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

TRABAJO DE FIN DE TITULACIÓN

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate my thesis to my family, who has truly supported me from the very beginning of my professional career and my whole life as well.

I would also like to dedicate this thesis to my beloved girlfriend and friend, Arelys Salavarría, who was continuously supporting and encouraging me to do my best and achieve the goals I have set in my personal and professional life.

And of course I would like to dedicate this thesis to my very missed and thought Mother, whom I know is very happy to see -from Heaven- his little kid becoming a professional. All the effort is for her. And a special dedication to the One who could make this possible, the One who has given me everything I've got, the One who has made me whom I am, the One who directed me trough the right path, thanks a lot My God.

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I have always wanted to write an acknowledgement and I feel very, very happy that this is my first one, and I am sure this is not going to be the last one.

The fact itself of writing these words make me remember those times when I found it hardly impossible to do it due to my social condition and my personal problems; but a voice inside of me used to say loudly and constantly: "Victor, you are almost there. You can do it. You can…" and I guess It was right.

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The enormous effort, the sleepless nights, the non-eating days, no going-to class (to my Chinese classes), and so forth…were paradoxically good.

Every time we want to get something, we do have to persist and insist on it until we get it. This is a vivid experienced I have just had when working on my thesis and it is a real example of perseverance I can now share with my family, my friends and why not, my future children.

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to analyse the factors that influence the English language teaching-learning process in Ecuadorian private high schools. The method used in this research was quantitative.

To obtain the collected data, some questionnaires, for teachers and students, as well as observation classes with their corresponding note-taking were used as instruments. Additionally, the researcher found it necessary to include a little survey for the participants.

A total of five high schools in Guayaquil, Ecuador were selected. Teachers and students' behaviour and attitudes were progressively observed in every single class to obtain information concerning attention, on the students' side, as well as reactions on the teachers and students. Students' age ranged from 12-18, which means classes from Educación Básica and 3rd year of senior high school were taken into consideration.

The research showed that most of the teachers in private high schools did not have at least, an English Bachelor's Degree that certifies that these teachers could impart English classes. Very few teachers had an English Master's Degree and the classes were truly planned, organised, well prepared, and above all, dynamic and interesting classes.

KEYWORDS: factors, teachers, students, teaching-learning

RESUMEN

El propósito de esta investigación es analizar los factores que afectan el proceso enseñanza-aprendizaje del idioma inglés en los colegios privados del Ecuador. El método utilizado en ésta investigación fue cuantitativa.

Para obtener la información recolectada se utilizó instrumentos tales como cuestionarios a los profesores y a estudiantes, a más de observaciones de clases con sus respectivos apuntes. Asimismo, el investigador encontró necesario incluir una pequeña encuesta a los participantes.

Se seleccionó un total de cinco colegios en la ciudad de Guayaquil, Ecuador. Durante la investigación se monitoreó progresivamente el comportamiento y actitudes tanto de los estudiantes como de los profesores, para así obtener información concerniente a la atención prestada por alumnos, a más de reacciones de por parte de los docentes. Las edades de los estudiantes oscilaban entre 12-18, es decir, los participantes fueron estudiantes de Educación Básica y Bachillerato.

Los resultados de la investigación mostraron que la mayoría de los docentes de los colegios privados no tienen al menos una Licenciatura en inglés que certifique que dicho profesional puede impartir clases en éste idioma. Los pocos maestros que tenían una Maestría en ingles, mostraron clases organizadas, planeadas, muy bien preparadas y sobre todo, clases dinámicas e interesantes.

PALABRAS CLAVES: factores, profesores, estudiantes, enseñanza-aprendizaje

INTRODUCTION

English is used in almost all the countries around the world and it is used for different reasons. Some people use it for business, some for work, and o some other people use it for travels, etc. English is so important that nowadays it is the language of science and technology. Someone who does not speak this language cannot go into any of these two fields. For non-speaking English countries like Ecuador, the responsibility lies on teachers, who are the ones in charge to teach English at schools, high schools, universities, etc. Therefore, English has to be entrusted to someone who has expertise, techniques, methods and devotion to teaching.

The purpose of this research is to identify students' English level and their needs in the classroom as well as to determine the classroom conditions in which English lessons take place so that the characteristics of in-service English teachers could be identified. Since educational institutions play an important role, this research also seeks to determine institutional facilities and norms regarding quality education.

Previous studies on this field have already been conducted in more than one occasion. For instance, Aduwa-Ogiegbaen and Iyamu (2006) in their research wanted to inform whether teachers used instructional resources in teaching English or not, and the correct method to teaching English as well. The instruments used in their study were not deep enough as in this research, for instance, factors concerning teachers, students, classrooms and the educational institutions which help envision these various aspects that were not seen in Aduwa-Ogiegbaen and Iyamu's (2006) study. However, it should

be highlighted that the research they conducted was in public schools while this research was conducted in private high schools.

Results in the study revealed that modern instructional technologies by English language teachers were not frequently used and poor use of teaching techniques in their English language lessons were observed.

Alsayed (2003) conducted a study which sought to investigate some factors that contributed to success in learning English as a foreign language. Though, the research conducted by Alsayed (2003) was significant in many aspects concerning the student's need s basically, it could be observed that there was a lack of many other factors to be considered so that the research was much richer and abundant in contributions regarding the process of learning English as a Foreign Language. Consequently, it is observable that this research is widely open to cover different factors in relation to not only the learning process and students' need, but the teaching process as well. In Alsayed's study, the results showed that motivation played a very important role in success in learning English as a foreign language, and he asseverated that language learning can be enhanced through motivating students to get high marks.

On the other hand, Salim (1996), sought to explore both the social and the cognitive dimensions of learning. The research he proposed was certainly very interesting regarding the fact that social factors were not taken into consideration in the present research. Social factors could probably play an important role in the teaching-learning process of English. His study showed that the students who read culturally

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familiar texts received higher reading-comprehension scores than the students who read culturally unfamiliar texts; therefore, the fact of being in contact with familiar topics or events makes students' learning much easier.

Salim's research also has its limitations, for instance the participants were all from 8th grades. On the one hand, in order to have a wider perspective it is advisable to have a much larger number of participants should have been taken. On the other hand, two schools it not enough to obtain validity as well as reliability. The results demonstrated that the attitudes students had towards English were basically based on instrumentation rather than the ingratiation of the four skills; however, their attitude towards the English learning situation was positive.

Ultimately, the final purpose of this research pretends to contribute to the teaching-learning process of English as a Foreign Language, Second Language or as a complementary language in Ecuadorian private high schools. In other words, this research seeks to help teachers in general firstly, since it was observed lack of preparation of teachers as well as a very poor commitment. It also seeks to help not only the observed students or institutions, but the whole community of students in the country who are involved in the process of learning English, so that they could improve and potentiate their knowledge and skills. Consequently, this research is actually concerns the board of directors of educational institutions and the ones who control or are in charge of the educational policies of the country.

The present research also had its own limitations. For instance, one of the biggest limitations found was that the time of year when the research was conducted was not favourable at all because the research took place during the month of November, which is a very troubled and busy month in the Coast of Ecuador because during this month students from the 3rd year of senior high school are preparing themselves for the final examinations in some high schools, or most fairs and open houses take place during this month too. Consequently, most teachers and students were working and thinking about different activities from the syllabus.

In addition, even if the main purpose of the questionnaire was not to measure students' level of English, the researcher found it quite relevant for the investigation to measure student's level of English since it had to do with what they have learnt during their learning process; therefore, the design of the students' questionnaire was a limitation because it was not written in the target language, but in Spanish.

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METHOD

Setting and Participants

This research was conducted in 2012 in 5 private high schools in Guayaquil, Ecuador. The participants that were selected were students from Educación Básica to 3rd year of senior high school; both girls and boys with ages raging from 12 to 18 years old. Social class concerning high school varied insignificantly.

Procedures

To initiate this research a lot of investigation was first done. The researcher first needed to know of previous studies on the field. A lot of data were collected and meticulously scrutinised to acquire as much knowledge and information as possible. Books and the Internet were the main sources of information for researcher to learn and in some cases, remember about some factors concerning teachers, students, classrooms and educational institutions; for instance, teaching techniques and methods, approaches; class size, students' needs amongst others. After the data collection was finished, the research took place.

Class observation and questionnaires were mainly used in this research. An additional survey was also applied to the 15 teachers and the 15 students as well. The process started by observing three teachers per high school –one per class-. The class observation was as thorough as possible. The researcher was sitting right at the bottom of the class, taking notes in a notebook for later revision.

After the class hour was finished, the teachers were interviewed in English, trying to make the conversation as natural as possible. The main objective in the conversation was to measure teachers' level of English and to confirm or compare the information they would later fill in the questionnaire. This information was also written down and labelled on a CEFR chart provided by the Univerdidad Técnica Particlar de Loja. The obtained information was also kept for later revision. The researcher considered reasonable to approach the teachers a few minutes later they had the conversation to make the teacher fill a questionnaire.

Similar procedure was applied to one randomly selected student per class to fill the questionnaire. Other students were also chosen to apply the survey on them. The English level of the students was somehow measured with the survey.

Once the researcher finished observing the 15 classes, the collected data needed to be analysed, described and interpreted to show the results the research showed. This study used a quantitative method. Pie charts were used since they can give a better view of the results thanks to the percentages they show.

DISCUSSION

Literature Review

English is without a doubt an important language for most people to learn for many reasons, no matter the country or age they are. Nehru (as cited in Tiwari, 2010) stresses that English is a language used for political, and industrial relations with the world and he also emphasises that English is also the major window of our modern world.

As years pass, most people have the need of using English for studies purposes, business, travelling, and so forth; the importance of it has increased more and more amongst us. Ecuador is not an exception as has been mentioned by the Ministry of Education of this country that is about beginning a new promising project. The project is called *English Enrichment as a Foreign Language*. This let us know the fact that English has a real impact all over the globe because of its use and irrefutably enormous need.

During decades, experts in the language have tried different ways to teach the language effectively which has caused an evolution in the methods and approaches proposed for this purpose. In the following section some of the most important approaches and methods will be mentioned as well as some studies and elements concerning the English teaching and learning.

Teaching Approaches and Methods

The first method to be introduced will be Total Physical Response followed by cooperative language learning approach, the grammar-translation method, task-based instruction method and finally Content-based instruction approach.

Total physical response (TPR) is a method acquired by repetition and most importantly, by doing, just as our mother language is learnt from the very beginning of our lives. TPR is then based on the way children acquire their mother language and it can be engaging as it involves body movements (Raman, 2004). The name of Total Physical Response is given to this method because it uses or implements "orders or commands" to instruct students while the class is imparted by the teachers. Students will respond the commands using their bodies to accomplish the instructions teachers give.

Asher (as cited in Larsen-Freeman, & Anderson, 2011, p. 104) claims that the fastest and least stressful way to achieve understanding of any target language is to follow directions uttered by the instructor.

The use of the imperative is a very important strategy through teachers can direct student's behaviour. Some other activities, apart from imperative, that can be used in this method are role-plays and action sequence. Some examples of how commands could be used will be presented in the following examples "Take out a piece of paper" or "Write the address on the envelope" (Larsen-Freeman, & Anderson, 2011, p. 112).

Cooperative Language Learning (CLL) is an approach which teachers use to instruct students as a group that is expected to work together. Some authors call this approach by the name of Collaborative Learning. This approach works well especially when working with teenagers because sometimes some students at that age want to be better or overshadow their partners. Johnson, Johnson, & Holubec (as cited in Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 192) emphasize that CLL is a good choice that teachers can use to work in class, given the fact that CLL in this context seek to raise achievement of all

students, help students build positive relationship among students, and replace the competence organisational structure of most classrooms and schools with a team-based, high-performance organisational structure. Hence, students who work under the CLL approach will share not only information, but they will also learn something from their partners (Arnold, 1999).

The Grammar-translation method (also called the traditional method) is perhaps one of the most common methods, or at least it is a method most teachers have heard about considering that it has been used since the 17th century for the teaching of Greek and Latin.

In this method reading and writing are the most important skills to be developed because translation requires interpretation and reporting. Nevertheless, this method also has its own negative points. Richards & Rodgers (2001) state that reading and writing are the major focus and little or no systematic attention is paid to speaking or listening. Furthermore, it creates frustration for students; for instance, it is a method for which there is no theory (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Additionally, Stern (as cited in Byram, 2004) suggests four defects which lead to the failure of the grammar-translation method. These defects are overemphasis of grammar rules, limitations of practice techniques, sheer size of the memorisation and lack of coherence with language facts.

Task-based instruction (TBI) is a method in which "tasks" will be put into practise in the activities to be imparted in the teachers' lessons. Consequently, this method is actually concerned about tasks students have to solve; this may be in groups or individually.

The activities this method offers are of students' interest considering that students are motivated by doing tasks that prepare themselves for the real world, i.e. students will be working on something they feel pleased with and motivated for. Working on something that you like or working on something you truly need to use in life will make things easier to acquire and assimilate. Feez (as cited in Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 224) suggests that the key assumptions of task-based instruction are summarised as: the focus is on process rather than the product.

Some activities that can be used by the teacher when working with the Task-Based Instruction method could be completing one another's personal chart, solving a riddle, or leaving a message to a friend or family member who is not with you at that moment.

Content-based instruction (CBI) is an approach in which students learn about something with the use of the target language to assist themselves do this so that students could be learning about physics, math, or any other subject, but using English, i.e. students will be capable of using what they know in different contents, with the aid of the target language. According to Richards & Rodgers (2001) "content … frequently refers to the substance or subject matter that we learn or communicate through language rather than the language used to convey it". It is believed that the Content-based instruction approach works better, or has more benefits for learners who speak English as a second language.

Considering that some methods and approaches have been seen and analysed, other factors in the field of English teaching will be also introduced. It is known that

good or extraordinarily good classes cannot be done or prepared just by applying the different methods and approaches already mentioned for the reason that there are other factors to be taken into account when teaching English to students.

Managing Learning

One way to manage students' learning is by giving instructions to students, which is more difficult than it seems (Dixie, 2003). One way to give students instructions is by catching student's attention.   Giving instructions is a very hard task for teachers to take into account considering that "the importance of doing this is compounded if you are teaching practical lessons where pupils have a degree of freedom to use the resources located at various points in the classroom" (Dixie, 2003, p. 30).

Another way to manage learning for teachers to know is the right moment transitions have to be made –the change from one activity to another- because "it demands on students to do three things at the same time: mentally close out one task, prepare for the next one and refocus their mental energy on a new topic" (Thompson, 2009, p. 291). Similarly, Weistein (2006) suggests that a transition has to be finished and then change students' behaviour and attention to the new topic . On the other hand, organisation could also be a hard thing for teachers to deal with. Kelly (2010) suggests that "Organisation can seem difficult at first because it requires some discipline on your part".

