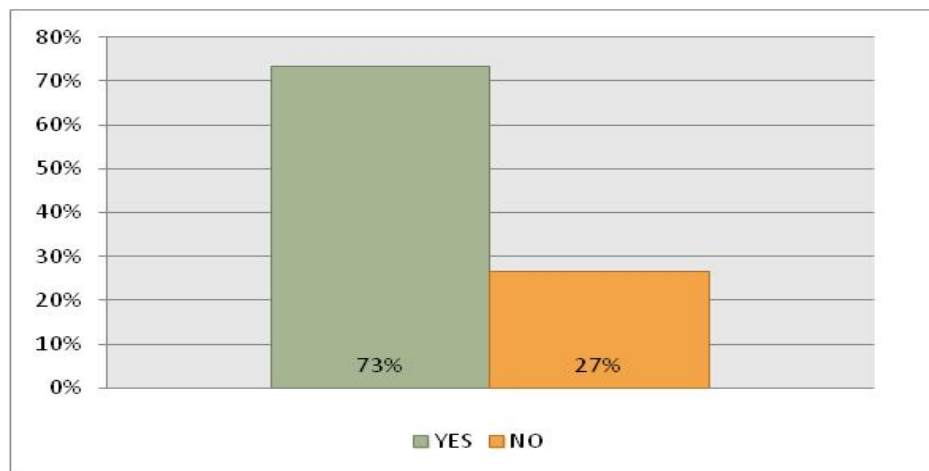
Source: Teachers' questionnaire
Authors: Carlos Galarza Peñaherrera and Pablo Lemos Trujillo

In graph 19, 73% of the teachers answered that institutions do review lesson plans and 27% of teachers indicated that their plans are not revised. Teachers whose plans are revised commented that it happens once a month in some institutions and once a week in others. Besides, those teachers applied many of the elements of lessons plans such as timing, lesson topic, warm-up activities, objectives, and introduction to new topics. As a result, the teaching-learning process was better organized than in other classes in which teachers did not have their plans revised. It was observed that, a few high schools had English supervisor and the revision of the plans is carried out by teachers with experience in education and teaching but not in English.

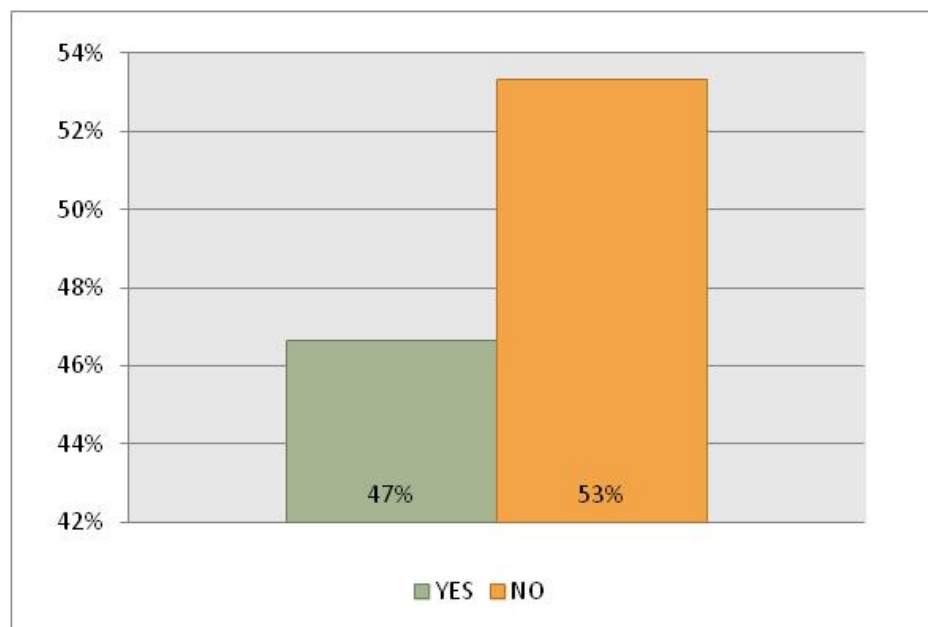*Does the institution monitor teachers' teaching?*

Graph 20

Source: Teachers' questionnaire
Authors: Carlos Galarza Peñaherrera and Pablo Lemos Trujillo

The graph above shows that 53% of teachers answered that institutions monitor their teaching and 47% of teachers answered that their teaching is not monitored.

