UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA PARTICULAR DE LOJA
La Universidad Católica de Loja

TITULACIÓN DE LICENCIADO EN CIENCIAS DE LA
EDUCACIÓN MENCION INGLES

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

TRABAJO DE FIN DE TITULACIÓN.

AUTOR: Peñarreta Flores, Vanessa Jacqueline

DIRECTORA: Nesterenko, Nina, Mgs

CENTRO UNIVERSITARIO SANTO DOMINGO

2013

.

CERTIFICACIÓN

Magister.

Nina Nesterenko

DIRECTORA DEL TRABAJO DE FIN DE TITULACIÓN

C E R T I F I C A:

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

Loja, septiembre de 2013

f) . . . .

DECLARACIÓN DE AUTORÍA Y CESIÓN DE DERECHOS

"Yo, Peñarreta Flores Vanessa Jacqueline declaro ser autor(a) del presente trabajo y eximo expresamente a la Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja y a sus representantes legales de posibles reclamos o acciones legales.

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

f. ....

Peñarreta Flores Vanessa Jacqueline

Cédula: 171756408-0

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my parents, Jacqueline Flores and Hipólito Peñarreta, my siblings Hipólito, and Jenniffer Peñarreta who have given me all their love and support and helped me to accomplish this important goal.

I also want to dedicate this thesis to my husband Juan Carlos Cabezas, who encouraged me to obtain this degree.

I thank God for giving me life, intelligence, and energy to live every day.

Vanessa Jacqueline Peñarreta Flores

ACKNOWLEDGEMET

I am deeply grateful to my mother Jacqueline Flores, who gave me her support and helped me in this relevant stage of my life to continue working hard in order to achieve my goal.

Vanessa Jacqueline Peñarreta Flores

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

This research analyzed the factors that affect the English language teaching-learning process in Ecuadorian public high schools. The study was done in five public high schools in Santo Domingo, Ecuador in 2012. The sample consisted of fifteen teachers and their students. This sample was drawn from 8th basic education to 1st year of senior high school.

During the field research, fifteen classes were observed to identify factors concerning teachers, students, classrooms, and educational institutions. Moreover, fifteen students (one after each observed class) were surveyed and the same number of EFL teachers were interviewed and surveyed.

All the collected data was analyzed quantitatively by taking into account the answers of the teachers to the applied interview and survey, the responses of the students in the questionnaire, and the information obtained during the observed EFL lessons.

The most relevant conclusion is that the English language proficiency of the teachers is very poor; as a result of this, they are not able to teach their classes in an effective way.

KEYWORDS: class size, classroom space, seating arrangements

RESUMEN

Esta investigación analizó los factores que afectan el proceso de enseñanza y de aprendizaje del Inglés en los colegios públicos del Ecuador. El estudio fue realizado en cinco colegios públicos de Santo Domingo, Ecuador en el 2012. Quince profesores y sus estudiantes participaron en la investigación. Todos ellos eran de octavo año de educación básica a primer año de bachillerato.

Durante la investigación de campo, se observaron quince clases para identificar los factores relacionados a docentes, alumnos, aulas e instituciones educativas. Por otra parte, quince alumnos (uno después de cada clase observada) fueron encuestados. Además, el mismo número de profesores de Inglés fueron entrevistados y encuestados.

Todos los datos recogidos fueron analizados cuantitativamente, teniendo en cuenta las respuestas dadas por los profesores en la entrevista y encuesta. Las respuestas mencionadas por los estudiantes en el cuestionario y la información recogida durante las observaciones de clases de inglés como lengua extranjera también se consideraron en análisis de los resultados.

La conclusión más relevante es que el dominio del idioma Inglés de los profesores es muy pobre; como resultado de ello, no son capaces de enseñar sus clases eficientemente.

PALABRAS CLAVE: tamaño de la clase, el espacio de aula, organización de los pupitres.

INTRODUCTION

Teaching English in Ecuador has not been as successful as expected because students who graduate from public high schools do not have an appropriate knowledge of the foreign language. This is in spite of the fact that students study English for 5 hours per week during their 6 years of high school. The knowledge deficit of this subject in Ecuadorian students does not enable them to have the opportunity to access up-to-date English information. Moreover, they cannot apply for scholarships offered by English speaking countries. Therefore, it is essential to investigate factors that cause this problem so that solutions can be found to improve the education of English as a foreign language in this country.

This current investigation will determine the classroom conditions in which English lessons take place, identify the characteristics of in-service English teachers, and determine teachers' instructional competence. All of these are the specific objectives of the research.

At this point, it is necessary to mention that previous research on factors affecting English language teaching-learning process has been conducted. Narayanan, Rajasekaran, and Iyyappan (2008) conducted a study to determine if motivational, attitudinal, language anxiety and gender factor affect the learning of English at the tertiary level. The researchers found that these factors have a great impact on students' English learning.

Furthermore, Aduwa and Iyamu (2006) conducted a study to explore factors that affect the poor quality of teaching English as a second language. The researchers found that public secondary schools in Nigeria are not in the conditions of teaching and learning English as a second language since the schools are overcrowded, the

furniture is not comfortable for proper sitting, and classrooms do not have proper lighting and ventilation.

Furthermore, Riddling (1994) conducted a study to find out if seating arrangements affect the verbal interaction of teachers and students' speak behavior. The researcher found that seating arrangement affect positively the student's learning, their participation, their thinking, and their interaction with the teachers.

The current investigation will benefit to the Ecuadorian Ministry of Education as it will show how and which factors affect the English language teaching-learning process so that this institution takes action to improve the quality of education in Ecuadorian public high schools.

The present research will also benefit to teachers, educational institutions, and authorities to consider students' needs, teachers' instruction, institutional teaching resources, and policies that help to improve the level of English of the students. In addition, this investigation will provide future EFL researchers with useful information that they can use as a bibliographical source of consulting the factors that affect the education of the English language teaching and learning.

METHOD

Setting and participants

The present investigation was conducted in five public high schools in Santo Domingo, Ecuador in 2012. The sample consisted of fifteen teachers and their students. This sample was drawn from 8th basic education to 1st year of senior high school. Most of the teachers (66%) were women who are between the ages of 26 to 50 years old. On the other hand, most of the students (53%) were male who were between the ages of 12 to 15 years old. Almost all the students who participated in the study belong to a low and medium economic level.

Procedures

To start the investigation, it was necessary to review and analyze bibliographical sources related to factors that affect the English teaching-learning process and other important themes which included teaching approaches and methods, teaching techniques, managing learning, lesson design, class size, classroom space, seating arrangements, classroom and teaching resources, classroom observation, students' motivation, learning styles, and students' intelligences or aptitude to learn English. Furthermore, five previous studies done on factors that affect the English language teaching-learning process were included in the revision of bibliographical sources in order to support the current investigation. All the bibliographical information was obtained by consulting books and some trusty sources taken from the Internet.

After reviewing the theoretical information mentioned above, the field research started by collecting data through observing fifteen classes, interviewing fifteen teachers, and surveying fifteen students at the end of each observed class. The

quantitative method was used for analyzing the obtained data coming from the teachers' questionnaire, the students' survey, and the observations.

Moreover, to interpret, analyze, and compare the gathered information, twenty questions were written, and at the bottom of each question twenty graphs were drawn. The twenty questions and graphs were analyzed in a quantitative way by taking into consideration the answers of the teachers to the applied interview and survey, what the students mentioned in the survey, and the information obtained by observing EFL lessons.

DISCUSSION

Literature Review

Teaching English in Ecuador is necessary because this language opens opportunities for students in different areas such as business, trade, communication, etc. That is why the Ecuadorian Ministry of Education (2008) considers learning English to be important in this globalized world. However, the Secretaria Nacional de Educación Superior, Tecnología e Innovación (SENESCYT, 2012) in evaluation applied to Ecuadorian students of public high schools found that their knowledge of English is poor. As a result, Ecuadorian students have limited chances of accessing international scholarships in English speaking universities.

Besides, the low quality of teaching English language in Ecuador was reflected in results obtained through a teachers' evaluation done in 2011. For analyzing the results, the SENESCYT (2012) used The Common European Framework Reference of Languages (CEFR), and it found that the level of knowledge of English teachers was not good. The SENESCYT revealed that 60% of evaluated teachers were basic users of English; for this reason they were placed in A1 and A2 levels of language proficiency, which is considered a beginner level.

Given the above information, it is worth saying that according to international standards, the minimum level of English knowledge should be B2, upper-intermediate level of language proficiency (SENESCYT, 2012). It means that English teachers should be independent users. Therefore, the SENESCYT suggests that EFL teachers of Ecuadorian public high schools should improve their knowledge through effective training. The SENESCYT also recommends that the government find strategies that can support teachers so that they can improve the quality of education.

9

Teaching Approaches and Teaching Methods

Teaching methods and approaches play an important role in the learning-teaching process; therefore, it is necessary to know their characteristics. A known method is Total Physical Response (TPR) which is applied to beginner levels. Richards and Rodgers (2001) say that TPR emphasizes teaching through listening activities together with physical actions. Moreover, House et al (2011, p. 34) add that "Listening seems to produce a readiness for speaking, but the process cannot be rushed". Furthermore, Larsen-Freeman (2000) and House et al (2011) agree that the application of TPR reduces the students' stress in class. Additionally, Larsen-Freeman (2000) points out that TPR is based on following instructions which are given by teachers without translation. In others words, learners show their understanding by performing an action.

A different method to the previous one is the Grammar Translation method. Larsen-Freeman (2000) mentions that Grammar Translation method increases students' understanding of reading foreign texts. That is, students learn to translate from and into a foreign language. Furthermore, Larsen-Freeman (2000) and House et al (2011) agree that Grammar Translation method is taught in a deductive way where students have to memorize the grammar rules. Larsen-Freeman also says that the native language equivalent is used for learning new vocabulary; hence, the classes are frequently taught in the students' mother language. Additionally, House et al. (2011) point out that in Grammar Translation method reading and writing skills are more important than listening and speaking skills.

A different method of the two ones mentioned above is the Whole Language approach. Richards and Rodgers (2001) comment that this method focuses on real

communication through the use of authentic materials. These authors say that teachers have to negotiate their classroom planning with learners because they are facilitators of knowledge and play an active role in the language classroom. Richards and Rodgers also point out that Whole Language approach creates a supporting environment in which students collaborate with their classmates.

Another method used in the language classroom is Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). This approach used for emphasizing teaching through interaction between learners; that is, classroom activities consist in interchanging oral information and grammar rules are often not taught (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Furthermore, Larsen-Freeman (2000, p. 129) states that "the most obvious characteristic of CLT is that almost everything is done with a communicative intent. Students use the language a great deal through communicative activities such as games, role plays, and problem-solving tasks". Another key point is mentioned by House et al. (2011) who say that the objective of this CLT is strengthened by the students' communicative competences using real situation, in classroom tasks.

Other method used in the language classroom is an approach called Cooperative Language Learning (CLL). It is called in this way because it creates an environment of solidarity among teachers and students. In this regard, Richards and Rodgers (2001, p. 195) note that "CLL is an approach design to foster cooperation rather than competition". It means that classroom activities are carried out in group work.

To keep on providing information about teaching and approaches used in the language classroom, it is necessary to address to Content-Based Instruction (CBI). Larsen-Freeman (2000) remarks that CBI integrates the content of others subjects to

11

teach a language. Moreover, Richards and Rodgers (2001) comment that teachers have the responsibility to select and adapt the cross-curricular content to teach their classes. Above all, Richards and Rodgers say that CBI intends that learners are active interpreters of the information they are taught.

Furthermore, it is essential to address to Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT). Richards and Rodgers (2001) say that TBLT is based on teaching a language using a plan of tasks according to learners' needs and interests; therefore, teachers have to select, adapt and create tasks in a learning sequence. TBLT also gives the students an opportunity to interact with their peers while they are completing their tasks (Larsen-Freeman, 2000).

Moreover, a method which is used in the language classroom is the Natural Approach. House et al. (2011) says that in this approach the target language is used to provide learners with meaningful input. In addition, Richards and Rodgers (2001, p. 180) state that the Natural approach emphasizes the significance of learning vocabulary by "suggesting the view that a language is essentially its lexicon and only inconsequently the grammar that determines how the lexicon is exploited to produce messages".

In summary, all the methods and approaches mentioned throughout offer a range of options for teachers to achieve good results in class. That is why the application of teaching methods and approaches is undoubtedly necessary for successful teaching and learning.