The fact of knowing what to do at the right time will help a lot when teaching. This could be done by the help of planning. Lesson plans will help teachers to see the correct moment to make transitions.

Another important factor concerning managing learning is feedback. Giving feedback is certainly important to provide clear response on students' performances, even so; "it is better to give occasional, but focused feedback on one thing at a time rather than overwhelm students with too much information" (Richards, Halls & Proctor, 1998, p. 14).

Lesson Design

Good classes are definitely related to good planning. Butt (2006) states that it is not magic what we do in class, but the result of preparation before being in front of the students. Well-structured classes are the clear evidence of good planning. Butt (2006) also explains that good preparation will be noted by our students. Similarly, Harmer (2007) suggests that students will perceive whether a teacher dedicated time to prepare his classes or not. Although planning is used for teachers to have a clearer and better idea of what it is intended to do in class, doing exactly what our planning says is not what teachers or students expect; it can vary according to certain situations, for instance, students' abilities or students' deficiency as well (Richards & Farrell, 2011).

Planning sheets do not have a determined format. Harmer (2007) claims that there are different types of formats and they will differ from teacher to teacher or from institution to institution, nevertheless, they all should contain the following parts: description of the data, aims and objectives, procedure, anticipated problems, extra activities/material, material to be used in the lesson.

Class Size

   Class size is an issue concerning to everyone who wants to be a teacher. What is the right number of students there should be per class? Are there too many students in my class? Is it too large, or it is too small? These might be some of the very usual questions one could possibly ask oneself. In previous studies, Finn, Pannozzo, & Achilles(as cited in Bray & Kehle, 2011) indicate that less than 20 students per class is considered small, and more than 20 is considered a large one.

   Even if we can talk about the advantages of small classes, some research has been criticised for its small sample (Bray & Kehle, 2011). However, Finn Pannozzo, & Achilles on their study refer to better results to small classes since teachers give or dedicate more time to students as they would not do with larger groups (as cited in Bray & Kehle, 2011). Similarly, Nye, Hedges & Konstatopolous (as cited in Bray & Kehle, 2011) state in a passage that students who needed more help or special help went better in classes with less than 20 students.

   "Different class sizes may well involve different dynamics, that influence both teachers and pupils" (Blatchford, 2003, p. 10). This author emphasizes that even a small class of 15 students could be difficult to control if 5 of those students show emotional or behavioural difficulties or if it is hard for these students to concentrate.

   As has been shown, opinions in relation to class size are certainly divided. This piece of information makes us conclude that more research should be done regarding this aspect.

Classroom Space and Seating Arrangement

Rosenfield, Lambert, & Black (as cited in Savage & Savage 2009, p. 68) emphasize that the way seats are placed in the class can tell us a lot about the interaction and behaviour students have towards teachers; information which is close to what Weistein (as cited in Savage & Savage, 2009, 68) found, expressing that seating arrangement influenced attitude students have with respect to the class and the teacher.

Savage & Savage (2009) explains that the way desks are arranged depends on the objective to be obtained or achieved during our classes, which let us assume the positions of the seats can be varied as required.

The most common seating arrangements are the semicircles, the clusters and of course, the rows. The seating arrangement is closely related to the space in the class. McLeod, Fisher & Hoover (2003) affirm that "another major consideration in arranging student's seating is the area of each student's personal space", and "…the dimensions of the room, the number of students, and the necessary work and storage areas determine this". Similarly Moore (2011) asseverates that students sometimes do not have enough space to go through the class and sit on their seats properly.

Colombo (2011) emphasizes that "the spatial design of a classroom provides a framework for the classroom curricula, and this is critical for effective differentiation of instruction". Space is considered a learning resource for teachers who work with infants since children need space to move around to learn. Pollard & Collins (2005) affirm that the space of a classroom has a very big impact on the attitude learners have as well as

the quality classes have; and organising space demands on teachers a big amount of thought as well.

Classroom and/or Teaching Resources

Resources and materials have an important value in the languages teaching (Verdú, Jorda & Coyle, 2002). Resource is everything a teacher could use as a complement to teach. There are different materials and resources. Verdú, Jorda & Coyle (2002) distinguish some educational resources which they believe are some of the most common ones teaching material; for instance, books, visual created by the teacher and/or students, technological equipment, cassettes, projectors, videos, and computers".

Gower, Phillips & Walters (2005) explained the use of some materials. Amongst these materials the coursebook, readers, reference books, authentic materials and video were mentioned. The use of materials in the teaching of English has changed significantly in relation with a few years ago. In the past, chalkboards, wallcharts, posters, and realia were used. Nowadays duplicated materials like worksheets, handout notes; overhead projectors and television sets, and computers can be found in schools (Ellington & Race, 1993).

It is well known for everyone that technological progress is increasing day after day, and nowadays, it is a very useful resource that many teachers and students use in their daily life. There is a great variety of topics for teachers and students to choose and practice on the Internet. Smith & Baber (2005) declares that most teachers have visited a web site, and noticed that the World Wide Web is an incredible source to teach students; the use of emails are of great help, too.

Classroom Observation

There are different ways of observing the class. A partner of yours can be asked to do so, or perhaps a trainee needs to observe your class for professional purposes or maybe your supervisor as well. Master (as cited in Richards & Farrell, 2011, p. 98) alleges that "…the observer should try to make the visit as non-invasive as possible" and he also asserts that there are different opinions regarding the fact that the observer should announce his or her presence before or just do it unexpectedly. In a previous study, Wajnryb (1993) affirms that one approach on class observation is the one suggesting that classroom observation attempts to find new ideas and means of looking through teaching.

Learning Styles

Learning styles has certainly been a very significant topic to discuss. Perhaps inquisitiveness or just curiosity of what learning styles are should have arisen to many teachers when hearing some co-workers or friends talking about learning styles. Possibly, even experienced teachers could have a misconception about the way students learn from a particular learning style or multiple intelligences (Kelly, 2010).

Van Blerkom (2009) emphasizes that learning styles refers to the way information is acquired, processed, and retained. Correspondingly, Lefever (1995) suggests that students can learn not only in one specific way, but in more than one. However, Sonbuchner (2009) expresses that students use the learning style they are strong in and do not use the one they are weaker in, since it is a good idea to work with the strong ability one has. Additionally, Orlich, Harder, Callahan, Trevisan & Brown

(2009) explains that students who have a different learning style from other students will understand problems in different ways and solve them in the different ways.

Kolb (as cited in Lefever, 1995) describes his four learning styles in the following way: imaginative learner, analytic learners, common sense learners and dynamic learners. On the other hand, Kelly (2010) enunciates three learning styles, being these as follow: visual, auditory and tactile/kinaesthetic.

Language aptitude

Ellis and Fotos (1999) assert that aptitude is a gift one might have to learn a foreign language. In the same way, Nikolov (2009) proposes that language aptitude learning is a special ability which is separate from other abilities. Conversely, Selinker and Gass (as cited in Hoosain & Salili, 2005, p. 373) allege that aptitude and attitude can be linked when talking about languages. Broughton (1980) explains that there have been many tests on whether aptitude has to do with learning a second language best or not, but it seems that none can actually tell us if a beginner learner has the aptitude to learn English. However, Ellis (1997) claims that a research conducted in the early 50's and 60's on language aptitude shows that language aptitude is related to success in L2. On the other hand, it has also been found that not everyone learns a language equally (Salim, 2001).

Having seen and read about some approaches and methods amongst some other important information on teaching and learning taken from different sources, some previous studies will be now introduced to better clarify the importance of English and how it is perceived, taught, learnt and understood in different parts of the world.

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Aduwa-Ogiegbaen & Iyamu (2006) conducted a research on 3000 senior secondary school students, who were randomly selected. His research had as main objective to inform if teachers used instructional resources in teaching English, and the correct method to teaching English as well. This study was conducted in Nigeria.

To carry out the research, the use of questionnaires and observation sheets were necessary. The questionnaires had different sections concerning type and location of ethnography and instructional resources used by the teachers and methods teachers frequently adopted for teaching English language.

The observations were carried out by some research assistants who were present in the classrooms. These observations were also used as data collection. The questionnaire contained information about instructional resources, teaching techniques and environment sections making a total of 27 items.

The study shows that Nigeria schools need appropriate instructional media and it also shows that the use of technologies such as audio and video, laboratories and computers can be more effective teaching tools for the English Language.

Salim (1996), in his study, sought to explore both the social and the cognitive dimensions of learning. The study, which was conducted in Israel, was applied in two schools with a total of 83 Jewish students. Instruments used in his study were attitude questionnaire, stories in Hebrew and English, and multiple-choice questions about the stories. Students who knew the stories were not taken into account to be part of the study. Attitudinal and motivational questionnaires in Hebrew were also used to measure their orientation towards English.

Participants were randomly assigned into four equal groups. Each group of participants received one story a day for three days in one of the following forms: Western stories in English**,** Western stories in Hebrew, Jewish stories in Hebrew, or Jewish stories in English.

The results shown by the study demonstrates to support both schema theory (Rumelhart, 1981, 1984) and the socio-educational models of Gardner (1983) and Wong-Fillmore (1991). Abu-Rabia (1996) concluded his study declaring that an implication of the present study that is relevant to the field of second-language learning and multicultural education is that language curricula are more meaningful when they relate to students' personal lives and cultural backgrounds.

Alsayed (2003) proposes, in his study conducted in Syria to fifty subjects picked from the British Council Records on basis of their International English Language Testing System (IELTS) test scores, to investigate some factors that contribute to success in learning English as a foreign language.

All the subjects were adults ranging 22 to 25 years old and they all had different academic backgrounds. Semi-structured interviews, which are a set of questions the interviewer use to ask the participant, lasted 10 minutes each, and they were used to every student. To avoid embarrassment or restrain, recordings were not used, but note-taking by the interviewer was used instead so that the conversation could be as natural as possible. Statistica, which is a software that provides data analyses, was used to find the relation between the four skills. This correlation was also calculated.

Alsayed's findings showed that motivation seems to be the most significant predictor of overall performance in English as a foreign language. His findings also showed that attitude does not seem to correlate with high achievement in English as a foreign language. Early first language acquisition correlates highly with aural skills, but has a relatively low correlation with reading and writing. However, it was found that early exposure to English has a high correlation with aural skills, but lower correlation with reading and writing. Finally, the findings show that social background has a moderate correlation with overall achievement in English as a foreign language.

Sayadian & Lashkarian (2010) tried to identify the societal factors and psychological factors that motivate learners to better perform in English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Additionally, they also intend to postulate a theoretical model subsuming these socio-psychological variables to clarify and predict the performance in EFL in Iran. The participants were 537 learners (210 male and 327 female) between the ages of 19 and 24. They were randomly selected from Yazd University.

The revised Persian version of Attitude Motivation Test Battery (AMTB), which is a questionnaire, was applied to identify Iranian university students' attitudes and motivation toward learning English as a foreign language.

The questionnaire was compounded of two mains sets of questions concerning assessment on attitude and motivation. The first set consists of a total of 53 questions. This set was divided into 7 different categories. The first category is comprised of ten questions designed to measure the learners' interests in foreign language. The second category consists of ten questions designed to measure attitudes toward English

speakers. The third category also consists of ten questions developed to measure attitudes toward learning English. The fourth category includes four questions provided to measure integrative orientation. The fifth category contains four questions to measure instrumental orientation. The sixth category consists of five questions measuring English class anxiety .The last category comprises of ten questions to measure parental encouragement.

The use of ANOVA, which is an analysis of variation that indicates if there are any differences between groups on some variable, was necessary to analyse different categories of motivation while the t-test was applied to check for the frequencies of subcategories for attitude with which the categories occurred. The questionnaire was designed to elicit information regarding each learner's integrative motivation, instrumental motivation, and attitude toward language learning.

In conclusion Iranian learners' attitude problems are a result of the culture in which they have been raised. Many English learners develop a love and hate attitude toward English, and this is evident in the contradictory data of the present study.

In summary, it is observed that the teaching of English concerns many aspects. Amongst those aspects some methods, approaches, and techniques have been presented. It has also been observed that some studies and investigations have been conducted by many researchers for decades and decades in order to obtain some new information about English teaching, the way students could possibly learn better, the dimension of a class, the number of students in class and even how chairs should be arranged to have a

well-structured class. It has been manifested that despite of the conducted research, more investigation should be done in many of the presented aspects.

Description, Analysis, and Interpretation of Results

To initiate this research, five private High Schools from Guayaquil, Ecuador were taken into account. Some class observations, interviews and surveys were applied to fifteen teachers and fifteen students. Three teachers from each high school were selected and one student per class was randomly chosen, making a total of fifteen teachers and fifteen students as well. In the coming paragraphs, a detailed analysis and interpretation of the quantitative results will be shown.

Quantitative Analysis

Factors Concerning Teachers

Which level of education do teachers have?
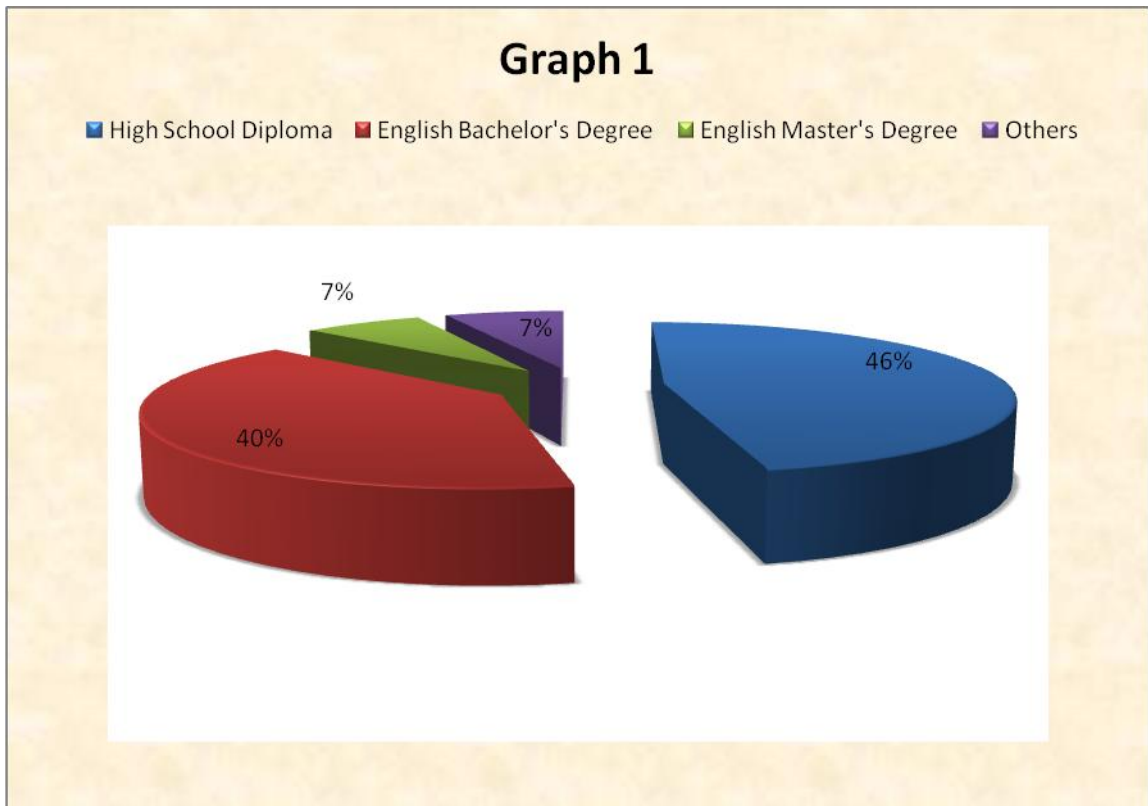
Author: Victor Almeida Pacheco
Source: Teacher's Questionnaire

Graphic 1 shows that forty-six percent of the English teachers had a High School Diploma, followed by forty percent of teachers who had an English Bachelor's Degree. Additionally, the graphic also presents a low seven percent of teachers who possessed a Master's Degree, while another seven percent did not have any degree or studies related to the teaching of English as a Foreign or Second Language.