Regarding teaching monitoring or classroom observation, Milanowski, Prince, &

Koppich (2007) describe some advantages such as: it is useful to determine how

individuals achieve their outcomes; it provides teachers the necessary support when

circumstances are advert such as low scores in student tests; and, it provides formative

feedback to help teachers understanding how to get better results in their teaching

process. Taking into account what the authors mention, most of the observed teachers

are not benefited by the positive aspects of teaching monitoring. Although most of them

applied the elements of lesson plans in their classes, teachers do not receive any kind of

feedback about the quality of their teaching.

Conclusions

- The results of this research show that class size, classroom space, seating arrangement, lesson design, and managing learning are main factors that affect the English language teaching-learning process in the observed public high schools.

- The teaching-learning process was affected by class size. The number of students was not appropriate for the space in the classroom and it impeded teachers to monitor students' work appropriately due to lack of space.

- Classroom space was not appropriate for the number of students. In consequence, students and teachers did not have enough space to work and they had difficulties to circulate and perform dynamic activities. As a result, teachers did not arrange seats in relation to learning activities.

- Teachers do not consider students' needs to teach their classes. Overuse of lecture method and the board caused that students demonstrate low level of engagement in the lessons because contents were not taught meaningfully in relation to learning styles.

- The majority of teachers do not have their plans reviewed by an authority. This affects the teaching-learning process because they do not receive appropriate feedback about the pertinence and design of their plans.

- An important group of teachers has B2 and C1 levels within the CEFR. As a result, teachers had good language skills but most of the time they did not use the target language in class due to students' basic English level.

Recommendations

- Teachers should acquire more training in using English language in class for motivating students to learn and use language effectively. Therefore, institutions should organize workshops to provide teachers strategies about the last trends in teaching methods and techniques in teaching English as a foreign language.

- It is advisable that public high schools authorities implement evaluation mechanisms that link the results of teaching monitoring to the effectiveness of lesson plans in order to improve students' language achievement.

- It is recommended that teachers develop more strategies to manage large classes to control students' bad behavior and facilitate learning. Therefore, authorities must provide teachers training in dealing with large classes.

- It is important that Ecuadorian government and educational authorities provides public high schools with appropriate and varied teaching resources to improve students' English learning. In addition, teachers should receive training about the effective use of instructional materials.

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ANNEXES

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION:	
DATE:	
YEAR:	

1. Which level of education do you have?

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

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

Students' Needs *(age, personality, attitude, aptitude, motivation, and learning styles)*	
YES ( )	NO ( )

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

Students' Level *(Basic, Intermediate, High Intermediate , and Advanced)*	
YES ( )	NO ( )

4. Which is the level of your students?

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

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

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

Others	( )
_____	

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

YES ( )	NO ( )	
Why?		
_____		

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

YES ( )	NO ( )	
Why?		
_____		

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

YES ( )	NO ( )	
Why?		
_____		

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

YES ( )	NO ( )

10. Do you plan your lessons?

YES ( )	NO ( )

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

YES ( )	NO ( )

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

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

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

YES ( )	NO ( )

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

YES ( )	NO ( )

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

YES ( )	NO ( )

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

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

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

YES ( )	NO ( )
Which ones?	
_____	

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

YES ( )	NO ( )
Why?	
_____	

19. Does the institution review your lesson plans?

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

20. Does the institution monitor your teaching?

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

UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA PARTICULAR DE LOJA
La Universidad Católica de Loja
MODALIDA ABIERTA Y A DISTANCIA
CARRERA DE INGLES
OBSERVATION SHEET

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION:	
DATE:	
YEAR(desde 8vo básicaa 3ro bachillerato):	

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

Students' Needs(age, personality, attitude, aptitude, motivation, and learning styles)*	
YES ( )	NO ( )

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

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

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

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

3. Which of the following methods are used?

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

Total Physical Response	( )
Whole Language Approach	( )
Grammar Translation Method	( )
Others	( )

4. Which of the following activities are used?

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

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

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

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

Discipline	( )
Feedback	( )
Activities management	( )

Time management	( )

7. How many students are there in the classroom?

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

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

YES	( )	NO	( )

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

YES	( )	NO	( )
NOTES:			
_____			

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

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

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

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

TEACHER'S INTERVIEW

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

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

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

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION:	
DATE:	
YEAR:	

1. ¿Te gusta aprender Inglés?

YES ( )	NO ( )

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

YES ( )	NO ( )

3. Consideras que las actividades realizadas en clase son:

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

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

YES ( )	NO ( )

¿Por qué?

_____
_____
_____

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

YES ( )	NO ( )

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

YES ( )	NO ( )

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

YES	( )	NO	( )

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

YES	( )	NO	( )

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

YES	( )	NO	( )

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

YES	( )	NO	( )

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

YES	( )	NO	( )

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

YES	( )	NO	( )

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

YES	( )	NO	( )

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

YES	( )	NO	( )

GRACIAS!!!!!