Teaching Techniques

To have a better comprehension of this topic, it is essential and important to provide a definition about teaching techniques. Mukalel (1998, p.123), defines these

techniques as "every activity a teacher undertakes soon after he enters the classroom until he leaves, to put across his teaching point". Furthermore, Dhand (2008) adds that teaching techniques have two different focuses since they can be aimed at student-centered activities, for example student-made reports, and can also be teacher-centered, for example a lecture. Some teaching techniques used in the language classroom are mentioned below.

Dhand (2008) describes teaching techniques such as brainstorming, debating, and group discussion. Brainstorming is a technique that produces ideas about a particular theme or solution about a problem. Debating is a technique that allows students to present arguments to defend their point of view related to a proposed topic. Group discussion is a technique which gives the learners the opportunity to exchange their thoughts in an organized way. These three techniques help students to increase their confidence while they are speaking.

There are other teaching techniques that must be considered by language teachers. These techniques are role play, interviewing, lecture, and translation. Regarding role play, Byrne (1987) says that this technique enable students to act out and pretend to be in certain situations. In relation to interviewing, Dhand (2008) states that that this teaching technique allows students to ask questions among them in order to find out factual information. With regard to lecture, Dhand (2008) mentions that in the lecture technique the teacher talks about a teaching topic while students listen and take notes. Regarding translation technique, Lewis and Hill (1992) say that this technique enables teachers to give explanations through translation; this technique permits to give an equivalent meaning of English words and phrases in the students' mother tongue.

Additionally, other teaching techniques that can be used for teaching English are choral pronunciation, definition question, and reformulation. Lewis and Hill (1992) say that choral pronunciation involves the whole class in repeating the utterance being taught. Regarding definition question, Lewis and Hill comment that this technique helps teachers provide a definition of new vocabulary and ask the students to use it. In relation to reformulation technique, Lewis and Hill point out that this teaching technique enables teachers to generate natural answers to their questions in order to avoiding artificial answers produced by students.

Managing Learning

Teachers have the responsibility to guide students' learning; therefore, they have to know how to give effective instructions when teaching. According to Lindsay (2000), instructions need to be clear and convey the meaning to the whole class before doing an activity. For this reason, Lindsay says that teachers need to keep a simple language appropriate to the students' level; The teacher also has to inform learners what activity they are going to carry out, how it is organized, and what purpose it has.

Moreover, Gower, Phillips, and Walters (1995, p. 41) add that it is necessary that educators "support instruction with visual clues wherever possible". Furthermore, Gower et al. (1995), Harmer (2007), and Lindsay (2000) mention that giving a demonstration of the activity reinforces the instruction. Hence, Gower et al. (1995, p. 41) say that "showing what to do is more effective than telling what to do".

In addition, Gower et al. (1995) suggest that teacher sees if students have understood the instructions given to them in order to assess how well they perform a task and to evaluate particular language strengths and weakness.

Another important aspect in managing learning is feedback. Gower et al. (1995) and Nunan (1995) agree that a main function of the teachers is to give feedback to their students. Moreover, Gower et al. (1995, p. 163) indicate that "the aim of feedback is to bring about self-awareness and improvement. It means that learners have the opportunity to correct their mistakes. Furthermore, Nunan (1995) says that feedback is classified in a positive and negative way, being the most effective the first since it focuses on giving praise to students so they can feel motivated. Hence, Gower et al. (1995) note that teachers need to focus on positive points of students when they give feedback, especially in oral and written works.

In addition, feedback can be given through "praise and encouragement; corrections; setting regular tests; having discussion about how the group as a whole is doing; giving individual tutoring" (Gower et al 1995, p. 163). Therefore, the process of giving feedback offers teachers the opportunity to become assessor of their students.

Lesson Design

A lesson plan is considered as an essential tool for teachers who need to prepare their daily activities. Gower et al. (1995) describe the lesson plan as a detailed record. For Harmer (2007), the lesson plan is a guide for educators rather than a document to follow automatically. Thus, when teachers work with a lesson plan, they are aware of how to distribute available time for each stage of a lesson.

The aspects that a lesson plan contains are aims, activities, and teaching materials. Spratt, Pulverness, and Williams (2005) agree with Gower et al. (1995) that aims consist of what students are able to do and learn at the end of a lesson. Furthermore, Harmer (2007) considers aims to be outcomes of teaching which have

to be measured. Regarding activities, Gower et al. (1995) say that activities need to be related to the aims that must be achieved in a lesson. With regard to teaching materials, Gower et al. (1995) recommend that teachers note on their lesson plan when they are going to use any kind of material as aids and equipment in their classes. Furthermore, House et al. (2011) suggest making a list of the teaching resources which will be used in a lesson and noting for any materials that students are required to bring for the next lesson.

In addition, a lesson plan contains aspects such as class profile, potential learner problems and possible solutions. Regarding the first point, Gower et al. (1995) say that teachers need to register a description of their classes; recording size, level, age, and the name of the textbook. Moreover, Hamer (2007) adds that a class profile contains details of the behavior of individual students and the whole class. In relation to potential learner problems, Gower et al. (1995) suggest that educators adapt the lesson plan according to the circumstances and predict some possible problems related to terms of language or classroom management to find solutions. Therefore, Harmer (2007, p. 375) says that a good lesson plan "tries to predict potential pitfalls and suggest ways of dealing with them. It also includes alternative activities in case we find it necessary to divert from the lesson sequence we had hoped to follow".

Class Size

Harmer (2007) says that the number of students is variable in language classes because it is related to education system where the teachers are working. Taking into account Harmer' statement, it is relevant to mention that some institutions have very large number of students – up to 40 per class – other have 20

learners (small classes). That is why some learners prefer to attend one to one

classes. Harmer (2007) says that working with one student has its advantages since

educators focus on the student's abilities and assess them more efficiently. Also, this

author mentions that teachers adapt the syllabus and content to the student' needs,

interests, and learning styles. Above all, it is good for students who need individual

attention. However, one-to-one classes have disadvantages; for instance, these

classes could produce tiredness and sleepiness for students and teachers because the

lessons become boring (Harmer, 2007). Therefore, Woodward (2001) recommends

that teachers be enthusiastic to keep a class interesting when teaching in a one to one

lesson.

On the other hand, there are teachers who have up to one hundred students in

a class. These types of classes are called large classes. According to Harmer (2007),

in large classes there are a lot of students to interact with, and humor and drama are

part of class activities; it means that the dynamic is high. Notwithstanding, Nolasco

and Arthur (1995) indicate that large classes have some drawbacks. For example,

dealing with these types of classes is difficult for teachers, maintaining the discipline,

convincing students to use English when they work in pairs or in group, and

monitoring students' classroom activities is also hard for educators. Moreover,

Woodward (2001, p. 218) adds that in large classes teachers cannot "respond to

differing needs".

Classroom Space

Educators "might not be aware of how the classroom space affects the social

structure" (Hadi-Tabassum 2005, p. 122). For this reason, it is crucial to know how

physical space influences the number of students to develop classroom activities

17

successfully. McLeod, Fisher, and Hoover (2003) mention that the lack of classroom space produces problems of student behavior; therefore, it is important to anticipate students' space needs before starting any task. McLeod et al. also comment that a great deal of students in a small classroom alters their attitude and behavior; they tend to be aggressive and anxious, and their attentiveness is reduced. Hence, Satheesh (2012) highlights that appropriate physical space is needed to adapt the students' requirements along with classroom arragement to promote active learning and interaction.

Seating Arrangement

Educators need to be aware how the organization of students' seating affects the development of classroom activities. There are different kinds of seating arrangement that teachers could adjust to classroom activities (Evertson, Emmer, Clements, & Worsham, 1997). One seating arrangement commonly found in classrooms is orderly rows. Harmer (2007) says that orderly rows allow teachers to observe the whole class clearly. There are activities that fit with orderly rows; these activities include explaining a grammar point using the whiteboard and watching a video using an overhead projector. Moreover, Evertson et al. (1997) suggest that when teachers are leading most of activities in classroom, students need to be organized in rows.

Another way to arrange students' desks is circle and horseshoes which reduce barriers among teachers and learners although these seating arrangements are used in small classes. Evertson et al. (1997) point that horseshoes allows easy contact of face to face among learners and teachers. However, when students do tasks in groups, it is necessary to organize them in separate tables (Harmer, 2007). Additionally, Evertson

et al. (1997) suggest that when using any seating arrangement teachers should leave enough space between students to monitor their activities.

Classroom and/or Teaching Resources

Classroom resources assist the English teaching process because they are complements of lessons in a class. Siders (2011) mentions that teaching aids allow teachers to enhance students' language skills and make the teaching- learning process fun. For Haycraft (1978), teaching resources help to keep a harmonic environment in class. This author says that teaching resources allow the students to learn some words through pictures or by pointing objects which make easier the process of explaining something new in a lesson. Siders (2011) suggests that teachers use aids such as charts, flash cards, flip charts, maps, calendars, newspapers, graphs and surveys. In addition, Harmer (2007) recommends the use of an overhead projector to show any kind of text and pictures to the whole class. Another teaching resource recommended by Harmer is the CD player which is useful for listening activities.

Classroom Observation

It is crucial that institutions monitor their teachers. According to Richards (2001), monitoring involves collecting data to investigate how educators are teaching, to identify what kind of problems they have in classes, and to find possible solutions. Furthermore, Randall and Thornton (2011, p. 19) state that institutions need to have inspection or advisory departments which "have two functions, one is to monitor the provision of educational services, and the other is to provide support and advice to the teacher in the classroom". One way to monitor educators is through classroom observation which is made by supervisors or observers who give recommendations on teaching (Richards, 2001). Another kind of observation is peer

observation that permits teachers to be aware of their teaching and learning

experiences with others (Kral, 1994). Moreover, it has some benefits as producing

less tension when a teacher observe and assesses another teacher (Randall &

Thornton, 2011).

Students' Motivation

Students' motivation plays a relevant role in education since learners are

involved actively in the learning-teaching process when they are motivated. A

motivated learner is considered by Ur (1991) as someone who is willing to make an

effort to develop academic activities and achieve a goal. Moreover, Lightbown and

Spada (2006, p. 63) state that "there is ample evidence that positive motivation is

associated with a willingness to keep learning". Lightbown and Spada also mention

that teachers can contribute to increasing the motivation of learners by keeping

classrooms as enjoyable places where a supportive learning environment is created,

and the content of a lesson is targeted at students' age, level, and interest. In fact,

teachers have the responsibility of helping to keep the students' motivation by

choosing adequate activities that promote the students' curiosity and participation

(Harmer, 2007).

To continue with the discussion of motivation, it is necessary to say that there

are two types of motivation that students can possess. The first one is intrinsic

motivation which Ur (1991, p. 274) defines as "the urge to engage in the learning

activity for its own sake". Furthermore, Harmer (2007) describes this kind of

motivation as factors that occur inside the classroom; these factors include the

teacher's methods and activities done in a lesson. The second type of motivation is

extrinsic motivation. Harmer (2007) and Ur (1991) agree that extrinsic motivation

comes from outside the classroom and is influenced by external factors such as attitude of society, family, and peers.

Learning Styles

Students have various preferences in learning a language; these are called learning styles which Keefe (1979, p. 4) considers as "cognitive, affective, and physiological traits that are relatively stable indicators of how learners perceive, interact with, and respond to the learning environment". Moreover, Lightbown and Spada (2006) say that there are three kinds of learning styles such as visual, aural, and kinaesthetic. Brown (2000) describes that a visual learner as the one who develops an excellent visual sense that allows him/her to get information using pictures, diagrams, and charts. Regarding an auditory or aural learner, Brown says that he or she develops listening skill with the aim of types and learns through explanations, discussions, and lectures. In relation to kinaesthetic learners, Lightbown and Spada (2006) say that these learners learn through activities that involve physical actions; these activities can include role plays and simulations.

Students' Intelligence or Aptitude to Learn English

It is known that some people learn languages faster than others. They have special abilities related to cognitive aspects which allow estimating success in languages; this term is called language aptitude (Lightbown & Spada, 2006; Littlewood 1984). It means that students with high aptitude learn easily and quickly than those who have low aptitude (Lightbown & Spada, 2006). For, McDonough (1986), aptitude is an inclination to do something well. This author says that the most common aptitude tests assess language knowledge and aural ability.

Therefore, McDonough (1986, p. 133) affirms that "there exists a specific aptitude or talent for the activity which not everybody possesses an ear for languages".

To support all the topics mentioned throughout, it is necessary to remark that studies worldwide have been carried out to identify factors that affect the teaching-learning process. The following are some examples of the studies which have been conducted previously.