It is not a myth that English is a very important language because of its use since the whole globe uses it for many purposes. For instance, business, studies, travelling, etc. Thus Neru (as cited in Tiwari, 2010) expressed that English is used for different purposes, may these be political, and for industrial relations. The ones who should be in charge to impart this language to the non-native mass are the English teachers, however it has been observed that the teachers' level of English was not as good as it should be, as the results show in the monitored schools in Guayaquil, Ecuador.

In more than one occasion it was observed that teachers did not have enough vocabulary to answer students' questions, for instance; and teachers pretended to not listen to their students or they simply avoided any kind of questions students made. Teachers' poor lexical was also evidenced at the moment the interview was done. Most teachers felt insecure or nervous.

Ninety five of the classes were teacher-centred. They spoke the whole time while no or little interaction of the students was clearly observed. The big problem the researcher found in the classrooms was the fact that these difficulties occurred not only to teachers who had High School Diploma, but also to teachers who had an English Bachelor's Degree.

Most observed teachers only had a High School Diploma, which is an alerting thing for our education system to take into account since English cannot be entrusted to people who do not have knowledge, techniques, pedagogy, methodology, etc. that an English teacher definitely should have. Unfortunately most classes showed lack of pedagogy and knowledge at the moment that teachers explained their lessons.

Which of the following methods was used in the classes?
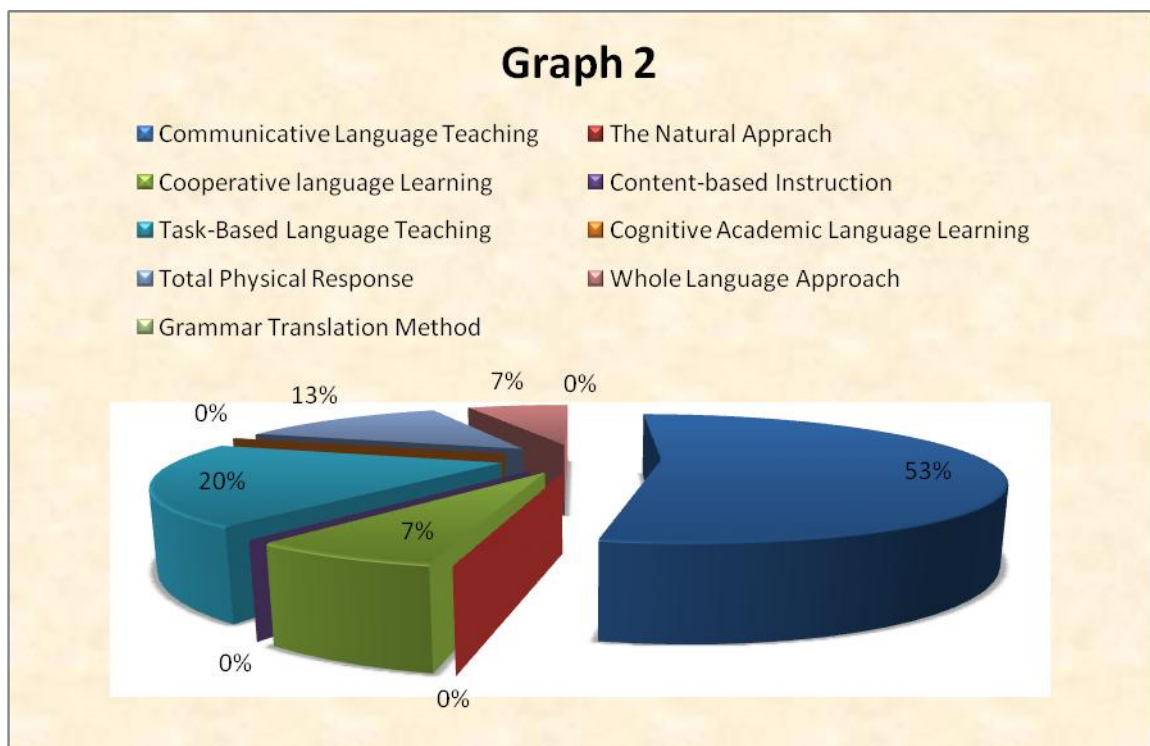
Author: Victor Almeida Pacheco
Source: Teacher's Questionnaire

One of the most used methods was The Communicative Language Teaching with fifty-three percent of acceptance from teachers. The Task-Based Instruction has twenty percent followed by Total Physical Response which has thirteen percent; and finally, the Cognitive Academic Language Learning, the Natural Approach, The Grammar

Translation and the Content-Based Instruction method have zero percent, as shown in graphic 2. The results shown in the table are in accordance to what it has been observed in classes.

Most teachers tended to use the Communicative Language Teaching and Task-based instruction in their classes. Despite of the acceptance of the CLT and TBI by teachers, it was also observed that teachers used other methods; however, these methods were not used adequately. In fact, not even the CLT was properly used. For instance, classes were always teacher-centred rather than student-centred, and poor or no use of extra material was used in class either.

It was evidenced that teachers did not recognise or really knew how to use the methods and/or approaches provided in the questionnaire. By the time teachers were filling the questionnaires they confirmed they did not know some of the given methods. In fact, teachers said they had never seen or heard about the Cognitive Academic Language Learning or the Natural Approach.

TBI was as used as the CLT. However, teachers paid too much thought to what their students had to present at the end of the class period. Conversely, Feez (as cited in Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 224) suggests that the key assumptions of task-based instruction are summarised as: the focus is on process rather than the product. But it is somehow debatable since when a well-conducted process might finish well too.

Nonetheless, most of the surveys students filled showed that students did like the way their teachers gave the lessons. Students did participate in class, but not as much as the method teachers were using in class, or the activities truly required.

Students only answered teachers' questions very briefly and sometimes they made groups to complete non-directed or monitored activities. Consequently, students mostly spoke about any other topics, except the one the teacher asked for, and what is worst, the target language was not used either.

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

Graph 3

Yes
60%

Otros
40%

No
40%
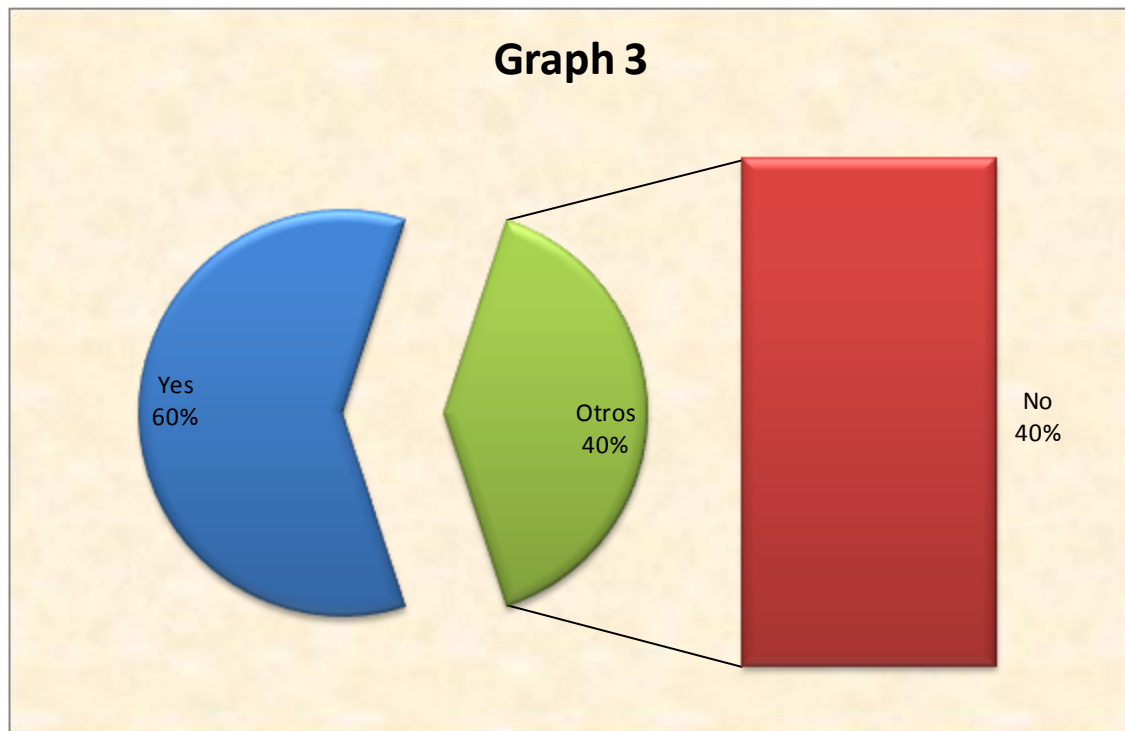
Author: Victor Almeida Pacheco
Source: Teacher's Questionnaire

The results shown in graphic 3 demonstrate that sixty percent of the teachers use whole-group activities. It also shows that forty percent of the teachers do not use whole-group activities.

The class observation showed that most of the teachers used whole-group activities almost the whole class hour, which is in accordance to the results on the chart.

The main idea of whole-group activities is to give everyone the chance to take part into the activities set by the teacher, but students did very little in the observed classes.

Whole-group activities did not seem to be good enough for students to be truly involved or emerged in class. This may be due to the way teachers approached the activities; i.e. lack of preparation was noticed in the majority of the observed classes. Teachers did not plan their classes since the instructions they gave were vague and unclear. On the other hand, students asseverated, according to the questionnaire they filled, that their teachers used a large variety of activities that allowed them interact amongst themselves, and made them feel motivated.

Teachers said they used this method because they found it interesting and easy for their pupils to do and follow during the given tasks. Some of the students even said that they liked very much the way teachers ordered chairs because they could interact and share with their partners. Though, during the interview the truth was another since students claimed their teachers did not vary the activities and they found it boring.

Asher (as cited in Larsen-Freeman, & Anderson, 2011, p. 104) claims that the fastest and least stressful way to achieve understanding of any target language is to follow directions uttered by the instructor, nevertheless it was so difficult for students to do so in the observed classes that most of them barely understood the instructions the teachers gave, hence they just repeated what their partners said or did, which means that no attention was paid to every student or brief monitoring at least.

Do teachers use individual activities to teach their lessons?

Graph 4

Yes ■ No ■

93%   7%   7%
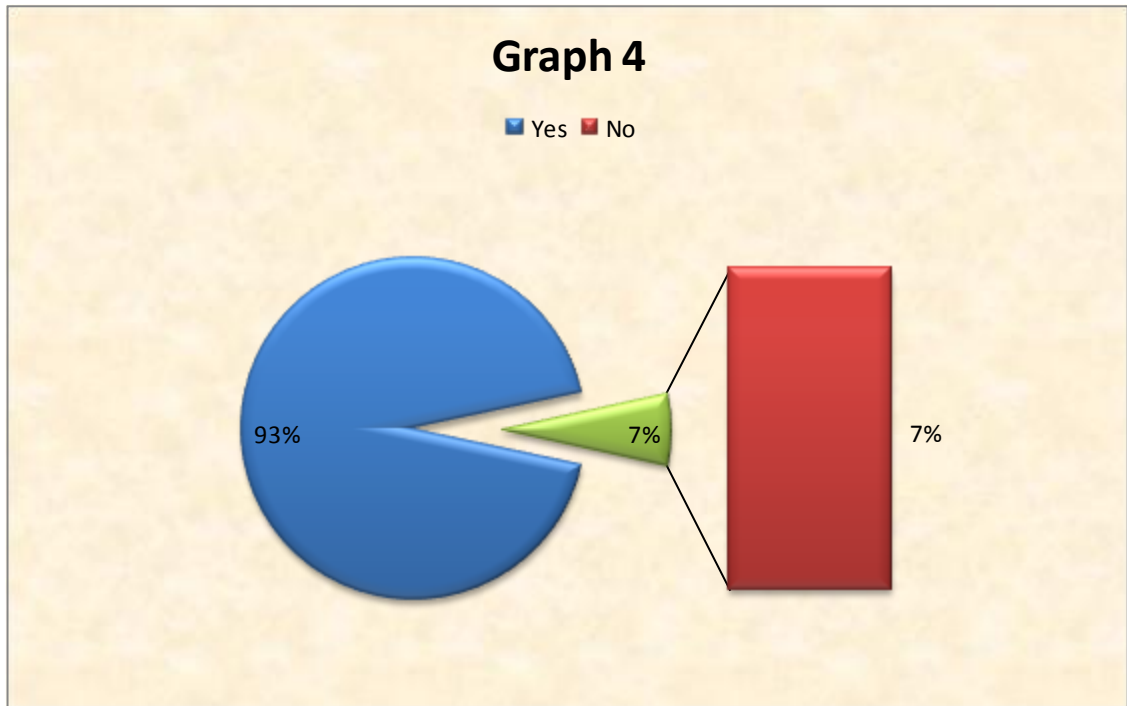
Author: Victor Almeida Pacheco
Source: Teacher's Questionnaire

Graphic 4 shows that ninety-three percent of the teachers use individual activities when giving their lessons, while seven percent of the teachers do not. The class observations, nevertheless, showed the opposite side. Almost all the teachers did not use individual work. Few teachers really used individual activities when imparting their lessons. Most of the classes were teacher-centred rather than student-centred. Students were not given time to work by themselves and no real chance to talk or interact was given either.

Teachers made students work on individual worksheets after a brief explanation, but no right monitoring was given. It was recognised by the researcher that the time

teachers gave students to work on the worksheets was too long and the instructions were not clear at all.