To start with, Saricoban and Sakizli (2006) conducted a study to analyze factors that affect classroom management. These factors are related to students, school environment, and teachers. In this bibliographic study, the researchers report that it is essential to take into account students' characteristics and needs, language programs, classroom activities, and materials in order to get successful teaching. Likewise, the school environment which is composed of physical factors such as things that students see, hear or feel, seating arrangement, and instructional materials are necessary to be considered. Other factors which must be considered are social factors associated with large classes, mixed abilities, and educational factors. Moreover, factors related to lesson design, the way teachers motivate the students, and teachers' training need to be considered. All these factors are fundamental in an effective teaching process. The researchers conclude that when possible factors that affect the teaching- learning process are considered, classroom management succeed in avoiding troublesome behaviors and keeping a positive learning environment.

Another study was conducted by Narayanan, Rajasekaran, and Iyyappan (2008) to determine if motivational, attitudinal, language anxiety and gender factors affect English learning. The study was carried out in five institutions which were selected randomly. During the process, the researchers applied a pilot survey to get

enough information to apply a final survey. Also a few observations were done. The researcher found out that motivational, attitudinal, language anxiety and gender factors have a great impact on student's English learning.

Aduwa and Iyamu (2006) conducted other study to explore factors that affect the poor quality of teaching English as a second language in Nigeria. In this investigation, one instrument used for collecting data was a questionnaire. This instrument had four sections which deal with demographic items such as school type and location; instructional resources/media used by the teachers frequently, methods teachers adopted frequently for teaching English language, and the school environment. Another instrument to collect data was observation. According to the researchers, research assistants were trained to observe classroom proceedings during administration of the questionnaire, reporting characteristics of the learning environment. Aduwa and Iyamu found that public secondary schools in Nigeria do not have the conditions of teaching and learning English as a second language because the schools are overcrowded, the furniture is not comfortable for proper sitting, and classrooms do not have proper lighting and ventilation.

Furthermore, Riddling (1994) conducted a study to find out if seating arrangements affect the verbal interaction of teachers and students' speak behavior. The sample of this study consisted of ninety teachers who have more than five years of teaching experience. The method used was Quasi-experimental. The information was gathered through observation. During the research process, each teacher was assigned a different seating arrangement which included traditional row, u-shaped, and split-half. The researcher found that seating arrangement affect positively the

student's learning, their participation, their thinking, and their interaction with the teachers.

Additionally, an interesting study was conducted by Chang (2011) to determine the factors that promote or hinder the implementation of CLT by Taiwanese college English teachers. During the study, the researcher applied semi-structured interviews to explore teachers' experience and perception of the implementation of CLT. The duration of each recording was about forty-five to sixty minutes. The researcher found that teachers need training to get adequate knowledge and high skills in language to apply CLT. He also concluded that teachers, students, and educational system factors are relevant things to consider when teaching.

Description, Analysis, and Interpretation of Results

This section presents the collected information which will be analyzed by using the quantitative method. To do this analysis, the results collected during the field research will include factors which concern teachers, students, classroom, and institutions.

Quantitative Analysis

Factors Concerning Teachers

Which level of education do teachers have?
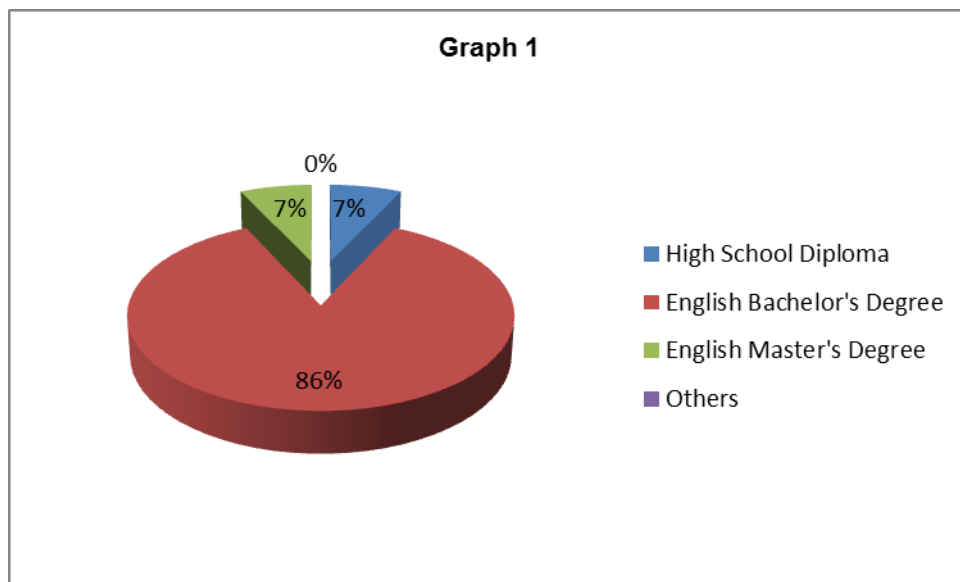
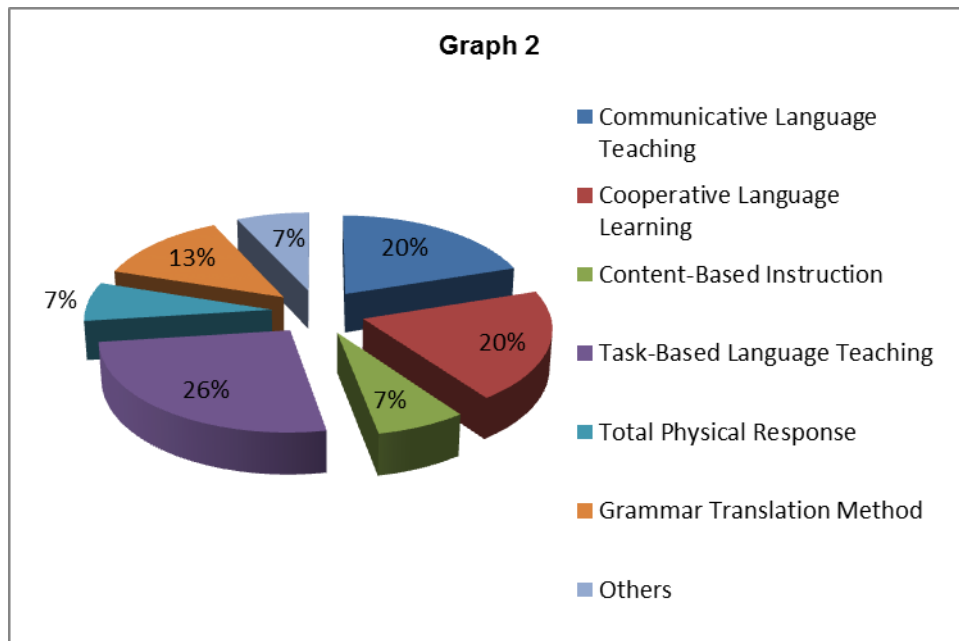Author: Peñarreta Flores Vanessa Jacqueline

Source: Teacher's questionnaire

This graph indicates that 86% of the observed teachers have an English Bachelor's Degree; 7% of them have a High School Diploma; and 7% of the observed educators have other type of degree (Bilingual Secretary Degree). From this information, it can be seen that none of the surveyed teachers have an English Master's Degree.

Moreover, the fifteen observed teachers were interviewed to know their level of English knowledge. According to the way they spoke in the interview, the teachers were placed on their respective language proficiency level. For example, two teachers were placed in low-beginner level (A1), six teachers were placed in high-beginner level (A2), four teachers were placed in low-intermediate level (B1), two teachers were placed in high-intermediate level (B2), and one teacher was placed in low-advanced level (C1). It is necessary to comment that in addition to considering how the teachers answered the questions of the interview, the Common European Framework References of Languages (CEFR) was used to place them on each of the level mentioned.

At this point, it is worth saying that the SENESCYT (2012) emphasizes that level acceptable to teach English is B2 (upper-intermediate). However, only two of the observed teachers have the level recommended by the SENESCYT. In fact, one teacher has advanced level (C1) as indicated above.

Furthermore, it is important to mention that one of the teachers placed in A1 has a High School Diploma and the other one has a Bilingual Secretary Degree; the six teachers placed in A2 have an English Bachelor's Degree; similarly, the four teachers placed in B1 have an English Bachelor's Degree; also, the two teachers placed in B2 have an English Bachelor's Degree, and the teacher placed in C1 has an English Bachelor's Degree. This information demonstrates that thirteen of the fifteen observed teachers have studied to get an English Bachelor's Degree.

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

Author: Peñarreta Flores Vanessa Jacqueline

Source: Teacher's questionnaire

The surveyed teachers said that they used the seven methods shown in graph two in the percentage as follows: Task-Based Language Teaching 26%; Communicative Language Teaching 20%; Cooperative Language Learning 20%; Grammar Translation Method 13%; Content-Based Instruction 7%; Total Physical Response 7%; and Others 7%. It is clear that none of the teachers used The Natural Approach, Cognitive Academic Language Learning, and The Whole Language Approach which were included in the questionnaire. Moreover, it is important to say that no reasons were given by the teachers to use one or another method.

It is necessary to mention that the results obtained through the teachers' questionnaire do not coincide on those of the observed classes because the teachers used only three of the seven teaching methods that they said they used in their classes. For example, Content-Based Instruction was used in two observed lessons in spite of the fact that the teachers said they used this method in one class, Cooperative

27

Language Learning was used in two lessons although the educators mentioned that they used this approach in three classes, and Grammar Translation Method was used in 11 observed classes even though the teachers affirmed that they used this method in two lessons.

Given the above information about the teaching methods used during the observed classes, it is worth saying that Larsen-Freeman (2000) remarks that CBI integrates the content of others subjects to teach a language. In the observations, two teachers integrated the content of science and math to teach English in their classes; it means that they use Content Based Instruction as Larsen-Freeman mentions.

Moreover, Richards and Rodgers (2001, p. 195) say that "CLL is an approach design to foster cooperation rather than competition". It means that classroom activities are carried out in group work. During the observed lessons, two teachers used this method to make students learn English by cooperating among them while they worked in groups. That is, what Richards and Rodgers mention about CLL was evidenced in the observed lessons.

Furthermore, Larsen-Freeman (2000) and House et al. (2011) agree that Grammar Translation method is taught in a deductive way in which students have to memorize grammar rules. In the observed lessons, five teachers taught grammar rules step by step in order to make the students learn language forms deductively. As it can be seen, the teachers taught grammar rules in a deductive way as Larsen-Freeman and House et al. mention.

To continue with the analysis of the teaching methods and approaches used in the observed lessons, it is necessary to mention about the students' survey where 87% (thirteen students) of them indicated that they like the teaching way that the

teachers use in their classes. Most of these students coincided on that their teachers explain the lesson clearly and make them learn English very well.

Nevertheless, 13% of the students (two) said that they do not like the way English is taught due to they do not understand what their teachers say when they speak in English. It is important to mention that the question of the students' survey was not asked directly about different teaching methods and approaches; however, the way how English is taught in a lesson is directly related to the teaching methodology that the teachers use in their classes.

Do you use whole-group activities to teach your lessons?
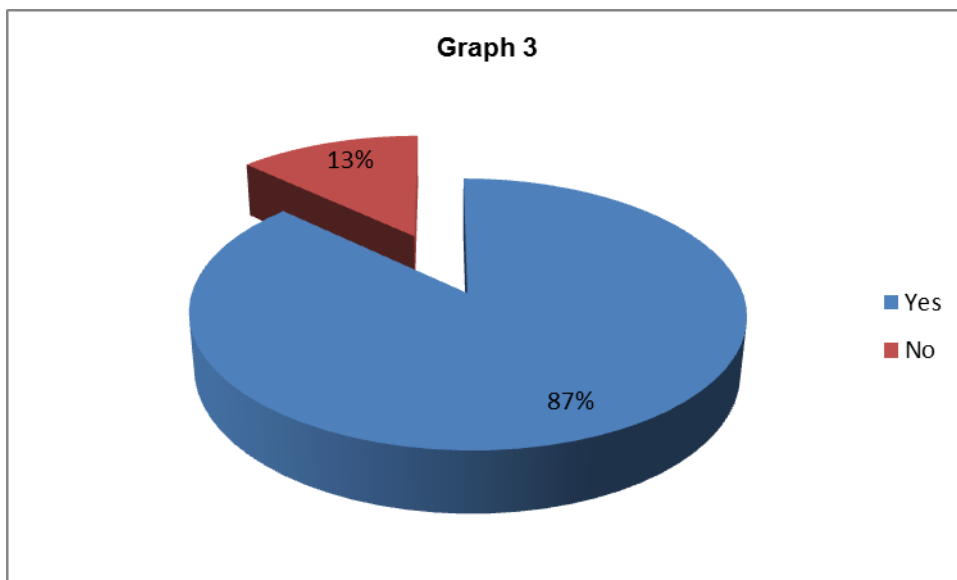
Author: Peñarreta Flores Vanessa Jacqueline
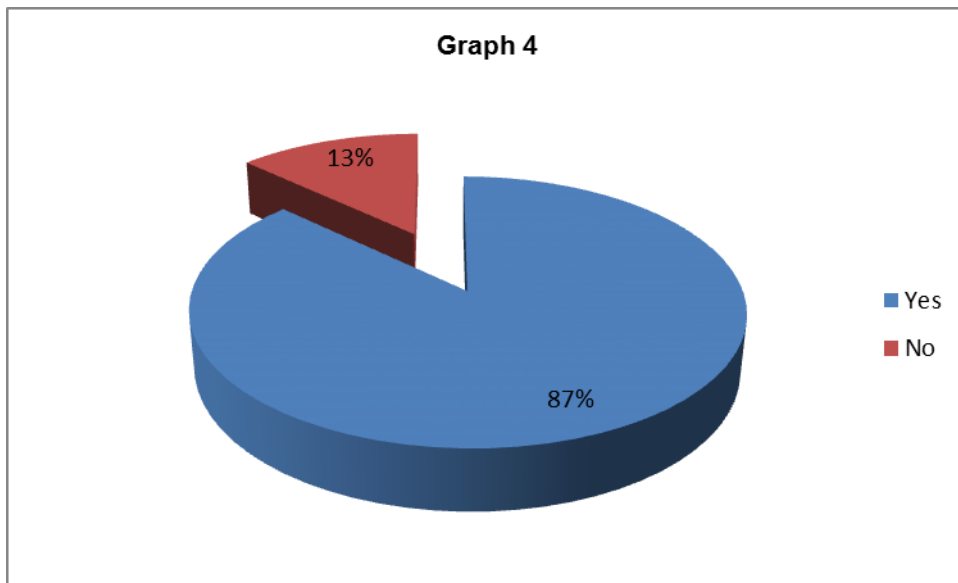
Source: Teacher's questionnaire

Graph three shows that in the survey 87% of the observed teachers confirmed that they use whole-group activities. Three reasons given by the teachers about using whole group activities in their English lessons are as follows: 1) students can practice pronunciation with confidence; 2) students can share information which involves the whole class; and 3) it is easier to explain and assess the whole class at the same time.

29

On the other hand, 13% of the teachers (two) said that they do not use this kind of activities to teach their classes because there are a lot of students and it is better to work in small groups than with the whole class according to these teachers.

It is relevant to mention that the results gathered through the teachers' questionnaire do not coincide on the observed classes since ten teachers (67%) used whole-group activities to teach their lessons. These teachers used whole-group activities to teach the students pronunciation of new words and to explain them grammar structures. Moreover, the teachers asked the whole class some questions that the students answered and were supported by their classmates. In this way, most of students participated actively by doing whole-group activities.

In relation to the students' survey, 93% of them answered that whole group activities motivate them to learn English. During the observed classes where the students learned English by working on whole group activities, all of them were motivated and participated in the lessons. What the students answered in the survey was confirmed in the observed classes.

Do you use individual activities to teach your lessons?

Graph 4

13%

87%

■ Yes
■ No

Author: Peñarreta Flores Vanessa Jacqueline

Source: Teacher's questionnaire

Graph four indicates that 87% of the surveyed teachers (thirteen) answered that they use individual activities in their EFL classes; they mentioned that these activities are used for assessing the students' skills and knowledge. On the other hand, 13% of the surveyed teachers (two) affirmed that they do not use this kind of activities in their EFL lessons; according to them, individual activities take a lot of time to be checked in a class. For this reason these teachers do not use individual activities in their classes.

In the observed classes, eleven of the fifteen teachers used individual activities in their classes, while four teachers did not make the students learn English by doing individual activities. As it can be seen, the results collected by surveying teachers are not similar to the observed lessons because thirteen teachers affirmed that they use individual work to teach their lessons.

An important point to note about individual work is that Harmer (2001) states that to make students work individually, they must be involved in reading in a private way and then answer individually. This author also indicates that students can be asked to complete worksheets in an individual way. Considering what Harmer mentions, the individual activities that the students did in the observed classes consisted of completing gaps, making sentences and questions, choosing correct option, speaking quiz, and listening quiz. This kind of activities encouraged the students to get involved by themselves in reading privately, answering individually, and completing worksheets.

Moreover, through the individual activities that students did in the observed lessons, their knowledge was evaluated by some of their teachers just as they mentioned in the survey. In this case, it was observed that the educators checked the progress of the whole class, assessed the learning of the students, and assisted them when they needed some help.

Regarding the students' survey, it is necessary to indicate that in the questionnaire they answered there was a question related to whether individual activities motivate them to learn English. Ninety three percent of the students answered this question positively; their response was confirmed because it was observed that when the students did individual activities, all of them were motivated to participate in the lessons in order to learn English.

Do you use group work activities to teach your lessons?
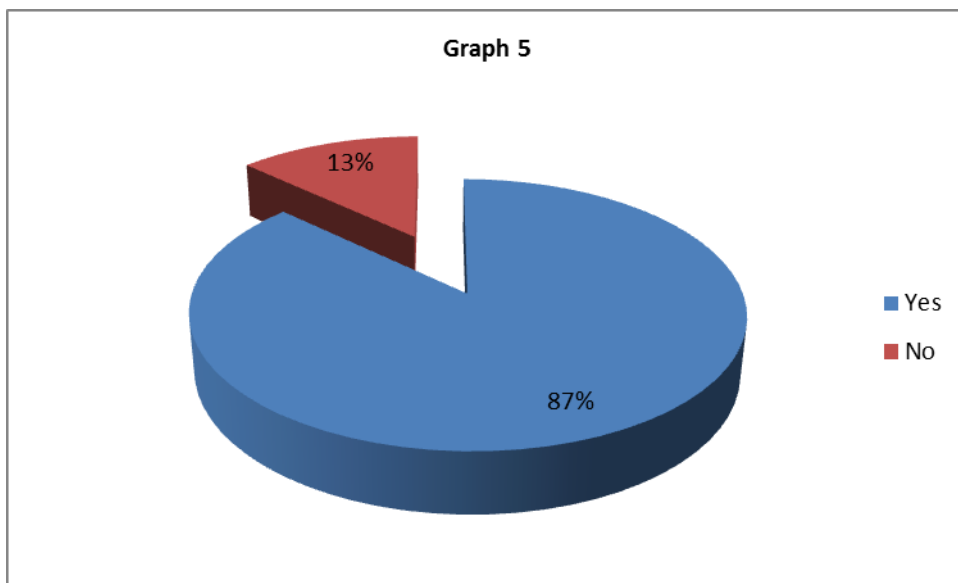
Author: Peñarreta Flores Vanessa Jacqueline

Source: Teacher's questionnaire

Graph five shows that 87% of the teachers (thirteen) mentioned that they use group work activities to teach their EFL lessons. The reason given by the teachers to use group work activities is that the students can share knowledge and interact among them while they do their tasks.

On the other hand, 13% of the educators (two) affirmed that they do not use group work activities in their classes. The reason given by these teachers is that the students do not complete the activities successfully since the classes are larger.

Although 87% of the observed teachers mentioned using group work activities in their classes, only four observed teachers (27%) included group work activities in their EFL classes. The group work activities observed were the following:

One activity that students did in group of six consisted of designing a poster containing information about medicinal plants, this poster was used by each group as

a means of speaking practice. Another activity carried out in group was to act out action verbs which were on word-cards. Other activity that the students did in group was to read a passage of their text-book and then answer some questions about the reading. An additional activity that the students did in group consisted of writing a post-card by following a model given to them. By doing these four activities, all the students interacted with their peers; they were motivated to learn English and had a lot fun, especially in the group activity in which they acted out actions verbs.

To complement the information about group work activities, it is worth saying that Harmer (2001) mentions that groups of five students encourage involvement and participation, stimulate interpersonal interaction, and encourage skill cooperation and negotiation. In the observed classes most of the groups were formed of five students; in these groups, the students participated in the lesson, interacted among them, and cooperated in doing their tasks in a similar way that the one mentioned by Harmer.

Regarding the students' survey, 93% of them said that group work activities motivated them to learn English. During the observed classes, the students were motivated by working in groups. Additionally, thirteen students (87%) indicated that their teachers use a variety of activities in class to help them interact with their peers. The information obtained from the students' survey reveals that the teachers (27%) used group work activities to teach their lessons just as it is mentioned in the third paragraph above.

Do you use English most of the time in your classes?
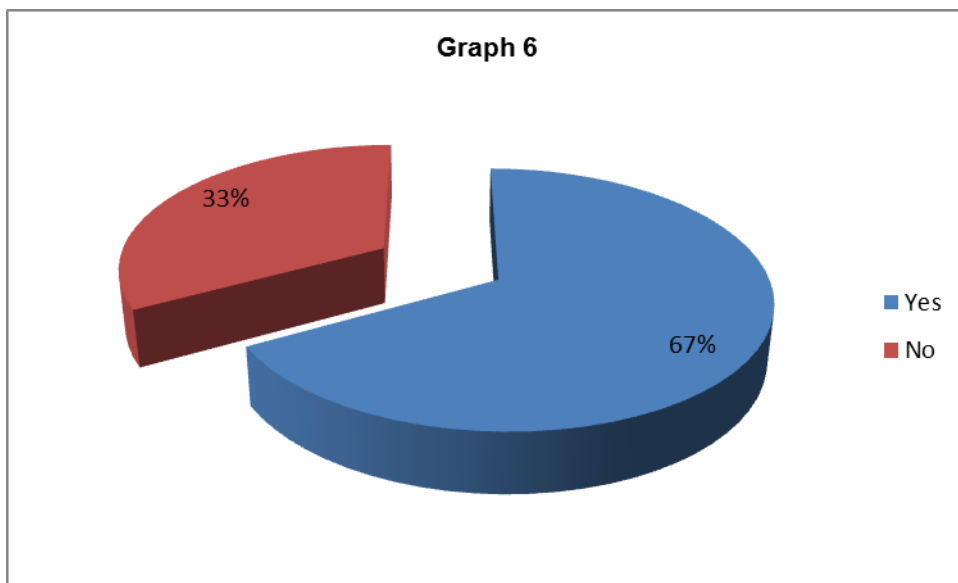
Graph 6

Graph six shows that 67% of the observed teachers (ten) mentioned that they used English most of the time in their EFL classes. However, 33% of them (five teachers) said that they do not use English most of the time in their EFL lessons.

As far as the students' survey is concerned, 80% of them affirmed that their teachers used English most of the time in the classes while three students (20%) answered that their teachers do not use English most of the time during the EFL lessons.

During the observed classes, the percentages in which the teachers use English in their classes were as follows: twelve observed teachers spoke 25% of English which is equivalent to 80% of the all observed educators; two teachers spoke 50% of English which corresponds to 13% of the observed educators; and one teacher spoke 75% of English corresponding to 7% of the educators who were observed.

The results obtained through the teachers' questionnaire and student's survey are different from the ones collected by the observations. It means that the teachers did not use English in the percentage mentioned in the survey.

It is necessary to say that the teachers who spoke 50% and 75% of English in their classes did in a fluent manner; nevertheless, the teachers who spoke 25% of English did not demonstrate a good mastery of the English language because these teachers use English as follows: they started to explain in English and then translated their explanations into Spanish; these teachers also gave most of their instructions in Spanish.