Dixie (2003) stated that one way to direct students' learning is by giving instructions which is one thing more difficult to do than it seems. Despite of the difficulty of giving instructions, it is not impossible to do so; though teachers did not show their best in this aspect.

Students said they liked the activities the teachers worked with, especially individual work because they could work alone and recognise how much and what they have learnt during the class period. Teachers, on the other hand, explained they used these activities because they could see who has got problems in the given topic.

It could be observed then that teachers did not have a clear idea of what individual activities are or how to use them in class properly, since the only thing students barely did was to work on long worksheets, which were very difficult to check together or correct; or students answer some questions teachers asked. Even if these questions were asked one by one, it cannot be seen as individual work really because question-answering activities can be done in any class.

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

Graph 5

Yes No

0%

100%
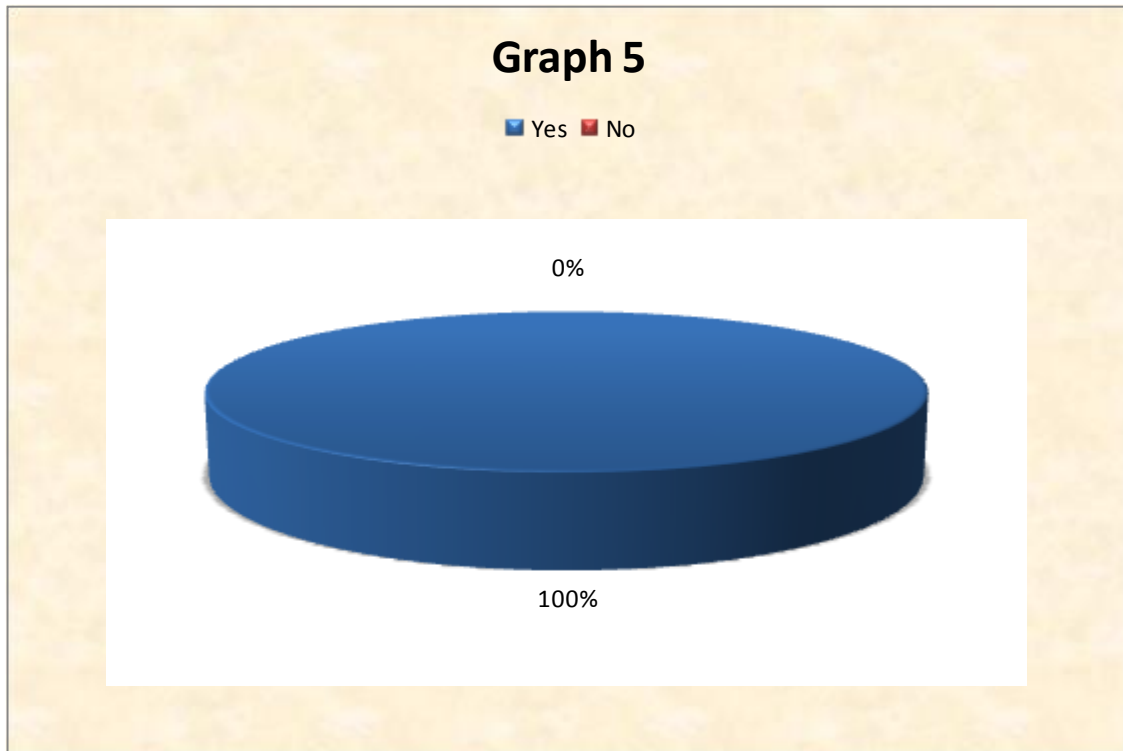
Author: Victor Almeida Pacheco
Source: Teacher's Questionnaire

An incredibly one hundred percent of teachers use group-work activities when giving their lessons as graphic 5 shows. The group-work activities is without a doubt one of the most used technique to teach English since it makes students share and learn one from another, nonetheless they were not really used very much in the observed classes.

It was observed that the scarce group-work activities teachers tried to do were also misused or not well planned. First teachers made the activity and then switched onto the class or vice versa. The problem here is that transitions were not properly used.

Weistein (2006) claimed that a transition has to be finished and then teachers have to change students' behaviour and attention to the new topic.

Teachers worked too much time on the activities, almost the whole class hour, consequenlty students got bored and did not feel mentally prepared to switch to another topic or follow the instructions teachers were giving.

Students claimed to like working with the activities their teachers do. Students also express that they feel attracted by the subject and show real interest as the questionnaires show; thought it was observed the other way in the classrooms and during the interview as well.

Teachers expressed they like working with this kind of activities because it would help students share knowledge and it would also help their pupils practise speaking. Some teachers also said working in groups helps the class be more dynamic and more interesting.

In spite of the use of group-work activities as a teaching technique, it could be identified that students liked the activities because they felt free to talk, and discuss about irrelevant topics or non-related topics to the subject. Students spoke in their mother language when the teachers were not monitoring, thus the target language was not used at all as it is expected.

Do teachers use English most of the time in their classes?
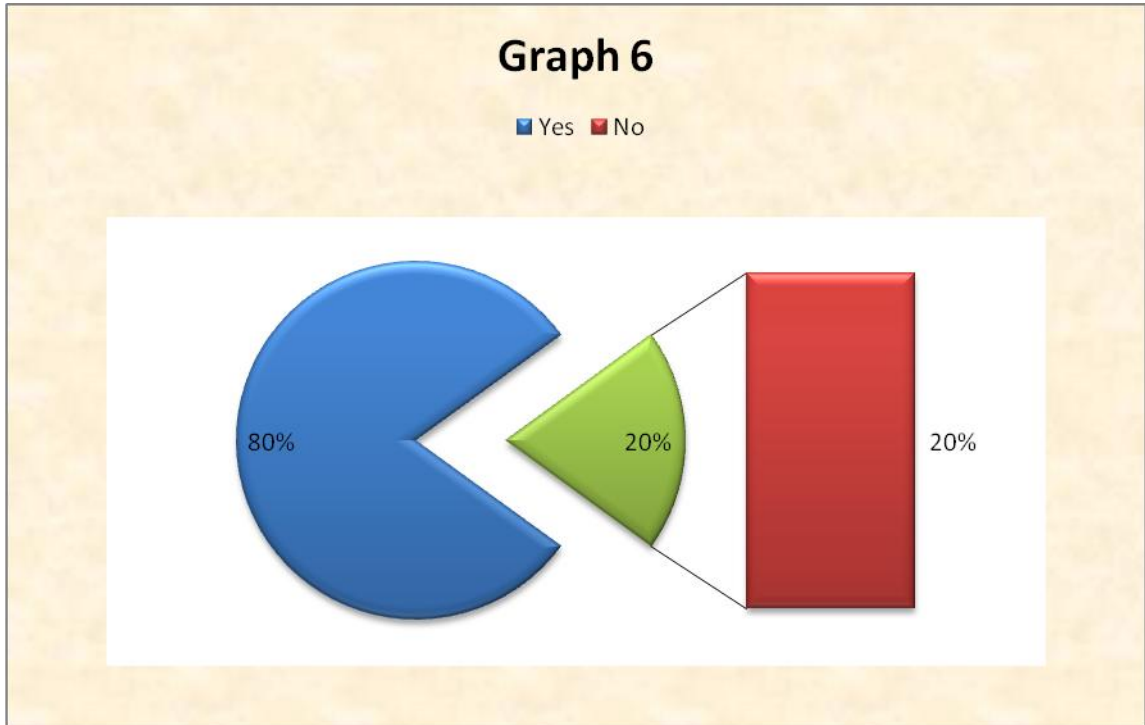
Author: Victor Almeida Pacheco
Source: Teacher's Questionnaire

Eighty percent of the teachers used English in class while twenty percent did not, as graphic 6 shows. Fortunately, English classes are taught in English in Ecuadorian private high schools, as it should be; but a much effective and efficient way to teach English should be using the target language the whole time, not only the first quarter of hour.

Teachers gave the instructions using English. The problem was that they explained grammar in both, Spanish and English. Another problem that could be easily detected was the lack of planning. Students asked teachers questions about the given topics and teachers did not have a right answer, so they tended to speak and explain in Spanish the grammar point they were explaining.

Butt (2006) determined that what a teacher does in class is not magic, but the result of preparation before the class starts, therefore a good planning takes time to do as well as patience and devotion to what it is been done.

It is assumed that teachers were afraid of making mistakes in front of the students according to what it was observed in the classrooms -teachers ignoring students' questions-. Most teachers had a very limited vocabulary resulting in Spanish-speaking lessons.

Some students who filled the questionnaires and some who did not fill the questionnaires were additionally asked, by the help of an interview, if they had ever attended English academies, institutes, etc., or if they had ever travelled to English speaking countries.

The results showed that most of the students in the observed high schools had studied English in academies and very few students had travelled. Most of the interviewed teachers, as it was said before, did not have an English Bachelor's Degree, hence most of the teachers have the same studies students do in the language because most teachers have also studied English only in academies. Consequently, teachers have the same knowledge in English as students do.

Do teachers plan their lessons?

Graph 7

■ Yes ■ No

0%

100%
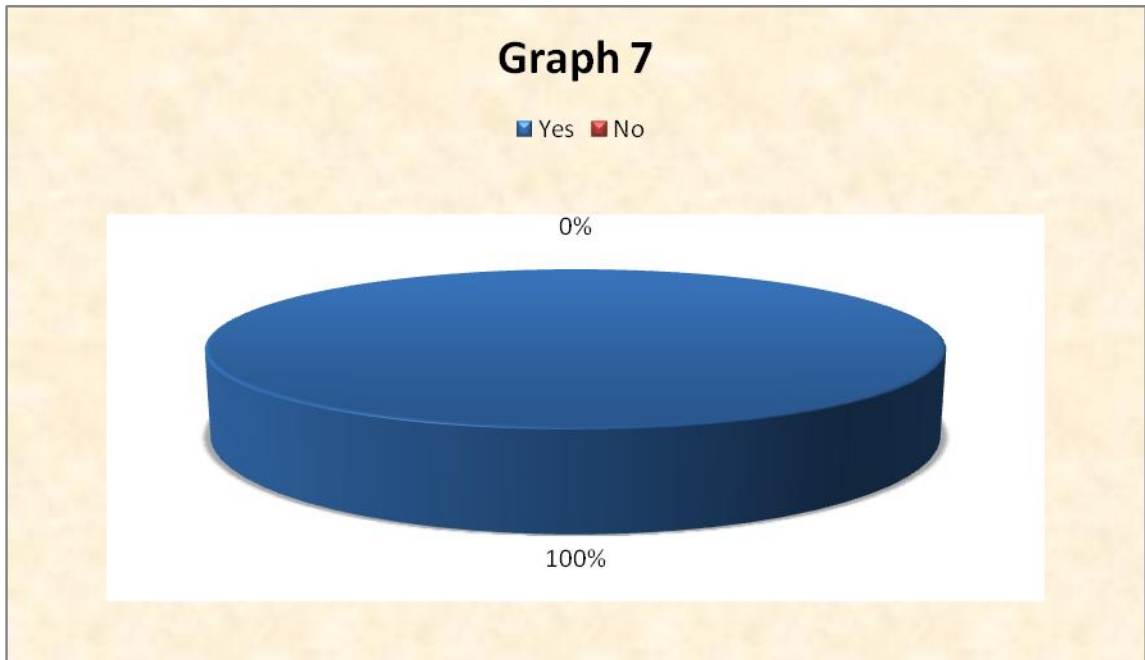
Author: Victor Almeida Pacheco
Source: Teacher's Questionnaire

One hundred percent of the interviewed teachers claimed that they did plan their lessons as graphic 7 shows. However, the observed classes demonstrated that no planning was done at all. Teachers never carried anything with them except for their English book and their markers. It could not be seen any additional resources or notes they had made before they started their classes.

Planning needs preparation. As Richards and Farrell (2011) explained, planning is used to have a clearer and better idea of what teachers want to do in class, but it does not have to be as rigid or strict since planning can vary according to the situation, students' need, etc.

One of the most difficult things for teachers do to is to plan; not because it is hard at all, but mainly because it takes time to do it as some of the interviewed teachers said.

Teachers also claimed that there was not a regular supervision on the coordinators or principals' side.

Basic aspects to be taken into account when planning are the objectives or goals, a warm up, the activities the teacher and the students are expected to do, the time each activity will last, the feedback, amongst others; but what the observed classes barely consisted of was a warm up and a quick feedback.

Most students seemed to like what they did in class. This may be because they did not do very much and had a lot of time to talk with their partners. Even if it seemed to be fine, it was not because students did not use the target language at least. On the other hand, it was also observed that some students did not understand the topics, especially when new grammar topics were explained, so they asked their partners or their teachers, but teachers answered students in Spanish.

Do teachers consider aspects such as discipline, timing, feedback, and instructions to teach their lessons?
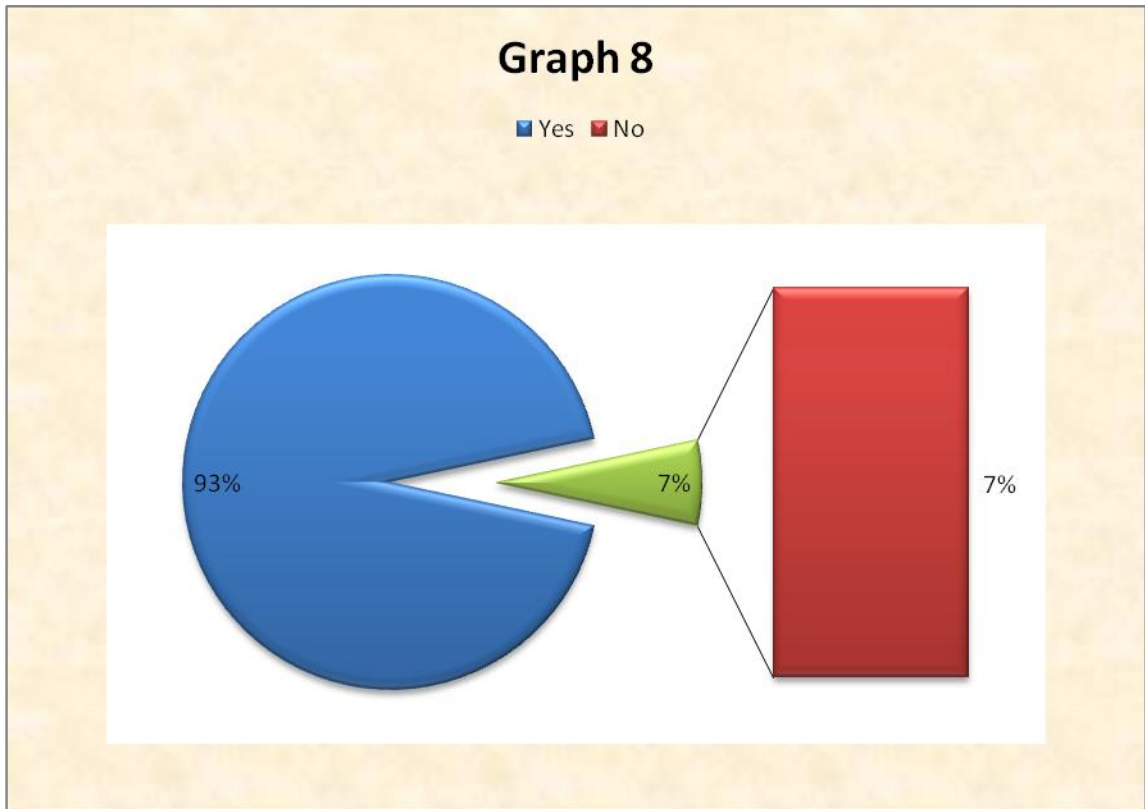
Author: Victor Almeida Pacheco
Source: Teacher's Questionnaire

Graphic 8 shows that ninety-three percent of the teachers consider aspects such as discipline, timing, feedback and instructions to teach their lessons while seven percent of the teachers do not consider any aspects. It is assumed that teachers selected *yes* thinking of some of the mentioned aspects, but not all of them. Most students asseverated their teachers controlled the classes and they thought their teachers also did the right feedback at the end of each class. Students also highlighted the fact that timing for each activity for controlled as well.