Do you plan your lessons?
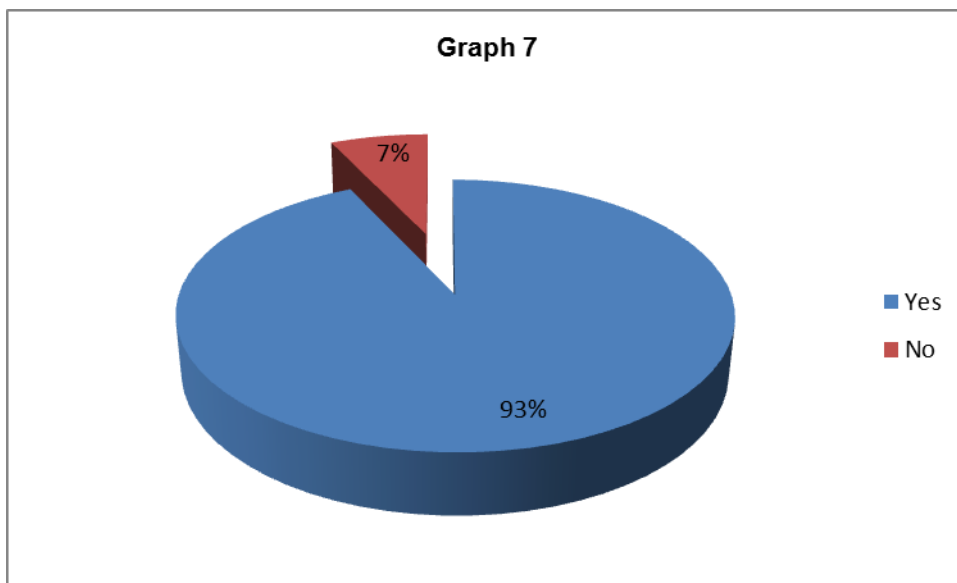
Author: Peñarreta Flores Vanessa Jacqueline
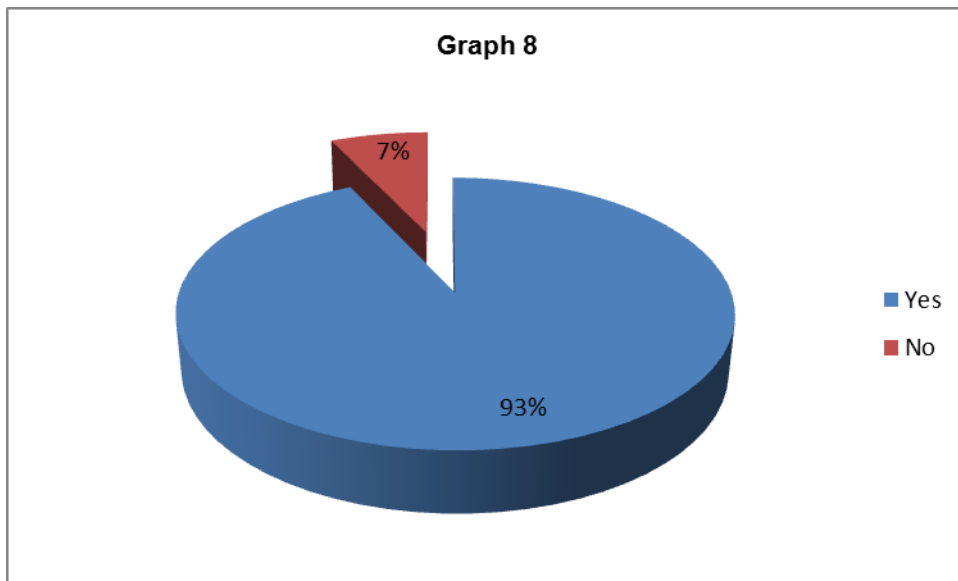
Source: Teacher's questionnaire

Graph seven reveals that 93% of the surveyed educators (fourteen) answered that they planned their lessons whereas 7% of them (one) commented that she does not plan her lessons. However, the teachers' answers did not reflect in the observed classes. Most of the observed teachers demonstrated that they did not plan their EFL

classes appropriately due to the fact that they did not apply some important aspects of a lesson plan. The aspects of the lesson plan taken into account in the observation sheet were time, lesson topic, objectives, warm-up activities, introduction of the new topic, guided on individual practice, assessment, feedback, and teaching materials. The observed teachers who applied some of the aspects mentioned were the following:

Two of the fifteen observed teachers assigned a determined time for each activity done in the classes; three teachers planned activities related to the objectives of the lessons; ten teachers presented the lesson topic in their classes; five teachers did warm-up activities; thirteen teachers introduced the new topic of the lesson; twelve observed teachers used guided on individual practice during their EFL lessons; seven teachers considered assessment and feedback; and twelve teachers used different teaching materials such as the white-board, word-cards, and a CD recorder. From all the observed teachers, only two of them applied all the aspects previously mentioned.

It is worth saying that Harmer (2007) indicates that the lesson plan is a guide for educators rather than a document to follow automatically. This author also says that when teachers work with a lesson plan, they are aware of how to distribute available time for each stage of a lesson. Moreover, Spratt et al. (2005) mention that teachers need to manage lesson plans that help them think through what and how they are going to teach during the lesson. During the observed classes, only two teachers took into consideration what Harmer (2007) and Spratt et al. (2005) say about lesson planning.

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

Graph 8

7%

93%

Yes
No

Author: Peñarreta Flores Vanessa Jacqueline

Source: Teacher's questionnaire

Graph eight indicates that 93% of the surveyed educators (fourteen) mentioned that they considered aspects such as discipline, timing, feedback, and instruction to teach their EFL lessons. However, one teacher (7%) answered that he does not consider within their lessons the aspects mentioned.

Regarding the student's survey, fourteen students (93%) indicated that their teachers controlled discipline in the class. Thirteen students (87%) said that their teachers assigned a determined time to do activities in the classrooms. Fourteen students (93%) affirmed that after each activity their teachers help them identify errors and assist them to correct everything necessary. And thirteen students (87%) said that their teachers gave clear instructions to do their tasks both in the class and home. The results obtained by surveying the teacher are almost similar to the student's survey.

In the observations, fifteen teachers controlled discipline even though the educators had a little trouble with a few students who started to interrupt the classes. The teachers could handle this situation successfully to make these students focus on the English lessons. In this case, the teachers were quiet and then raised their voice until they got the attention of their students to continue their lessons.

Seven teachers considered feedback which was given in five ways as follows: 1) the teachers went to the students' desks to help them with something they were having difficult; 2) the educators clarified and corrected everything necessary; 3) the students went to the teacher to ask for clarification when they did not understand something; 4) the teachers wrote on the board some errors, correct them, and gave an extra explanation to clarify some doubts that the students had; and 5) the educators gave positive feedback by encouraging the students when they corrected any error.

Thirteen teachers took into account activities management. The teachers gave clear instruction to the students to help them do their tasks. These teachers also explained and repeated the instructions to make sure that the whole class understands the activity which was going to be done.

Two educators took into consideration time management. The teachers assigned an allotted time for each activity in the class; they let know the students the time that they had to complete a specific task. However, it is crucial to point out that timing was not considered appropriately by thirteen teachers because the students ran out of time when the classes finished.

An important point to mention about instruction, timing, and feedback is that Lindsay (2000) suggests that instructions be clear to convey the meaning to the

whole class before doing an activity; Harmer (2007) indicates that students need to know how much time they have to do an activity; and Gower et al. (1995, p. 163) say that "the aim of feedback is to bring about self-awareness and improvement". What these authors state about instruction, timing, and feedback were considered by some of the observed teachers as mentioned above.

Factors Concerning Students

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

Graph 9

0%

100%

■ Yes
■ No
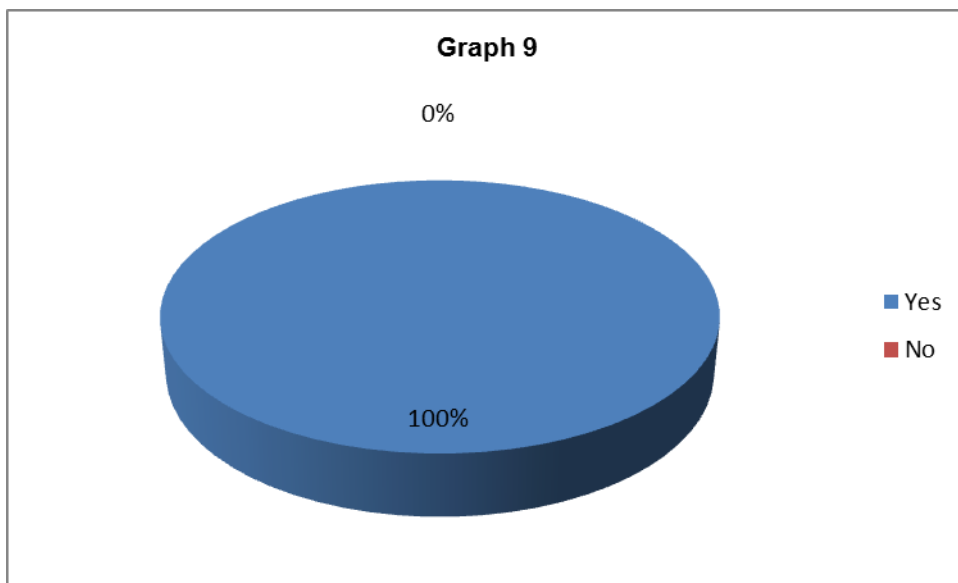
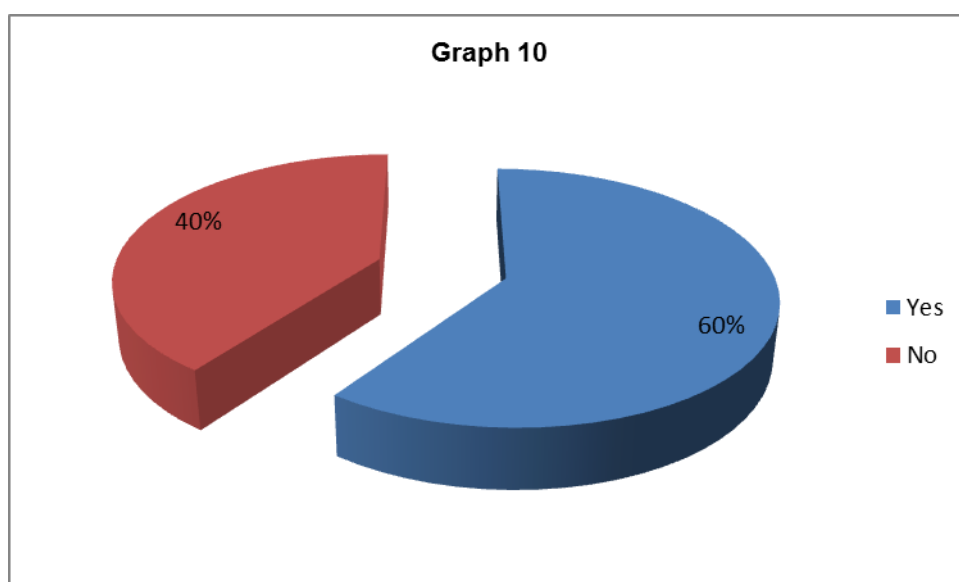Author: Peñarreta Flores Vanessa Jacqueline

Source: Teacher's questionnaire

Graph nine shows that 100% of the teachers said that they consider students' needs to teach English successfully. During the observed classes, the students' needs were considered in different proportion. For example, five teachers considered three learning styles such as auditory, kinaesthetic, and analytic. Auditory learners were stimulated by doing listening activities, kinaesthetic learners were encouraged by acting out different actions, and analytic learners were involved in analyzing grammar rules to complete sentences. Furthermore, three teachers used a variety of

activities appropriate for the age of the students, and through these activities, the students' aptitude and motivation to learn English was stimulated.

On the other hand, some teachers did not consider the students' needs appropriately because they asked the students to focus on one single activity which made the learners lose their interest and motivation to learn English. That is to say, these teachers did not design a variety of activities suited to the age of the learners, interest, aptitude, and motivation to learn English.

Do you consider Student's level to teach English successfully?

Author: Peñarreta Flores Vanessa Jacqueline

Source: Teacher's questionnaire

Graph ten shows that 60% of the surveyed teachers mentioned that they consider student's level to teach English successfully whereas 40% of them said that they do not take into account the student's English level to teach their lessons. During the observed classes, the English level of the students was considered by twelve teachers because they asked their students to do some activities, which were done by them without any difficulty. It means that the students did activities

41

according to their English level. Some of these activities involved doing simple exercises in '*simple present*', '*present continuous*', and '*simple past*'.

In the student's survey, 73% of them indicated that the activities done in the lessons were easy for them; three students (20%) mentioned that the activities were difficult; and one student (7%) mentioned that the activities were very easy. The information collected through the student's survey was very similar to the one obtained in the observations because the students did activities that were achievable for their level of English.

Which is the level of your students?
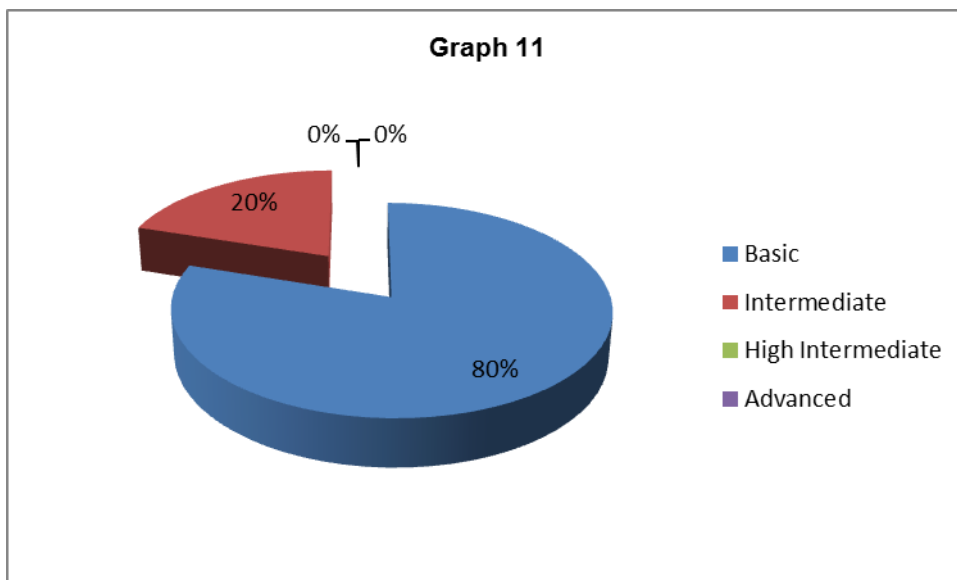
Author: Peñarreta Flores Vanessa Jacqueline

Source: Teacher's questionnaire

Graph eleven indicates that 80% of the surveyed teachers said that the level of their students is basic. These teachers referred to the students from eighth to ninth grade of basic education. On the other hand, 20% of teachers answered that the level of the students is intermediate; these teachers referred to the students from tenth grade of basic education to first year of senior high school.

The results obtained through the observations only coincide on those teachers (80%) who mentioned in the survey that the level of the students is basic. However the results gathered in the observed classes do not coincide on those teachers (20%) who said that the level of the students is intermediate because there was not any learner with an intermediate level. This statement is done since the students did activities designed for a basic level.

Factors Concerning Classrooms

How many students are there in the observed classrooms?
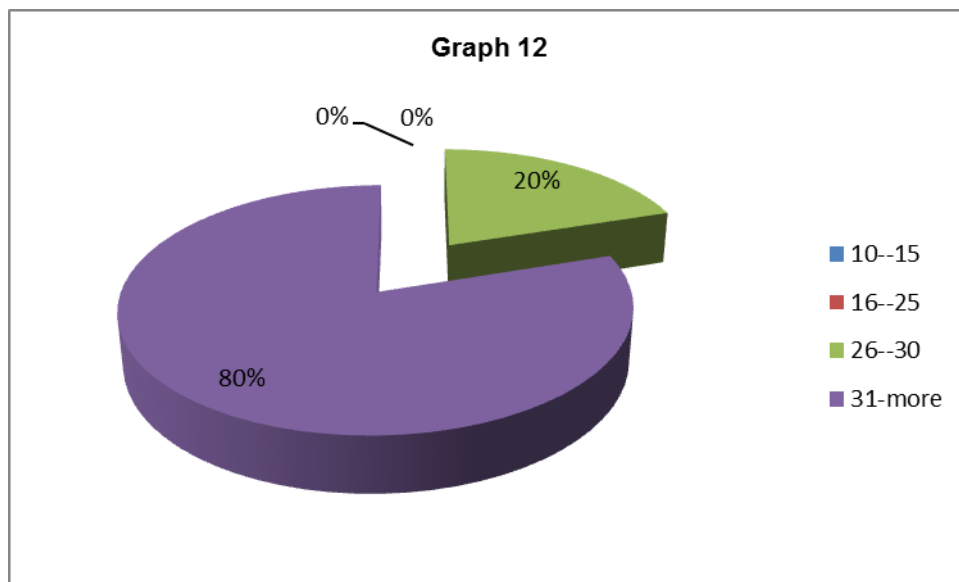
Author: Peñarreta Flores Vanessa Jacqueline

Source: Teacher's questionnaire

Graph twelve shows that 80% of the observed teachers answered that they work with more than thirty-one students in their classes; 20% of them mentioned that they work with twenty-six to thirty students; and none of the surveyed teachers mentioned working with ten to fifteen and sixteen to twenty-five students.

This information above was confirmed in the observed classes because the number of students in most of the classrooms was about thirty-one to forty-five. It means that twelve (80%) of the fifteen observed teachers taught English in large

classes. Furthermore, three teachers taught their lessons to twenty-six to thirty students. In the classes with thirty-one to forty-five students, the teaching-learning process was affected negatively because the number of the students did not enable the whole class to completely concentrate on the lesson that was being taught. However, in the observed classes with twenty-six to thirty students, the teaching learning process was affected positively since the number of the students allows the teachers to create a learning environment appropriate for the achievement of good results.

Regarding student's survey, 53% of them indicated that the number of students helps them to learn English. However, seven students (47%) said that the number of their classmates does not favor them to learn English in a better way. What 53% of the students mentioned in the survey was evidenced in the classes with twenty-six to thirty learners. And what 47% of the learners said in the survey was confirmed in the classes with thirty-one to forty-five students.

Do you feel comfortable with the number of students you are working with?

Graph 13

47%

53%

■ Yes
■ No
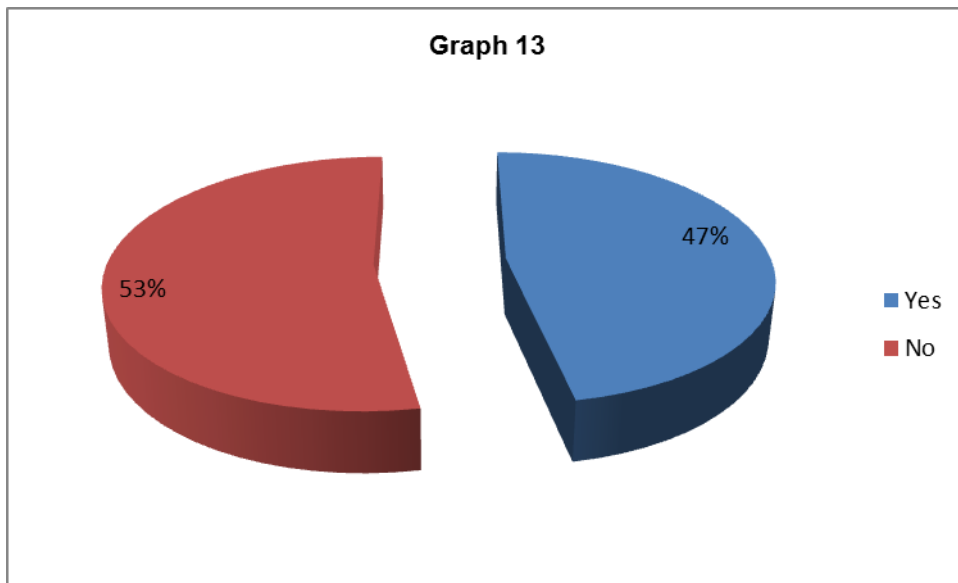
Author: Peñarreta Flores Vanessa Jacqueline
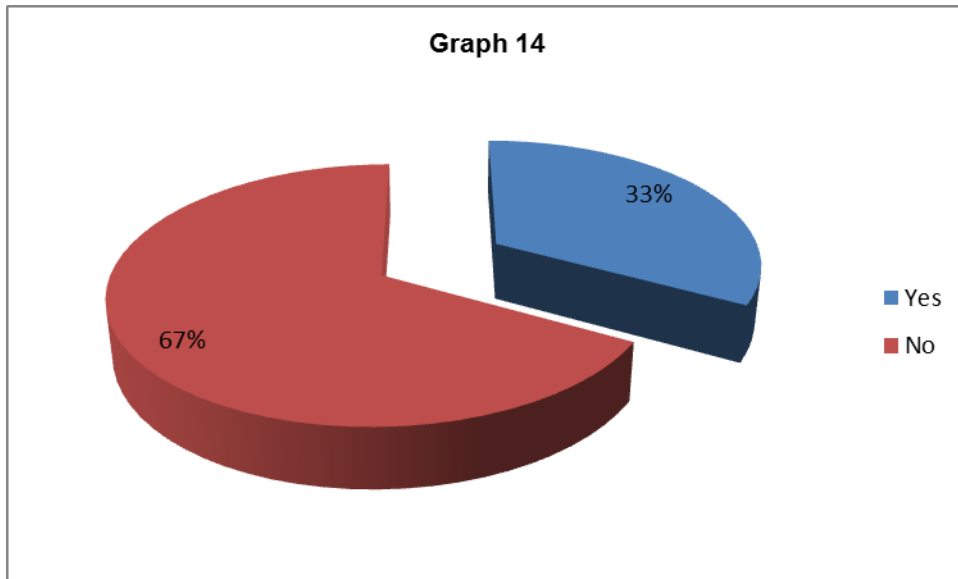
Source: Teacher's questionnaire

Graph thirteen shows that 53% percent of the surveyed teachers (eight) mentioned that they do not feel comfortable with the number of students they work with. On the other hand, 47% of teachers (seven) mentioned that they feel comfortable working with the number of students that attend their lessons. One of these teachers added in the survey that he has to accept the number of students assigned by the institution he works for. In fact, this teacher mentioned that he has to be able to work in any situation (related to the number of students).

In the observed classes, twelve teachers (80%) showed frustration and annoyance because they had difficulty moving inside the classrooms where there were a lot of students; these teachers did not monitor the students' tasks in a comfortable way. Besides, in some large classes, the teachers made an effort to control discipline since there were some students who misbehaved a little.

It is worth saying that Harmer (2007) points out that the number of students is variable in language classes because it is related to the education system where the teachers work at. Taking into account Harmer's statement, it is necessary to remember that one teacher in the survey commented that he has to work with the number of students that the educational institution has assigned him. It confirms that the number of students is determined by the education system where the teachers work at just as Harmer says.

In addition, Nolasco and Arthur (1995) indicate that large classes have some drawbacks. For example, dealing with these types of classes is difficult for teachers, maintaining the discipline, convincing students to use English when they work in pairs or in group, and monitoring students' classroom activities is also hard for educators. Moreover, Woodward (2001, p. 218) adds that in large classes teachers cannot "respond to differing needs". What these authors mention about the difficulties to work in large classes was evident in some observed classes as mentioned previously.

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

Author: Peñarreta Flores Vanessa Jacqueline

Source: Teacher's questionnaire

Graph fourteen indicates that only 33% of the surveyed teachers said that they have enough space to work with their students. However, 67% of them mentioned that they do not have enough space to teach to their assigned number of students. Regarding students, 73% of them answered that the classroom space allows them to work in a comfortable way. In contrast, 27% of the students mentioned that the space available in the classroom is not enough to work in a comfortable way.

In the observed classes only two teachers had enough space to make the students learn in a pleasurable way. Nevertheless, thirteen teachers did not have plenty of space to make the students learn English in a comfortable way. In this case, the students did not have enough space to move around the classroom to work in groups pleasurably. It is worth indicating that one group work activity required the students to act out different situations, this activity was not done in a comfortable

47

way due to the lack of space in the classroom. Besides, in other group work activities the students were close together, and it limited them to work comfortably.

The results obtained through the observed lessons do not coincide on the information mentioned in the survey because both teachers and students referred to the space of the classroom in different percentage than the one indicated in the first paragraph above.

It is important to say that Satheesh (2012) highlights that appropriate physical space is needed to promote active learning and interaction. Even though the students interacted among them, it was observed that in most of the classes the students needed an appropriate physical space to learn English and to do their tasks in an active and pleasurable way. This information evidences what Satheesh says about classroom space.

Do you arrange student's seats in relation to the activities planned for your classes?

Graph 15

27%

73%

- Yes
- No
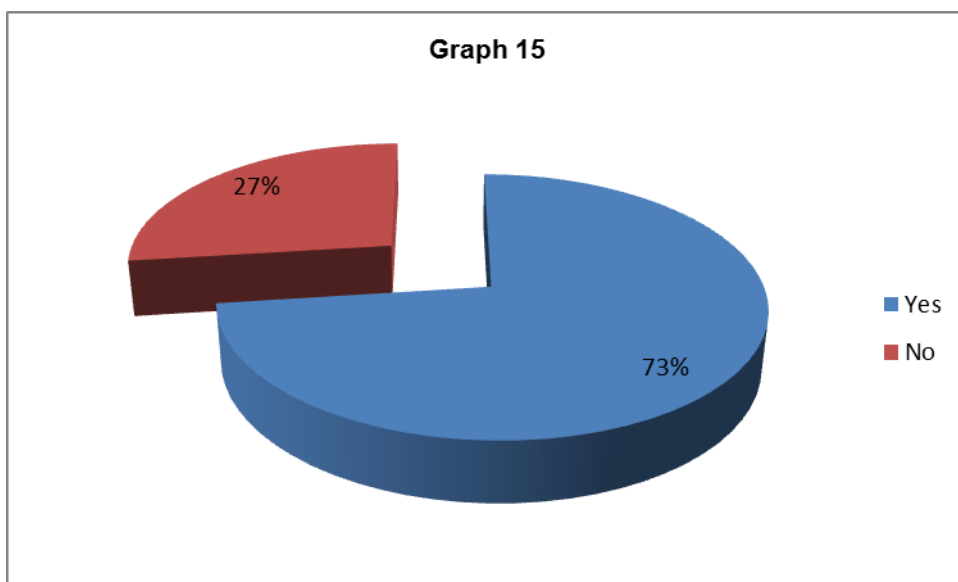
Author: Peñarreta Flores Vanessa Jacqueline

Source: Teacher's questionnaire

Graph fifteen shows that 73% of the surveyed teachers said that they arrange students' seats in relation to the activities planned for their classes. However, 27% of the educators indicated that they do not arrange their students' seats in relation to the activities they are going to teach.