Discipline was the least aspect to be considered for teachers as the class observation indicated. Students spent their time doing what they wanted while the teachers were explaining their lessons to the three or four students in the first row.

Most teachers did not get students' attention when they were doing making noise or any act of indiscipline. Teachers just pretended not to see or listen to what their students were doing in class, therefore, students kept talking or interrupting the class as they wished.

Timing was considered to some extent and the activities teachers did in class were also considered, even when the activities seemed to be improvised in most of the classes. Talking about timing, every activity the teachers did in class was managed almost to perfection, even if they were too long or too short. Even when the classes were not planned at all, teachers controlled the timing quite good, for instance, they said this activity will take 10 minutes, and that was the exact time it took.

However, there were so many instructions to do at the same time that students did not understand what they were asked to do and indiscipline used to take place for that reason. Giving instructions is not quite easy thing to do as it was already mentioned, but it is a very important aspect to follow when teaching. Instructions must be as clear as possible so that students can easily understand.

Dixie (2003) claimed that one way to give students instructions is by catching students' attention. One way to attract student's attention is by making them look at you and listen to you, i.e. teachers need to have a variety of interesting activities students will like so that it would be easier for teacher to get students' attention. But if discipline

is not controlled, instructions will never be heard by students; hence instructions will never be clear. Feedback was viewed as a myth for most teachers in the observed classes. Very few teachers gave occasional feedback to their students and it mainly consisted of repetition of what they had already worked in class.

Do teachers consider students' needs to teach English successfully?
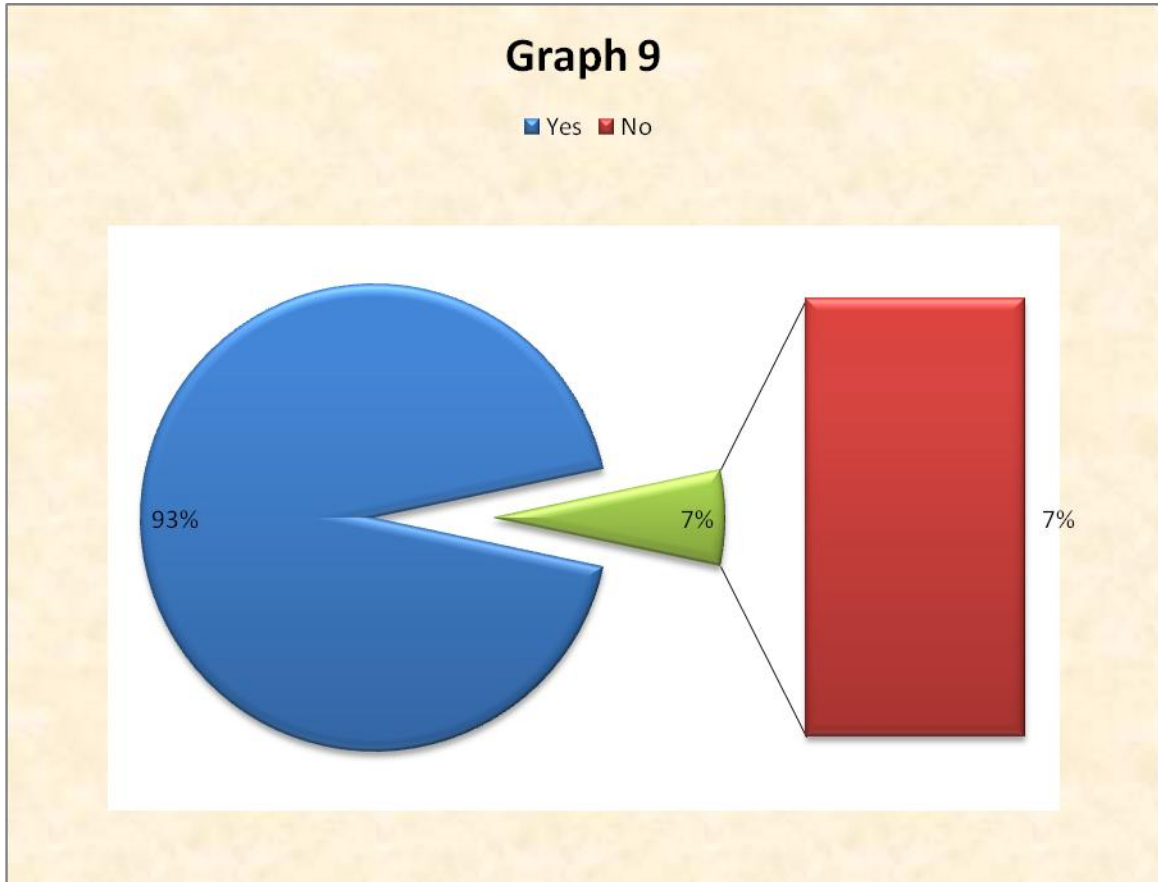
Author: Victor Almeida Pacheco
Source: Student's Questionnaire

If we take a look at the results shown on graphic 9, we will see that ninety-three percent of the teachers said that they considered students' need to teach English. Nevertheless the observation of classes showed a different reality. The classes given by teachers clearly lacked attention to students' needs. Students, however, expressed they like English class and how their teachers treated them. They believe teachers paid attention to their needs as the questionnaire showed.

Van Blerkom (2009) emphasized that learning styles refers to the way information is acquired, processed, and retained. The observed classes were taught for everyone at the same pace, no inclusion was observed, everyone was treated equally, as if they all learnt at the same speed.

Inclusion refers to the state of including everyone, paying special attention to the age, sex, health, race, social condition, beliefs etc. students have. Some of the teachers paid no attention to these aspects when forming groups. In one of the institutions there were some cases of students who could not walk well, so these students did not take part in the activities. Other cases were observed, too, for instance, students who did not sing because of their religion, consequently they did not participate in activity taking place in the classroom either.

Ellis and Fotos (1999) asserted that aptitude is a gift one might have to learn a foreign language. Not all the students in the observed classes liked English and some believed it was a difficult language to learn, however these aspects were not considered by the teachers. Furthermore teachers did not motivate their students to do their best in class or explain them the importance of English.

Since many of the English teachers in the private schools did not pay attention to the students' needs, more understanding regarding these aspects should certainly be required by teachers as well as institutions.

Do teachers consider students' level to teach English successfully?
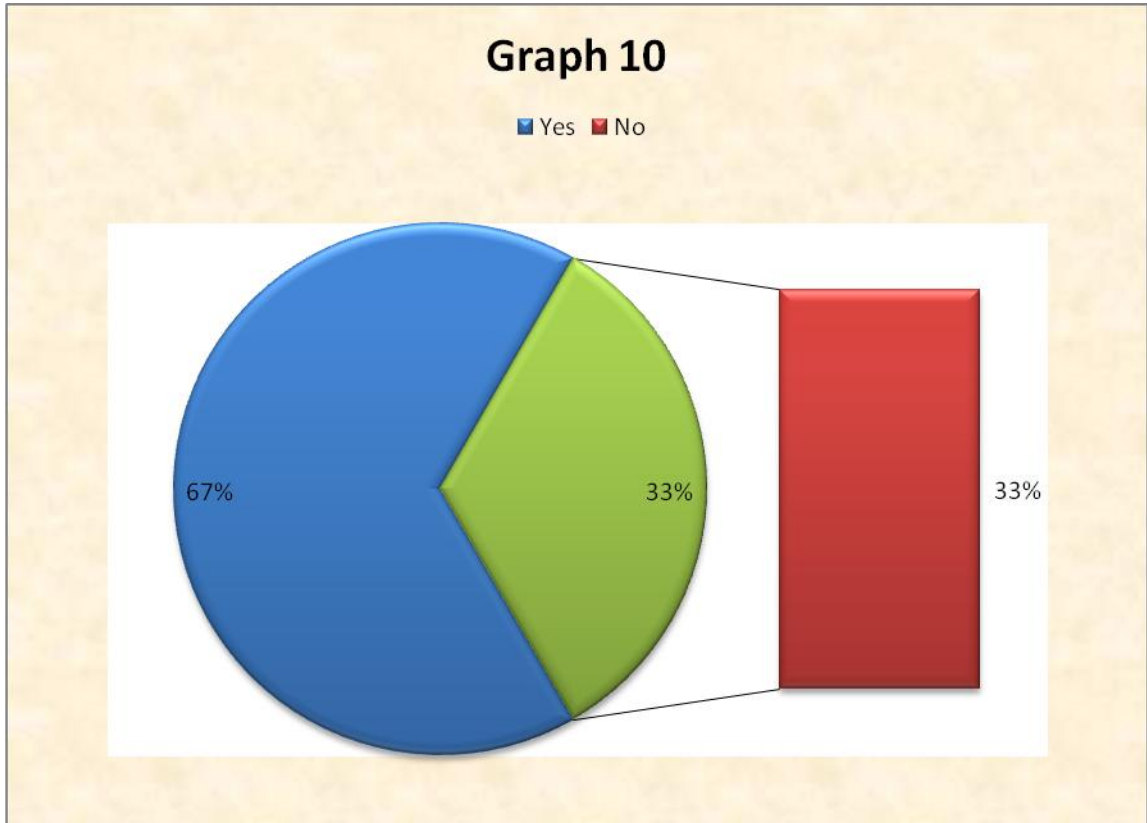
Author: Victor Almeida Pacheco
Source: Student's Questionnaire

Graphic 10 shows that sixty-seven percent of teachers considered students' level of English to teach and thirty-three percent did not consider students' level. Some teachers claimed that the institutions separated students into levels from the very beginning of the scholar year by the use of a placement test they owned; for instance one of the high schools divided students into 4 levels. First level (beginners), second level (intermediate), third level (high-intermediate) and forth level (advanced).

It was observed however that some of the students who were in higher levels did not have to be there, but in lower levels. The researcher, in several occasions asked the teachers why this is and they answered that it is the institutions that make the division

and not them, creating a problem for the students in class, such as lack of information or knowledge; thus teachers did not work considering students' real level or aptitude when teaching their lessons.

One important aspect to be taken when learning a new language is the particular language style each student has. Lefever (1995) suggests that students can learn not only in one specific way, but in more than one. If we pay attention to our students' level of English, it is strongly recommended to pay attention to how each student learns, i.e. he or she may be good but they need a different style to learn so that they could have a higher level.

Despite of the institutions' intervention in the classification of the students in their corresponding levels; teachers did not consider their students' level of English as the results above show. Even when teachers knew the big variety of levels they had in their classrooms, the activities they performed did not contemplate difficulty for the learners who did not belong into that particular group.

The researcher would classify as "low level students" to the students who had a low level of English compared to their partners and "high level students" the one who had a higher level of English than their partners did. Low level students did what they could do when possible or asked for helped to their partners, while high level students worked barely well on the activities because of the not-well given instructions.

However, most students claimed the classes were quite easy and some cases very easy, which was then revealed as not true in the interviews they had with the researcher. Low level students were hopefully helped by higher students in their groups, making

low level students learning easier and less frustrating, which is good to some extent because of the "companionship" it was evidenced when working, but not that good because it is the teachers' concern to think about this aspect of helping students work and progress in their learning.

Which is the level of the students?

Graph 11
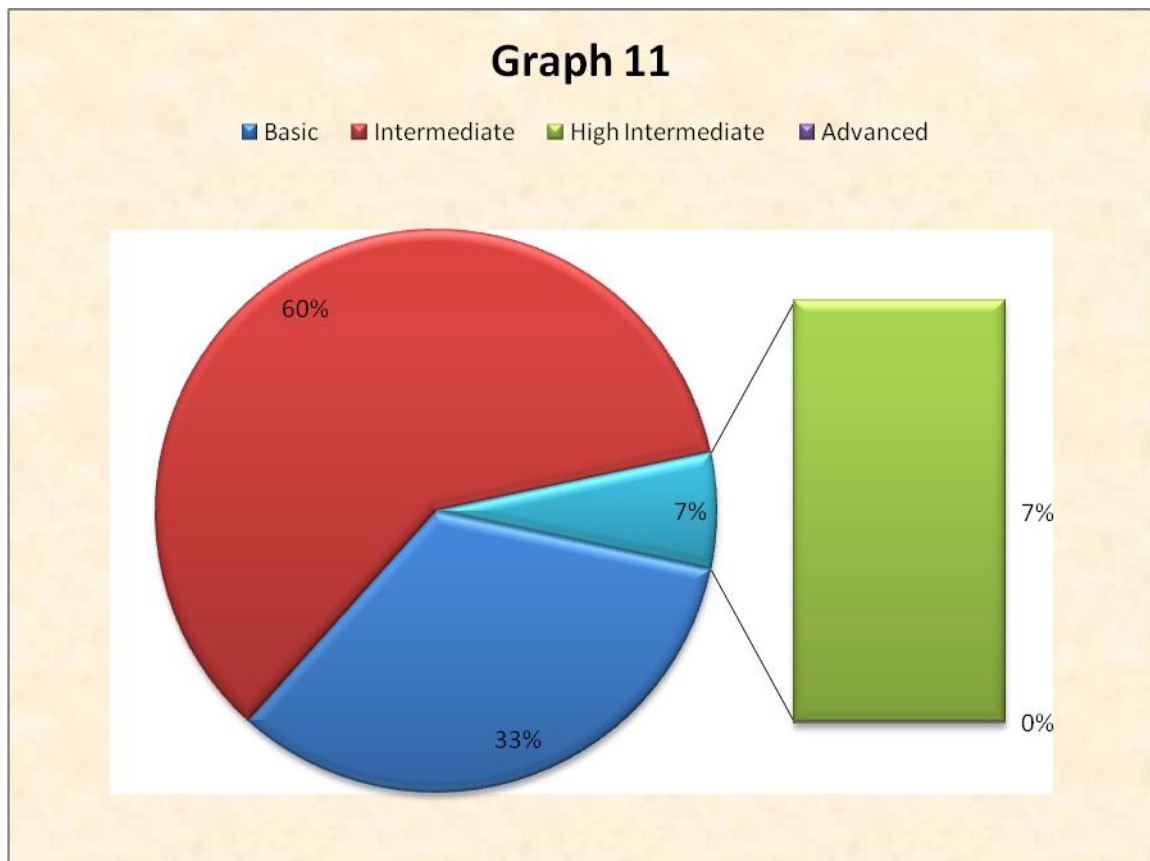
Author: Victor Almeida Pacheco
Source: Student's Questionnaire

Graphic 11 represents sixty percent of students who have an intermediate level in English while thirty-three percent of students have a basic level of English followed by a much reduced seven percent of students with a high intermediate level.