Regarding students' survey, 93% of them indicated that they like the way that the educators arrange their seats to do different tasks. In contrast, one student said that he does not like the way that the teacher arrange the desks in his class.

During the observed classes, only six teachers (40%) asked the students to arrange their seats in relation to the activities planned for the classes. Four of these teachers preferred to arrange students' seats in rows. And two teachers arranged the students' seats in horseshoe which consisted of arranging the students' seats in semi-circle. When the students worked in rows and horseshoe, they were enthusiastic and participated actively in the activities they did.

On the other hand, nine teachers (60%) did not ask the students to arrange their seats according to the activities planned for the lessons. Indeed, these teachers enabled the students to work as they pleased, and it made the classrooms look a little disorganized.

One point to mention about rows and horseshoes seating arrangement is that Harmer (2007) says that orderly rows allow teachers to observe the whole class clearly. And, Evertson et al. (1997) point out that horseshoe seating arrangement encourages face to face contact among learners and teachers. In the classes where the students arranged the seats in rows, the teachers were capable of observing the whole class in a clear way; and in the classes where the students' seats were arranged in horseshoes, it was easy for the learners to have face to face contact among them and

their teachers. This information agrees with what Harmer (2007) and Evertson (1997) comment about these two seating arrangement.

How many students do you think is appropriate number to teach English?
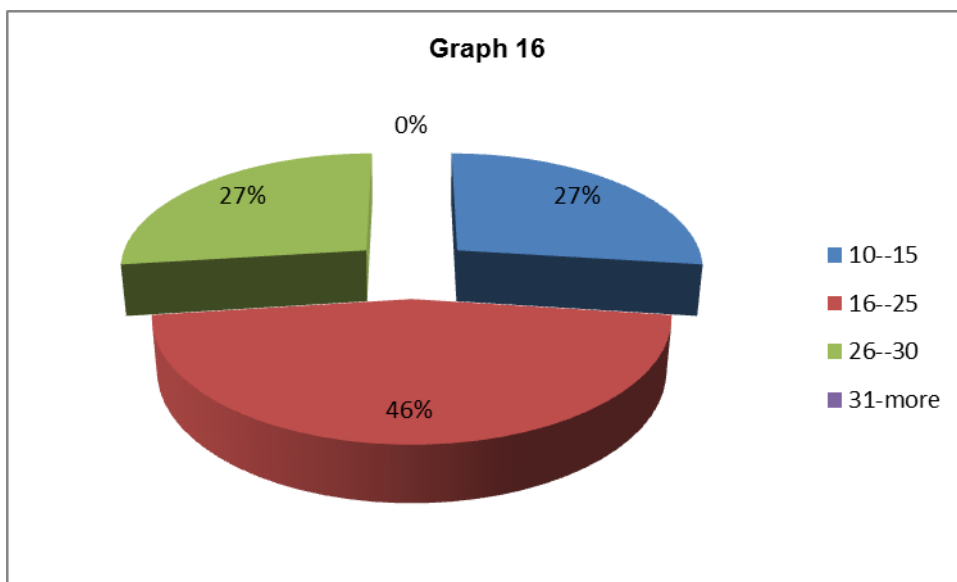
Author: Peñarreta Flores Vanessa Jacqueline

Source: Teacher's questionnaire

Graph sixteen shows that 46% of the observed teachers said that the appropriate number to teach is sixteen to twenty-five students; 27% of them said ten to fifteen students; and 27% of the educators mentioned twenty-six to thirty students. These results reveal that most of the teachers prefer to work with sixteen to twenty-five students.

Moreover, the data obtained by the teachers' survey clearly indicates that none of the educators consider more than thirty-one students to be an appropriate number to teach their classes. To support this information, it is necessary to mention that in twelve of the observed classes there were about thirty-one to forty-five students, and it was difficult for most of the teachers to check the work of the all students, monitor their activities, and give them feedback. In fact, these educators commented in a friendly conversation that a reduction of the number of students

50

would help them to teach in a better way and to know whether all the students learned English effectively.

It is worth saying that Davies and Pearse (2000) state that it is difficult to get good results in large groups because of the amount of students. These authors also say that teachers cannot give students individual feedback. Relating Davies and Pearse's statement to the observed classes where there were about thirty-one to forty-five students, the teacher made a great effort to achieve good results and of course, they could not give the whole class feedback individually.

Do you use teaching resources?

Graph 17

0%

100%

- Yes
- No
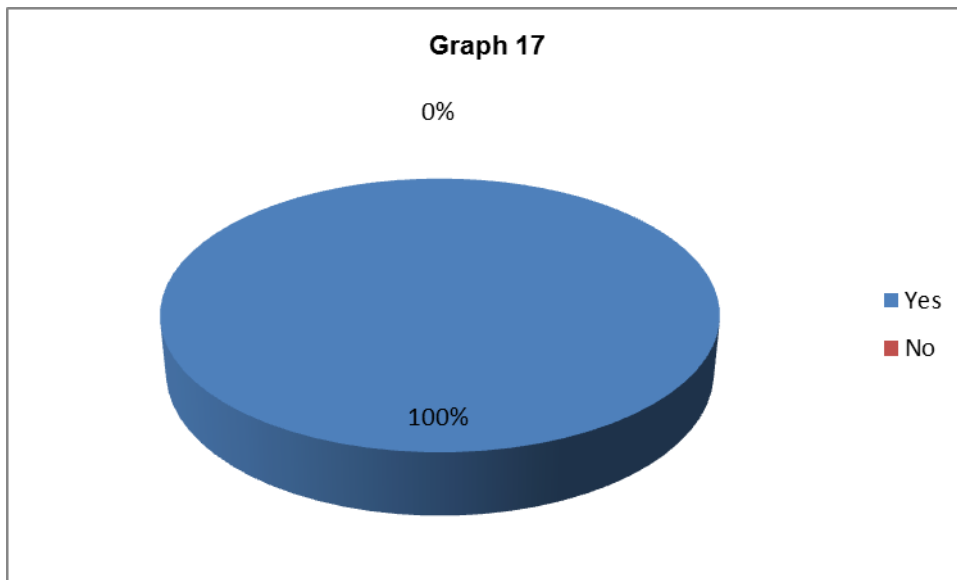
Author: Peñarreta Flores Vanessa Jacqueline

Source: Teacher's questionnaire

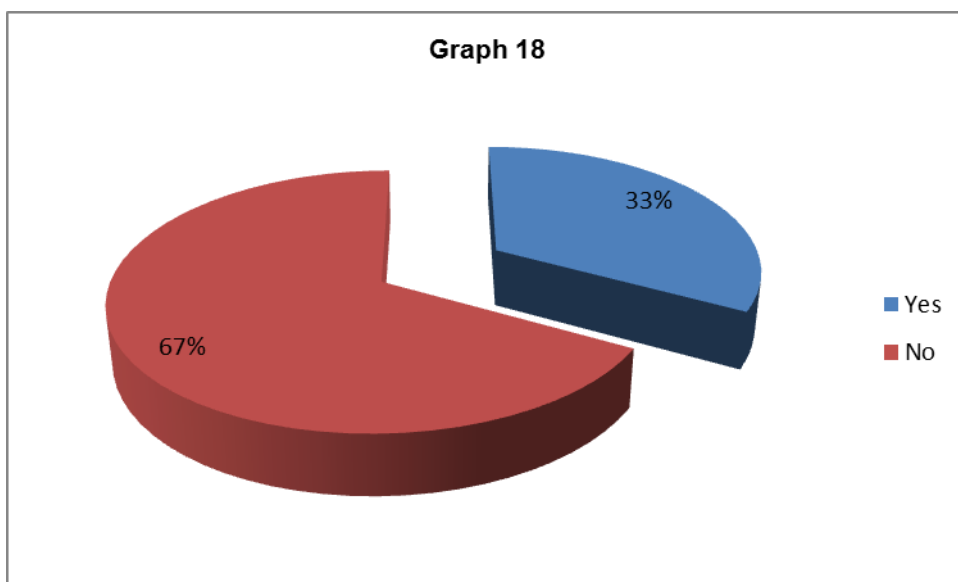Graph seventeen reveals that 100% of the surveyed teachers indicated that they use teaching resources such as TV, CD recorder, computer, projector, smart board, and supplementary materials to teach their classes. However, most of the teachers used the whiteboard and the coursebook to teach their lessons, and only one teacher used a CD recorder and another teacher used word-cards in the EFL classes.

As it can be seen, the teachers' answers mentioned in the survey do not coincide on the information gathered in the observed classes.

Regarding the student's survey, 53% of them indicated that their teachers do not use teaching resources such as television, CD recorder, computer, and smart board to teach English. However seven students (47%) affirmed that their teachers use a variety of teaching resources as the ones mentioned.

To continue the discussion about teaching resources, it is necessary to consider that Siders (2011) indicates that teaching materials allow teachers to enhance students' language skills and make the teaching-learning process fun. If all the observed teachers had used a variety of teaching resources, the learning- teaching process would have been more enjoyable and entertained for the learners while they were improving their language skills.

Do you consider appropriate the resources you have in class?

Graph 18

33% Yes

67% No

Author: Peñarreta Flores Vanessa Jacqueline
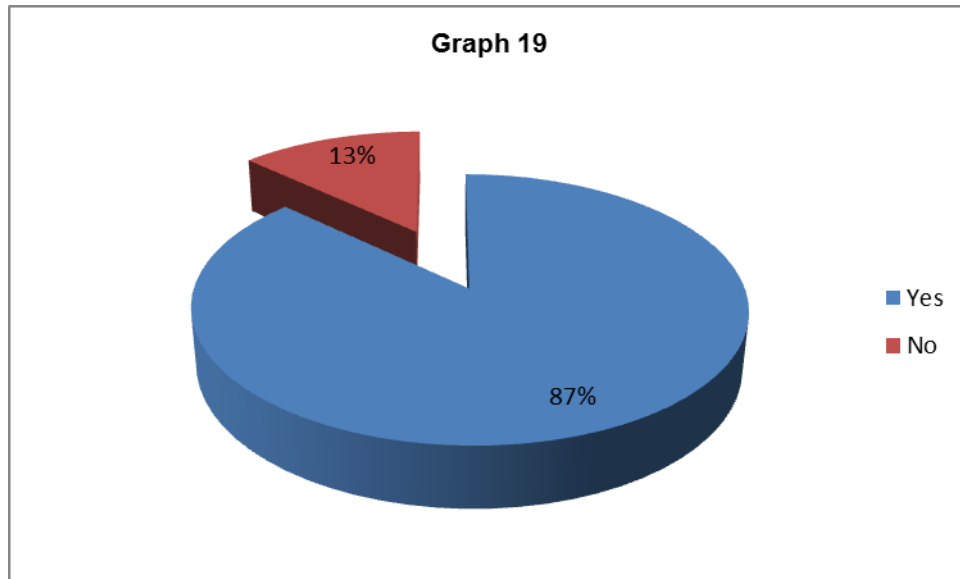
Source: Teacher's questionnaire

Graph eighteen reveals that 33% of the surveyed teachers consider appropriate the teaching resources that they have in class. However, 67% of the teachers consider inappropriate the resources that they have in class. It is important to say that five of these teachers were asked if the institution they work for provides CD recorder to teach English, they mentioned that the institution does not even provide such a teaching material to teach their lessons.

During the observed lessons, the teaching resources used by the observed educators were the whiteboard, the text-book, CD recorder, and word-cards; the use of these materials was appropriate to teach in relation to the activities planned for the classes of eight teachers. It means that only these eight educators used the whiteboard, the text-book, CD recorder, and word-cards in an appropriate way to encourage the students to learn actively. From a general perspective, the use of the teaching resources available was inappropriate in seven observed classes.

As mentioned, eight teachers used the whiteboard appropriately. Based on this information, something relevant to comment about the whiteboard is that to use it in an effective way, "organization skills as well as adequate writing" are required (Davies and Pearse, 2000, p. 153). The eight teachers used the whiteboard as Davies and Pearse point out because they put information on this teaching material in an organized way and with clear writing to help the students learn English successfully.

Do the institutions review teachers' lesson plans?

Graph 19

Author: Peñarreta Flores Vanessa Jacqueline

Source: Teacher's questionnaire

Graph nineteen shows that 87% of the surveyed teachers mentioned that the institutions review their lesson plans whereas 13% of them said that their lesson plans are not reviewed by the high schools they work for. The frequency that the institutions review the lessons plans according to the teachers who answered positively is as follows: 67% once a week; 13% once a month; and 7% daily.

It is important to say that four of the fifteen observed teachers commented that the Ecuadorian Ministry of Education establishes as compulsory the lesson planning in Ecuadorian public high schools, it means that the teachers have to prepare their lesson plans daily.

Regarding the observed classes, only one teacher showed her lesson plan reviewed by a coordinator of the English department of the high school this teacher works for. However, most of the observed teachers did not show any lesson plan

reviewed by an authority of the high school they work for. Therefore, during the observations, it could not be seen whether the institutions review the teachers' lesson plans as the educators mentioned in the survey.

Does the institution monitor your teaching?
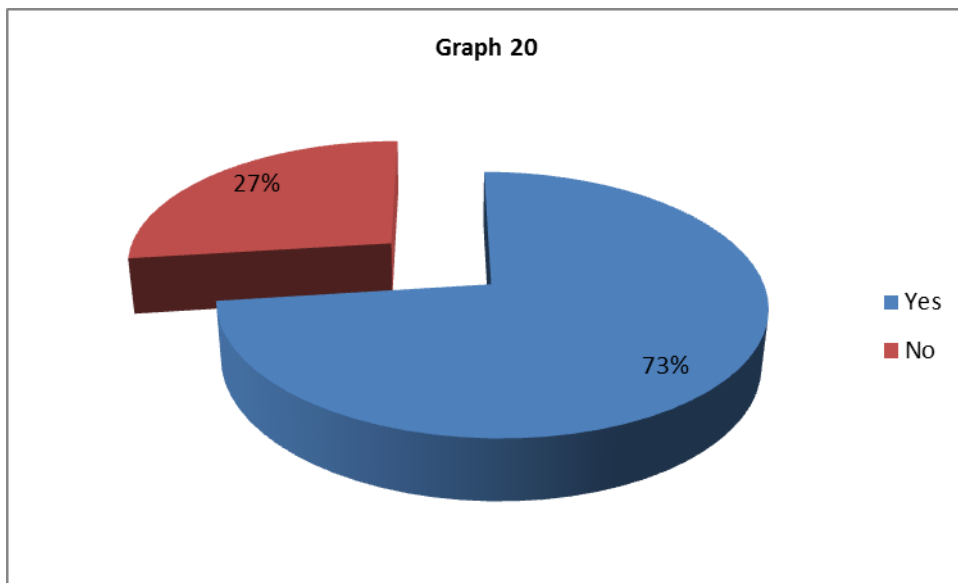
Author: Peñarreta Flores Vanessa Jacqueline

Source: Teacher's questionnaire

Graph twenty shows that 73% of the surveyed teachers affirmed that their teaching is monitored by the educational institutions they work for. In contrast, 20% of the educators said that the institutions did not monitor their classes. The teachers who answered in a positive way commented that the teaching process is monitoring with the frequency as follow: 46% once a month; 7% once a week; 20% others which include once a term, daily, and sometimes.

It is worth saying that Richards (2001) states that monitoring involves collecting data to investigate how educators teach, to identify what kind of problems they have in classes, and to find possible solutions. Furthermore, Randall and Thornton (2011, p. 19) say that institutions need to have inspection or advisory

departments which "have two functions, one is to monitor the provision of educational services, and the other is to provide support and advice to the teacher in the classroom".

What Richards (2001) and Randall and Thornton (2011) indicate about classroom observation is very relevant to take into consideration because by monitoring classes, the quality of the English teaching-learning process can be enhanced. Moreover, monitoring the teaching learning process has a beneficial effect on teachers' professional growth.

Nevertheless, it is necessary to say that during the observations, four teachers mentioned that the authorities do not give them feedback when they are monitored. In other words, these teachers commented that the authorities do not help them to identify their strengths and weaknesses of their teaching process. Considering what these teachers said, it can be assumed that the institutions do not help them to growth professionally to improve their teaching quality.

Conclusions

- The English language teaching-learning process in Ecuadorian public high schools is affected negatively by the large number of the students that the teachers work with.

- The large number of the students in most of the classrooms makes difficult for the teachers to check the tasks of the students and assess their progress.

- The space in most of the classroom limits the interaction among the students.

- The lack of a variety of teaching resources such as Tv, tape/CD record, computer, smartboard, and supplementary materials does not allow the teachers to add variety to the English lessons to get better results.

- The most frequent teaching method used in the EFL classes is Grammar Translation Method.

- Some teachers speak most of the time in Spanish because their language proficiency is not good.

- Most of the teachers have an English Bachelor's Degree; however, their language proficiency is poor since they do not have the level (B2 recommended by the SENESCYT, 2012) acceptable to teach English.

Recommendations

- Educational institutions and authorities of Ecuadorian public high schools should reduce the number of students in EFL classes to create an appropriate environment conducive to teaching and learning, to offer students opportunities to interact effectively among them and with the teacher, and to help learners to increase their English knowledge.

- English teachers should use different teaching resources and supplementary materials to make the classes interesting, meaningful, enjoyable, and motivating for their students.

- Educational institutions and authorities of Ecuadorian public high schools should implement an effective teaching monitoring plan during the whole school year; it will help teachers to improve the quality of their teaching.

- Teachers should enroll on an EFL training course to improve their language proficiency and their teaching methodology as well.

REFERENCES

Aduwa-Ogiegbaen, S., & Iyamu, E. (2006). Factors affecting quality of English

    language teaching and learning in secondary schools in Nigeria.

    College Student Journal, 40(3), 495-504.

Brown, H. D. (2000). *Principle of language learning and teaching* (4th ed.). New

    York: Addisson Wesley Longman, Inc.

Byrne, D. (1987). *Techniques for classroom interaction*. London, UK: Longman

    Group UK Limited.

Chang, M. (2011). Factors affecting the implementation of communicative language

    teaching in Taiwanese college English classes. *Journal of International*

    Cooperation in Education, 4(2), 3-12.

Davies, P., & Pearse, E. (2000). *Success in English teaching*. Oxford University

    Press.

Dhand, H. (2008). *Techniques of teaching.* New Delhi: A.P.H. Publishing

    Corporation.

Evertson, C. M., Emmer, E. T., Clements, B. S., & Worsham, M. E. (1997).

    Classroom management for elementary teachers (4th ed.). Boston: Allyn and

    Bacon.

Good, T. Eds. (200   8). *21st century education: A reference handbook.* London,

    UK: SAGE Publications, Inc. Author.

Gower, R., Phillips, D., & Walters, S. (1995). *Teaching practice: A handbook for*

    teachers in training. Oxford: Macmillan Education.

Hadi-Tabassum, S. (2005). *Language, space and power: A critical look at bilingual*

    education. Frankfurt Lodge, UK: Mutilingual Matters Ltd.

Harmer, J. (2001). *The practice of English language teaching* (3rd ed.). Pearson

    Education Limited.

Harmer, J. (2007). *The practice of English Language teaching* (4th ed.). Cambridge:

    Pearson Longman.

Harmer, J. (2007). *How to teach English* (4th ed.). New York: Pearson Longman.

Haycraft, J. (1978). *An introduction to English Language Teaching.* London, UK:

    Longman Group Ltd.

House, S., Alonso, R., Banks, M., Cerezo, L., Duran, R., Hobbs, V., & Paran, A.

    (2011). *Practicum* (1st ed.). Barcelona: Editorial Graó.

House, S., Beltran, F., Hobbs, V., Llinares, A., Motleram, G., Paran, A., &

    Whitlaker, R. (2011). *Theory and practice in English language teaching* (1st

    ed.). Barcelona: Editorial Graó.

Kral, T. Eds. (1994). *Teacher development making the right moves.* Washington, DC:

    English Language Program Division. Author.

Keefe, J.W. (1979). *Students learning styles: diagnostic and prescribing programs*.

    Reston, VA: national Association of Secondary School Principals.

Larsen-Freeman, D. (2000). *Techniques and principles in language teaching* (2nd

    ed.). Oxford University Press.

Lewis, M. & Hill, J. (1992). *Practical techniques for language teaching.* London,

    GB: Language Teaching Publications.

Lightbown, P. M., & Spada, N. (2006). *How languages are learned* (3rd ed.). Oxford

    University Press.

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

    Publishers.

Littlewood, W. (1984). *Foreign and second language learning: Language acquisition research and its implications for the classroom.* Cambridge University Press.

McDonough, S. H. (1986). *Psychology in foreign language teaching* (2nd ed.). London, GB: George Allen & Unwin Ltd.

McLeod, J., Fisher, J., & Hoover, G. (2003). *The key elements of classroom management: Managing time and space, student behavior, and instructional strategies.* USA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Ministerio de Educación y Cultura. (2008). *Programa nacional de Inglés*. División Nacional de Idiomas Extranjeros / Proyecto CRADLE. Quito: Ecuador

Mukalel, J. C. (1998). *Approaches to English language teaching*. New Dehli: Discovery Publishing House.

Narayanan, R., Rajasekaran , N., & Iyyappan, S. (2008). Some factors affecting English learning at tertiary level. *Iranian Journal of Language Studies (IJLS), 2*(4), 485-512.

Nolasco, R., & Arthur, L. (1995). *Large classes.* Hertfordshire: Phoenix ELT.

Nunan, D. (1995). *Language teaching methodology*. New York: Phoenix ELT.

Randall, M., & Thornton, B. (2011). Advising and supporting teachers. Cambridge University Press.

Richards, J. C. & Rodgers, T. S. (2001). *Approaches and methods in language teaching* (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press.

Richards, J. C. (1999). *Language teaching awareness: A guide to exploring beliefs and practices.* Cambridge University Press.

Richards, J. C. (2001). *Curriculum development in language teaching.* Cambridge
    University Press.

Ridling, Z. (1994). *The effects of three seating arrangements on teachers: Use of
    selective interactive behaviors.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the
    American Educational Research Association, New Orlans.

Saricoban, A., & Sakizli, S. (2006). Factors influencing how teachers manage their
    classrooms. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies, 2*, 12-26.

Satheesh, K. J. (2012). *Creating conducive classroom climate*. Retrieved from
    http://www.articlesbase.com/education-articles/creating-conducive-
    classroom-climate-256406.html

Senescyt. (2012). *Bases de postulación programa de becas para "docentes de inglés
    para 8º año de EGB a 3º de bachillerato en establecimientos fiscales - enseña
    inglés".* Retrieved from http://www.senescyt.gob.ec/documents/240658/
    394760/bases_profesores_de_ingles+14-03-12+ultimas.pdf

Siders, K. (2011). *How to work with teaching aids.* Retrieved from
    http://www.howtodothings.com/education/a3096-how-to-work-with-
    teaching-aids.html

Spratt, M., Pulverness, A., & Williams, M. (2005). *The TKT teaching knowledge test
    course.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ur, P. (1991). *A course in language teaching.* Cambridge University Press.

Woodward, T. (2001). *Planning lessons and courses: Designing sequences of work
    for the language classroom.* Cambridge University Press.

ANNEXES

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

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION:	
DATE:	
YEAR:	

1. Which level of education do you have?

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

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

Students' Needs *(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_____

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:	

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. Cosideras que las actividades realizadas en clase son:

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

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

YES ( )	NO ( )

¿Por qué?
_____
_____

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

YES ( )	NO ( )

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

YES ( )	NO ( )

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

YES ( )	NO ( )

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

YES ( )	NO ( )

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

YES   (   )   NO   (   )

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

YES   (   )   NO   (   )

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

YES   (   )   NO   (   )

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

YES   (   )   NO   (   )

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

YES   (   )   NO   (   )

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

YES   (   )   NO   (   )

GRACIAS!!!!!

UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA PARTICULAR DE LOJA

La Universidad Católica de Loja

MODALIDA ABIERTA Y A DISTANCIA
CARRERA DE INGLES
OBSERVATION SHEET

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION:	
DATE:	
YEAR(desde 8vo básica a 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 ( )