Teachers mentioned that students were classified into level by the institutions. The coordinators or principal of the English Departments were actually the ones who take the placement test to students so that they could be divided into their corresponding levels. Nevertheless, the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), which is a guideline used to describe achievements of learners of foreign languages, established a specific pattern of grammar the learners should have in order to have an Intermediate level in English as the questionnaire students filled suggest. Once again, it is important to highlight that the sixty percent of interviewed students certainly did not have all of the patterns of grammar the CEFR requires.

Resources and materials have an important value in the languages teaching (Verdú, Jorda & Coyle, 2002). Therefore teacher wanting to improve their student's level of English should implement the new resources that could definitely be an extraordinary help for students.

Fortunately, there is a tendency on the parents of making their children make further studies in English, and students show interest in learning English. Parents have their children enrolled in private institutions or academies as the interviews revealed. These students had a better level of English.

In some class observations it seemed that students' level of English was not good enough, however it varied a lot from one institution to another. It was also observed that teachers who tended to speak English most of the class hour did so with the students who spoke English better, but teachers could not do the same with the others whose English level was not very good at all.

Even when students claimed their English classes were easy or very easy, during the observation it was evidenced that students, especially they low level ones, found it quite difficult to understand the explanations because they certainly lack a lot of information from the previous courses or levels.

How many students do teachers have in their class?
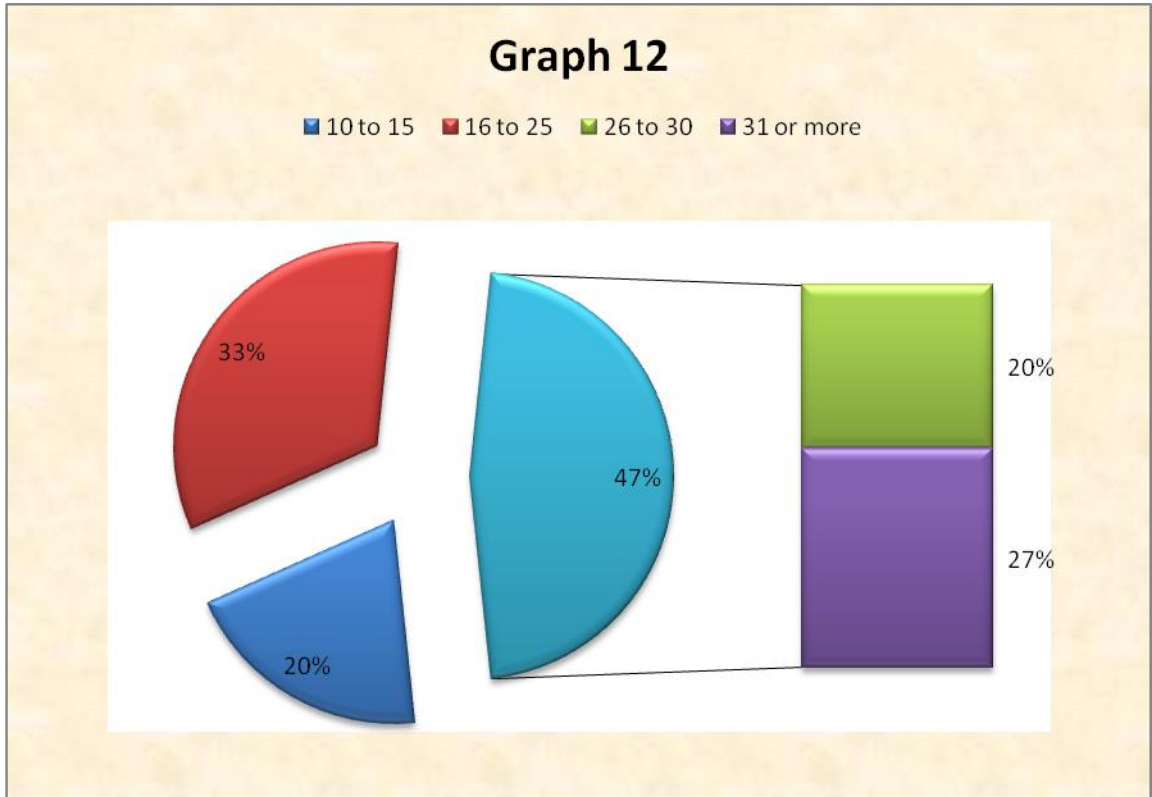
Author: Victor Almeida Pacheco
Source: Student's Questionnaire

Graphic 12 represents thirty-three percent of classes having 16-25 students; followed by twenty-seven percent of classes having 31 or more students. The graphic also shows twenty percent of classes having 10-15 students; similarly it shows another twenty percent of classes having 26-30 students.

Finn, Pannozzo, & Achilles (as cited in Bray & Kehle, 2011) indicated that less than 20 students per class is considered small, and more than 20 is considered a large one.

Most of the observed classes had more than 20 students, which caused not good monitoring or proper attention to each student. The fact of having big numbers of students in class made the environment in class quite noisy, therefore students lost concentration and teachers lost time in repeating over and over the same instructions.

Classes with 10-15 students were remarkably good. Conduct and level of English were also good in the small classes, which is in accordance to what Achilles (as cited in Bray & Kehle, 2011) explained when he said that better results to small classes could be achieved since teachers give or dedicate more time to students as they would not do with larger groups.

Some students did not show any problems and claimed to like working with the number of partners they had. On the other hand, there were some students who preferred fewer students in their class to maintain discipline and a better learning.

In my opinion and experience in teaching, good English classes should have a maximum of 15 students to truly help student by student improve their English progress, attitude, individual learning problems, etc.

Teachers who had more than 26 students expressed discontentment as they showed in both, the questionnaire and the interview. Teachers also believed that if they had fewer students in their classes, it would be better and beneficial for both, the students and the teachers.

Do teachers feel comfortable working with this number of students?
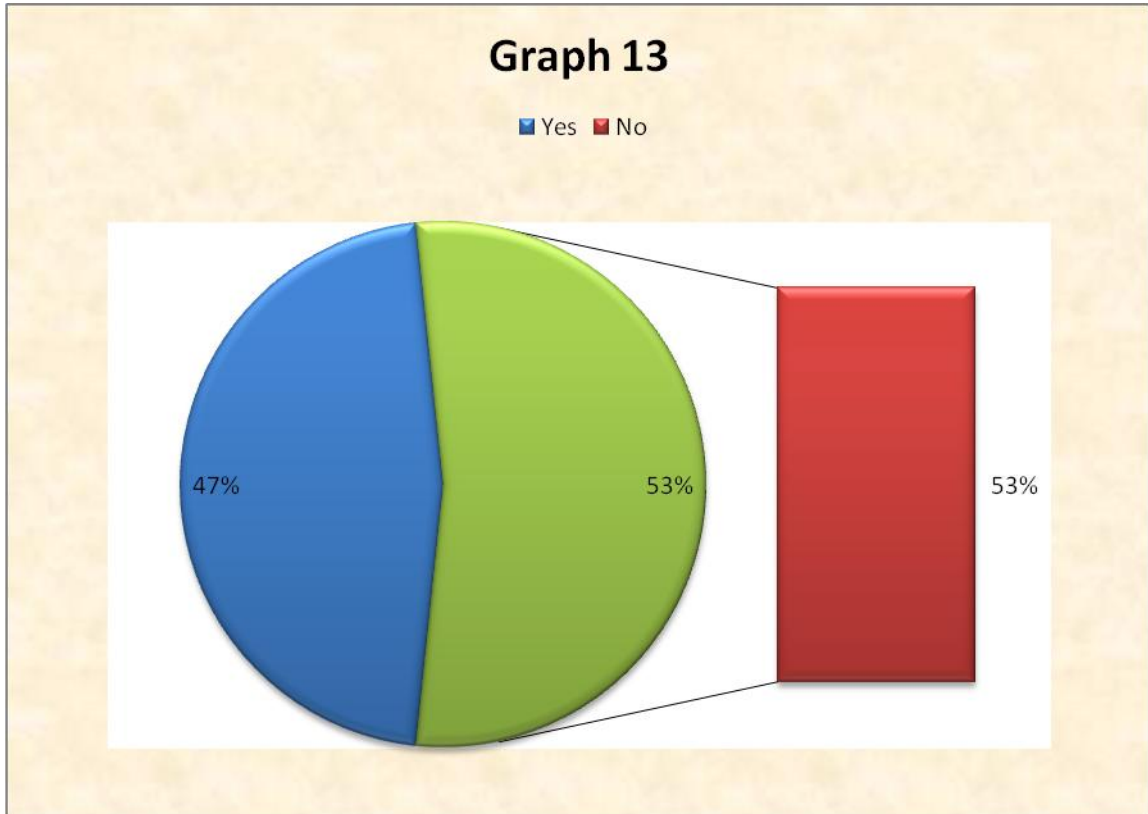
Author: Victor Almeida Pacheco
Source: Student's Questionnaire

The results are certainly controversial as graphic 13 shows. Fifty-three percent of teachers do not feel comfortable with the number of students they have. And forty-seven percent of teachers, which is a high number, felt comfortable with the amount of students they have in class.

Many teachers, before the interview, claimed to have got used to work with big numbers of students very much. They expressed that it was almost irrelevant for them to work with 15 or 31 students; but during the interview, teachers tended to be more open-minded and honest than they were at the moment of filling the questionnaire. Teachers

said they really did not like to work with big numbers of students because it was more difficult to control discipline and it was hard to work faster.

Teacher mentioned they felt afraid about how the collected information was going be used, and they said they dread for dismissal, therefore the questionnaires contains false information to some extent.

Students who showed real interest in the subject thought that classes should have fewer students, but the ones who did not show interest at all claimed the number of students was not a problem at all.

Another problem identified by the researcher was that the institutions were not conscious of the problems teachers and students were having in the classrooms, and they allowed big numbers of students per class without paying real attention to the students' needs and rights.

Do teachers have enough space to work with their group of students?
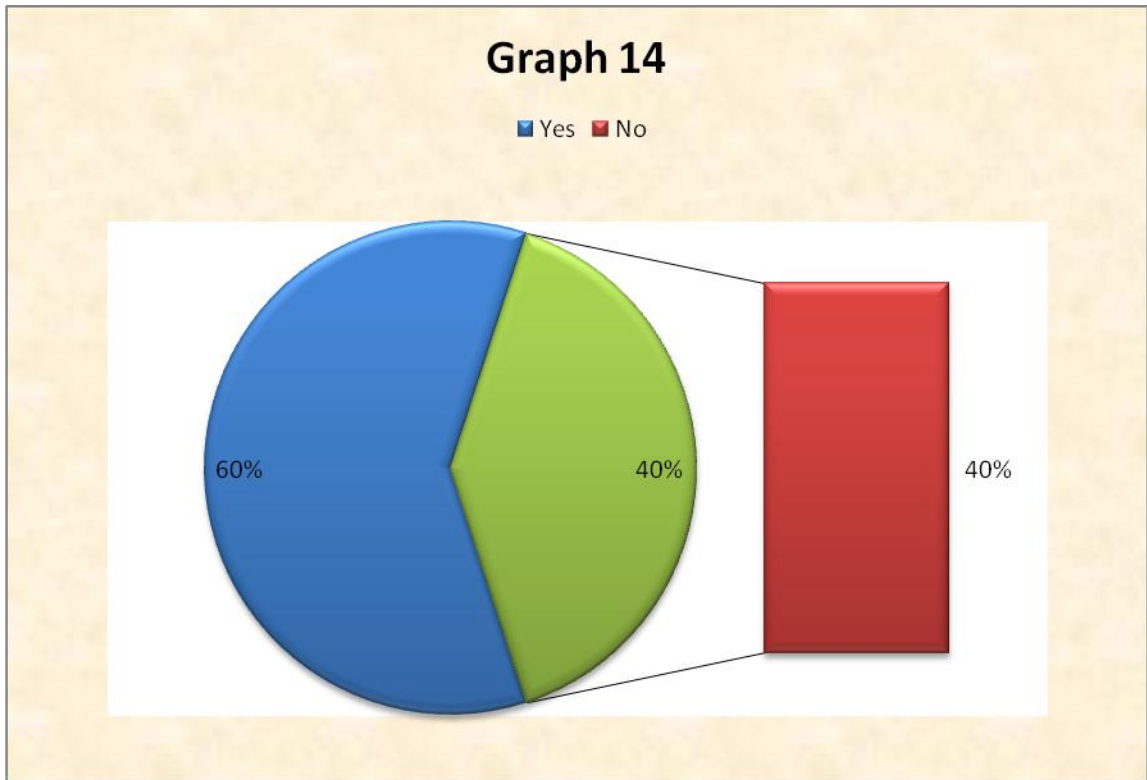
Author: Victor Almeida Pacheco
Source: Teacher's Questionnaire and Student's Questionnaire

The majority of teachers expressed they had enough space to work with, as it is shown on graphic 14 with sixty percent of positive answers, while forty percent of teachers said they did not have enough space to work with.

Pollard & Collins (2005) affirmed that the space of a classroom has a very big impact on the attitude learners have as well as the quality classes have. Referring to this aspect, in the observed classes, students did not show a good attitude at all; additionally the classes needed more planning and discipline.

Students like the space they had in their classrooms because they said they had plenty of space to play and do dynamic activities during the Spanish and Art classes.

They needed and wanted their English classes to be more dynamic as well as more interesting.

In spite of the big number of students the classroom had, it could be conserved that teachers sincerely felt comfortable with the enough space they had to work with. This is a very positive aspect to highlight regarding the awareness the institutions have had with anticipation concerning the size of the classroom, since ninety percent of the observed classroom were big enough to work without any problems.

Students could move freely because their space was big enough around them. McLeod, Fisher and Hoover (2003) affirm that "another major consideration in arranging student's seating is the area of each student's personal space".

Nevertheless, teachers did not make a good use out of the big space most classroom had, since the activities teachers worked with did not require too much space or shifting of the students; hence this very important resource was unfortunately misused.

Do teachers arrange students' seats in relation to the activity planned for their classes?
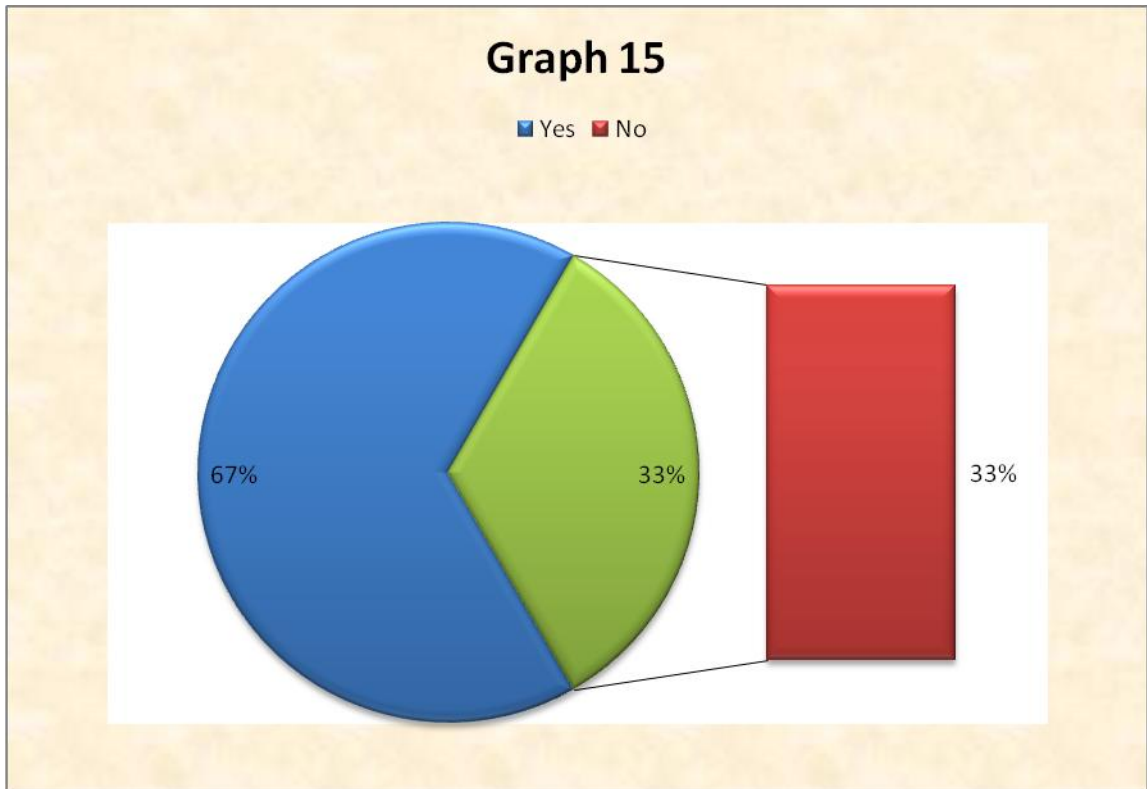
Graph 15

Yes ■ No

67%   33%   33%

Author: Victor Almeida Pacheco
Source: Teacher's Questionnaire, Student's Questionnaire, Observation Sheet

Sixty-seven percent of the teachers alleged they arranged their students' seats in relation to the activity or activities to be performed in class as graphic 15 presents. On the other hand, thirty-three percent of teachers did not arrange seats.

There are different seating arrangements; for instance, the semicircles, the clusters and one of the most common one, the rows. It is said that the seating arrangement is closely related to the space in the class, but even when the classroom were big enough no varied seating arrangement could be seen in the observed classes.

Rosenfield, Lambert, & Black (as cited in Savage & Savage 2009, p. 68) emphasize that the way seats are placed in the class can tell us a lot about the interaction and behaviour students have towards teachers.

All the observed classes had the row seating arrangement and teachers' desks were always at the front of the classrooms. In most of the cases, the students remained in the same place; because there were not many group-work or pair work activities to be done. Teachers did not rearrange the seats since the scarce activities they proposed in class did not require students to move their seats in any particular way.

Once again it can be noticed that not much participation of the students could be observed in their classroom. Students mainly played a passive role; they stayed sat listened to what the teachers said. They did not talk or participate in class as it was expected, i.e. classes tended to be teacher-centred rather than student-centred; however students, in the majority of the observed classes, claimed they liked the way teachers arrange the chairs in the classroom.

How many students do teachers think is the appropriate number to teach English?
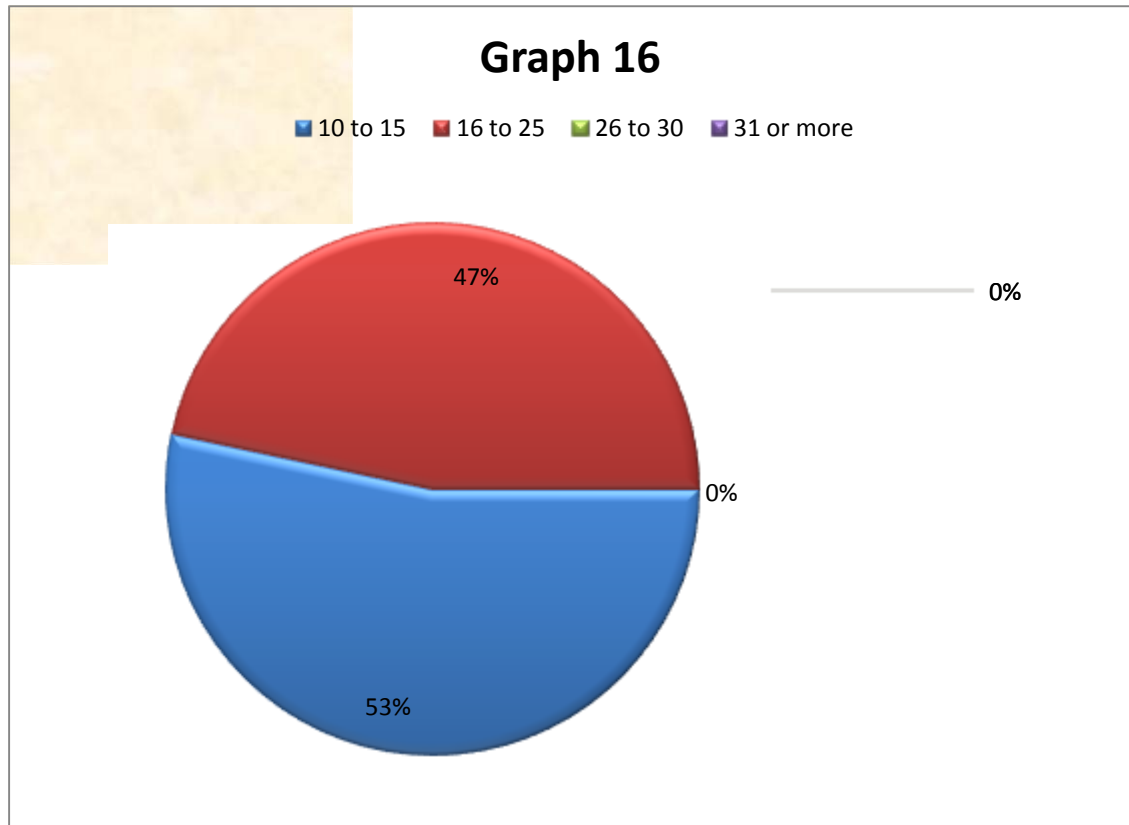
Graph 16

■ 10 to 15   ■ 16 to 25   ■ 26 to 30   ■ 31 or more

47%

0%

0%

53%

Author: Victor Almeida Pacheco
Source: Teacher's Questionnaire, Student's Questionnaire and Observation Sheet

Graphic 16 demonstrates that there is a slight difference of criteria regarding the appropriate amount of students according to teachers. Fifty-three percent of the teachers believe that 10 to 15 students is an appropriate number per class, while forty-seven percent of teachers think 16 to 25 is correct.

Most teachers who filled the questionnaire said they felt comfortable with the number of students they have been working with, but they also said they would like to have fewer students as they were interviewed; especially the ones who had more than 26 students. Teachers said they found it really hard to get students' attention due to the big number of students; another thing all teachers mentioned was the complexity of

checking large amount of homework, quizzes and exams as well. The only teacher who

had 10 students in the classroom did a very good job with his students. Students worked

well and they all participated without any problems. Nevertheless, Blatchford (2003)

claims that even a small class of 15 students could be difficult to control if 5 of those

students show emotional or behavioural difficulties or if it is hard for these students to

concentrate.

According to what it has been observed in class, it can be stated then that

teachers with large classes really did not have serious problems with working with the

numbers of students they have, except for some details, for instance, monitoring each

student, making everyone participate, helping everyone obtain the set goals, having

students concentrated and focused, made it very tiring and time consuming for teachers.

Do teachers use teaching resources (TV, Tape, CD recorder, Computer(s), projector(s),

Smart board and supplementary materials)?

Author: Victor Almeida Pacheco
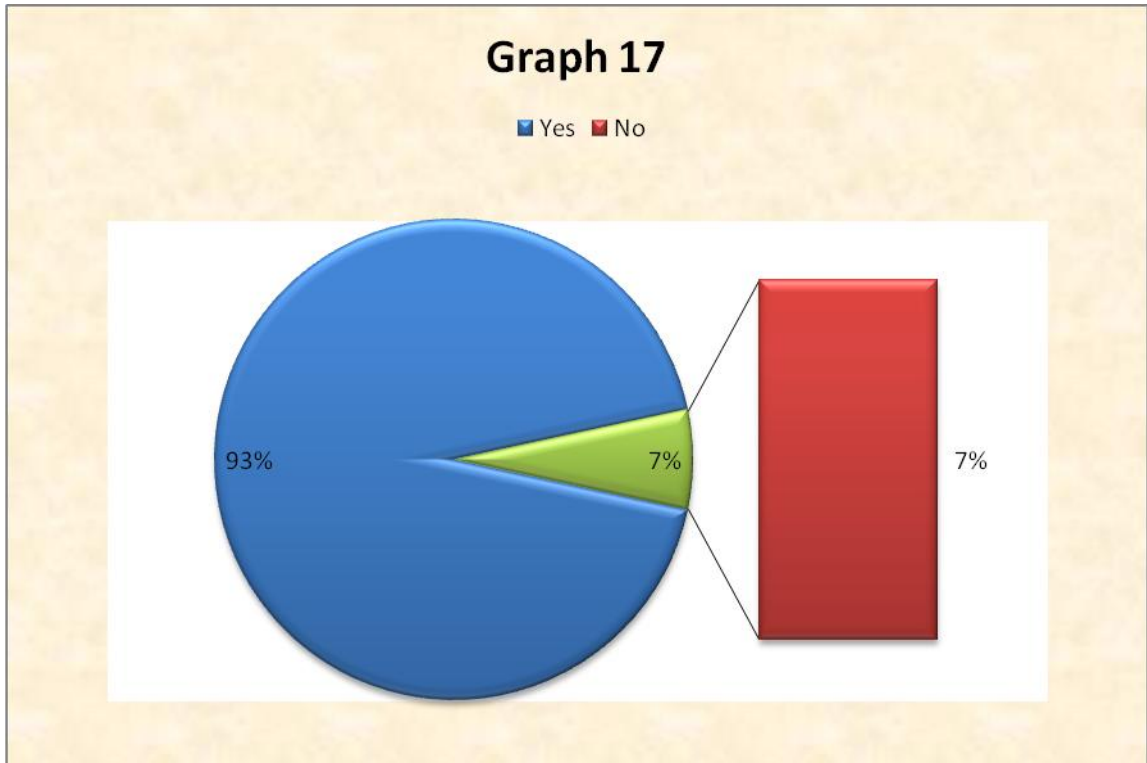Source: Teacher's Questionnaire, Student's Questionnaire and Observation Sheet

The graphic above suggests that the majority of the teachers use teaching

resources, ninety-three percent respectively. And a very small amount of teachers, seven

percent, alleged they did not use any teaching resources. Even when teachers said that

they used teaching resources in their classes, it is imperative to mention that they did not

use all the resources the questionnaire asked for, i.e. the resources teachers had in class

to work with were CD recorder, and supplementary materials like worksheets, flashcards

and sometimes TV. Smith & Baber (2005) declares that most teachers have visited a

web site, and noticed that the World Wide Web is an incredible source […]; however

none of the observed classes used the Internet as a teaching resource.

Only a few high schools used projectors, but teachers did not use them at all because they just found it unnecessary or it was difficult to get one because of the large process they need to follow to ask for one projector. None of the observed classes had computers or Smart Boards.

The supplementary materials most of the teachers used were flashcard, posters, or worksheets. The most used teaching resource was the whiteboard.

Students found it difficult to answer the question in the questionnaire due to a misunderstanding at the moment of reading the question. They opted to choose the positive answer because they saw one resource they had in class, however it did not mean they had most or all of resources.

Do teachers consider appropriate the resources they have in class?
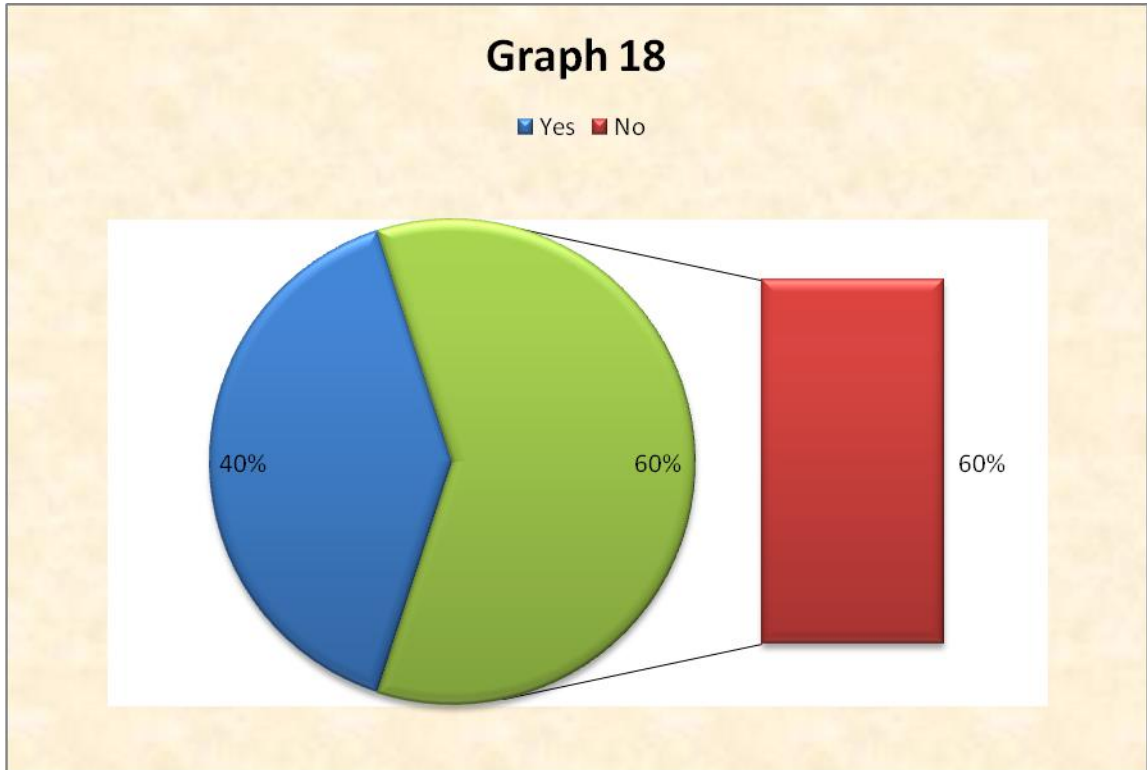
Author: Victor Almeida Pacheco
Source: Teacher's Questionnaire, Student's Questionnaire, Observation Sheet.

The graphic above presents rejection to the few resources used in class. Even when teachers claimed they had resources to work with, sixty percent of teachers think the resources they have in class are not enough or good enough to teach English properly. It is certainly known that teaching resources play an important role in class. However, it is also true that it depends on how teaching the resources are used, for instance, you could have projectors, Smart Boards, etc, but a non-proper use of them will be the same as having nothing to work with.

Verdú, Jorda & Coyle (2002) stated that resource is everything a teacher could use as a complement to teach, even a CD player or some flashcards should be used a

resource. Nonetheless, it was detected that during the classes teachers did not make a good use out of the teaching resources they had or they simply did not show creativity.

Students did not like the resources their teacher worked with, first because teachers did not use them well, for instance, teacher were working with simple past and the only one thing they did with the flashcards was to show the students the past of each verb and make them repeat.

Concerning the CD player, another common resources every high school had, was also poorly used since teachers worked with CD players to complete some activities from the textbook when they could have used it to listen to music and make class more dynamic and purposeful for students.

Teachers claimed they used those resources because that is what they could find in the institutions. Other teachers said it was difficult to get one projector from one day to the other because of the endless processes and permissions they needed to fulfil in order to get one.

Do the institutions review teachers' lesson plans?

Graph 19

■ Yes ■ No

0%

100%
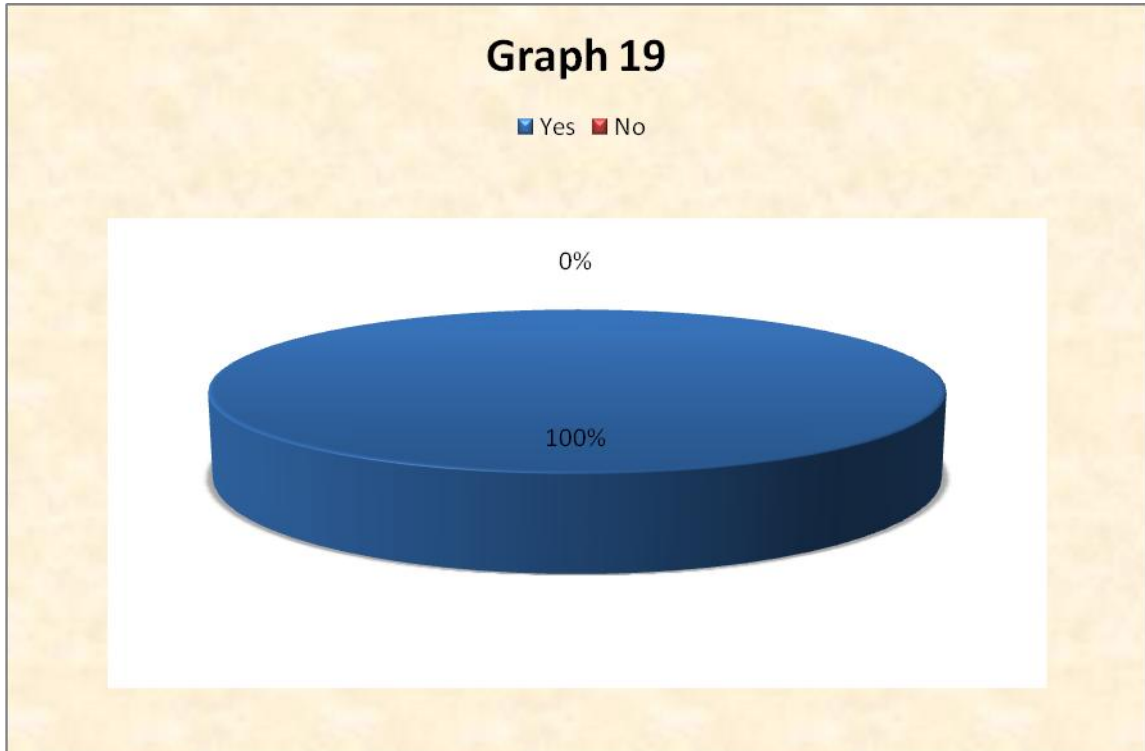
Author: Victor Almeida Pacheco
Source: Teacher's Questionnaire, Student's Questionnaire

A convincing one hundred percent of teachers claimed that the institutions where they work reviewed their lesson plans as the results on chart 19 shows. However, none of the board of directors was seen during the research process. The researcher never saw any personnel from the school, revising or checking plans of any of the imparted lessons.

For what it was observed in class, unfortunately very few institutions did the right monitoring to teacher and their lesson plans, since most of the classes were improvised or poorly directed.

When interviewing teachers it was then noticed why teachers chose *yes* as answer to the questionnaire. They said the institutions checked their lesson plans the first four or five weeks at the beginning of the scholar year or at the end. Teachers also claimed that the institutions did not read the lesson plans carefully, and the only one thing they cared about was presentation –they had to present the plans-. Harmer (2007) suggests that students will perceive whether a teacher dedicated time to prepare his classes or not; but the institutions should also perceive and take it into consideration for a much better learning for our students.

Nevertheless, it was perfectly known by teachers and researchers that the reviewing of the lesson plans is of great importance since those are the plans students will be working with, this was institution could have a record of their teachers to help them correct their mistakes on time, and improve their teaching methodology, techniques, etc.

Do the institutions monitor teachers' teaching?

Author: Victor Almeida Pacheco
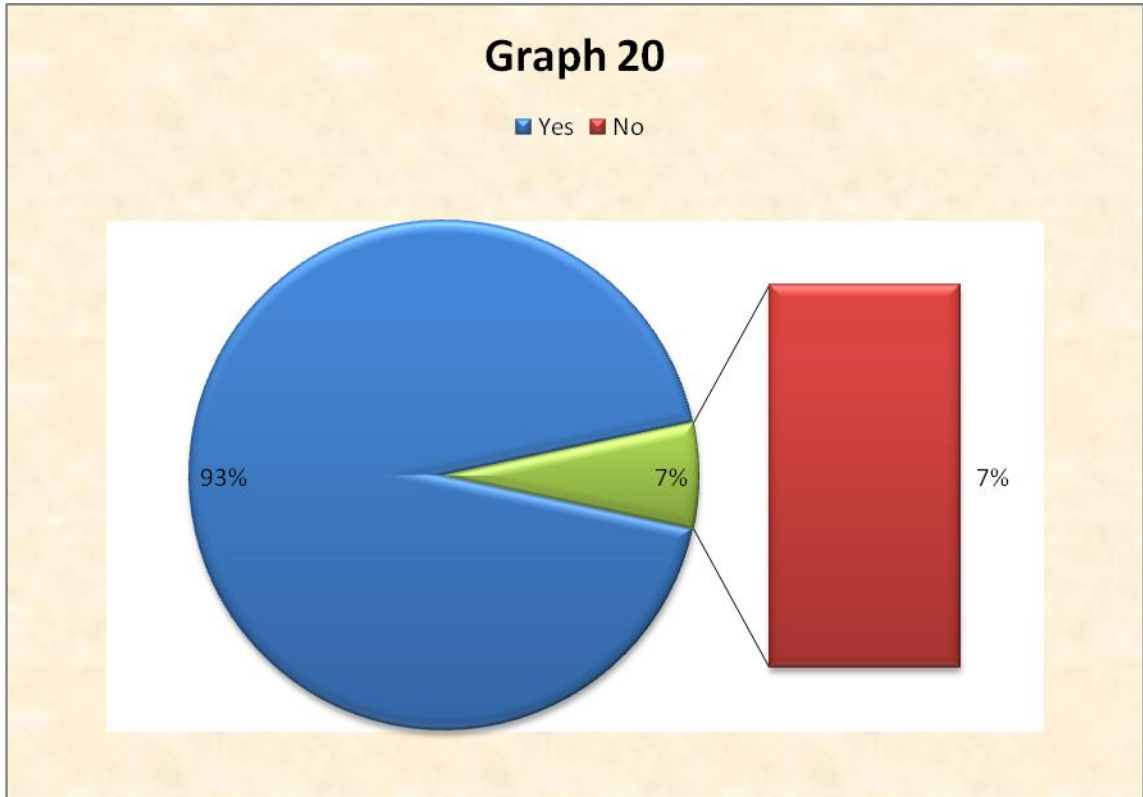Source: Teacher's Questionnaire, Student's Questionnaire, Observation Sheet

Graphic 20 shows that ninety-three percent of the institutions monitor teachers and a small seven percent do no monitor their teachers. It can be said with certainty that the institutions do monitor teachers or do not because during the class observation they were not but they could have done after or before. Nonetheless, it should be stressed that while the researcher was doing the observation the class, no one was monitoring teachers' classes.

Teachers were more overt by the time they were interviewed and claimed that the institutions did not monitor them at all during the whole year.

Wajnryb (1993) states that one approach on class observation is the one suggesting that classroom observation attempts to find new ideas and means of looking through teaching, which is a very imperative point to be taken into account for both, the teachers and the institution as well.

Teachers are supposed to have a clear idea of what they want to do in their classes as well as the goals he wants to achieve for every single class. However, the situation is tremendously alarming and it might be of the institutions concern since it is their workers who need a progressive monitoring along the year to obtain the aspired result concerning the prestige of the institution and, of course the students learning and the welfare above all.

CONCLUSIONS

❖ Even if the pie charts show one thing, the truth is another, for instance, the majority of teachers in private schools do not have enough knowledge in English to teach efficiently. Most teachers know or have almost the level of English their students have. Consequently, private schools teachers require more studies, expertise, practice and knowledge.

❖ Teachers did not know or recognise the methods and approaches, and it considerably affected the results in the charts because they did not show what really happened in the classrooms. Once again, it is demonstrated that teachers need to acquire much more knowledge and preparation in the field of English teaching.

❖ Lesson plans were seen as optional by many teachers instead of as a pre-requisite to teach English correctly their classes. This lack of preparation resulted in poor classes and worthless activities where students did not seem to obtain any set goals.

❖ Discipline was almost an isolated aspect because a few teachers paid attention to it. Teachers did not give much importance to discipline in class, resulting in poor learning and poor teaching as well.

❖ It was observed that teachers did not pay attention to students' personality, aptitude, learning styles or attitude, i.e. there was not inclusion at all. Two aspects that were rarely observed by the teachers were age, and motivation.

❖ The scarce resource teachers had in class were not used properly. Most of the schools need to acquire more resources to give a much better education to the students, by the use technology, which has been making and incredible progress during the last years.

❖ Amongst the different kinds of activities like whole-group, individual and group work, the most used in class was by teachers the whole-group activities. So teachers should vary the activities and the seating arrangements as well.

RECOMMENDATIONS

➢ A very helpful proposal for the institutions to do would be to offer teachers they work with workshops and training so that teachers can improve their teaching abilities and skills.

➢ Institutions should also assure themselves that their teachers at least have an English Bachelor's Degree or verify that their instructors are studying to be English teachers so that the y can help students' English level improve too.

➢ Classes should be student-centred rather than teacher-centred. In this way students can have much more opportunities to practise, develop and show all the hidden potential they certainly have.

➢ It is necessary to monitor teachers weekly or monthly to check progress and performance during the whole scholar year to obtain much better results that could benefit students.

➢ A programme for teachers and institutions to be evaluated should be implemented in all private high schools to boost quality and high standards in the field of English teaching.

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ANEXES

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   (   )
Why? _____ _____ _____ _____

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

Students' Level *(Basic, Intermediate, High Intermediate , and Advanced)*
YES   (   )   NO   (   )
Why?_____ ___

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 ( )
Why? _____	

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

YES ( )	NO ( )
Why? _____	

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

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

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

YES ( )	NO ( )
Why? _____	

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

YES ( )	NO ( )

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

YES ( )	NO ( )
Why? _____	

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

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

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

YES ( )	NO ( )
Which ones? _____

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

YES ( )	NO ( )
Why? _____

19. Does the institution review your lesson plans?

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

20. Does the institution monitor your teaching?

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

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION:	
DATE:	
YEAR:	

21. ¿Te gusta aprender Inglés?

SI ( )	NO ( )

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

SI ( )	NO ( )
¿Por qué? _____	

23. Consideras que las actividades realizadas en clase son:

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

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

SI ( )	NO ( )
¿Por qué? _____	

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

SI ( )	NO ( )

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

SI ( )	NO ( )

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

SI ( )	NO ( )

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

SI ( )	NO ( )

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

SI ( )	NO ( )

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

SI ( )	NO ( )

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

SI ( )	NO ( )
¿Por qué?	
_____	

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

SI ( )	NO ( )
¿Por qué?	
_____	

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

SI ( )	NO ( )
¿Por qué? _____	

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

SI ( )	NO ( )

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 %	( )

Annexes 2

<center>**Teacher's Survey**</center>

<center>**(Sample)**</center>

How long have you studied English?

Have you ever travelled to any English speaking country?

Have you lived in any English speaking country?

What level of English do you consider you have?

Basic   Intermediate   high Intermediate   Advance

Is it difficult to plan?

Would you like to have fewer students in your class?

Do you like teaching English?

<center>**Student's Survey**</center>

<center>**(Sample)**</center>

Do you like English? Why not?

Do you study English somewhere else apart from the high school?

Have you ever travelled to any English speaking country?

Have you lived in any English speaking country?

Do you like the activities your teacher does?

Does your teacher usually vary activities he does in class?

These were some of the questions the researcher additionally asked to some teachers and students to obtain extra information that the researcher believed relevant. All the questions were orally and their answers too.

<center>87</center>