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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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Loja, febrero de 2014

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ABSTRACT

The present study was done in order to determine and analyze the factors influencing the teaching-learning process of English in Ecuadorian private high schools.

This research study was developed in Loja city, specifically in five private high schools. In every school three English teachers as well as three students from eighth year of basic education to third year of bachelor were randomly selected.

The chosen sample filled out surveys, which were designed with the purpose of determining the importance of educational factors such as methods, classroom space, class size, and equipment, among others, in the English teaching learning process.

Once the surveys and the interviews were completed, data was tabulated in order to analyze the information and establish the influence of different factors in the teaching-learning process.

Finally, at the end of the present study we concluded that in Ecuadorian private high schools the appropriate use of factors like classroom space and equipment, teaching resources, classroom management, lesson design, monitoring, among others have positive influence in the teaching-learning process, and results are shown.

Key words: factors; English teaching; private high schools.

RESUMEN

El presente trabajo de investigación fue realizado con la finalidad de determinar y analizar los factores que influyen en el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje del idioma Inglés en los colegios privados del Ecuador.

El estudio fue desarrollado en la ciudad de Loja, específicamente en cinco colegios privados de la localidad. En cada institución educativa fueron seleccionados al azar tres profesores de Inglés y tres estudiantes los cuales se encontraban indistintamente entre el Octavo Año de Educación General Básica y tercer Año de Bachillerato.

Se aplicaron dos cuestionarios; uno dirigido a los docentes y otro a los estudiantes. Dichos cuestionarios fueron diseñados con el propósito de determinar la importancia que ellos le dan a factores determinantes en el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje.

De la misma manera, se realizaron quince observaciones a las clases impartidas por los docentes para corroborar la información obtenida en los cuestionarios. La información recolectada de las observaciones, los cuestionarios y las entrevistas luego fue tabulada con el fin de analizar los resultados y establecer los factores de mayor impacto en el proceso de enseñanza aprendizaje.

Una vez concluido el presente trabajo investigativo se puede concluir que en los colegios privados del Ecuador el uso adecuado de los diversos factores analizados como salón de clase, recursos de enseñanza, diseño de un plan de clase, monitoreo a los salones, entre otros, tienen una influencia positiva en el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje, como se comprobó en el buen nivel de Inglés de los estudiantes pertenecientes a estas instituciones educativas.

Palabras clave: factores, enseñanza del inglés, colegios privados.

INTRODUCTION

It is well known that English is one of the main languages around the world; many scientific books and investigations are done in English speaking countries. In addition, it is spoken as second language in many countries as means of communication, commercial transactions, and education. For those reasons Ecuador's Governments signed agreements to try to improve the way in which the foreign language was taught in public high schools. However, there were no observed improvements. Students of private and public schools had problems applying to scholarships or universities after graduating from high school because they had little knowledge of the English language.

Additionally, high school students had not been the only ones affected by the poor development of the four skills of the language; many professionals have lost the opportunity to continue their studies in English speaking countries because they cannot communicate with fluency in this language.

Luckily, in the recent years authorities have been trying to update the educational system. This modernization includes a curriculum that guarantees a B1 level students and the training of teachers who work in high schools to accomplish this goal.

The previous paragraphs showed that English has become a key element on education and research. For this reason, the purpose of this study is to analyze the factors that influence the teaching-learning process in Ecuadorian private high schools.

In order to determine factors influencing the teaching-learning process, the present study has established the following specific objectives. The first one is to identify students' English level and their needs in the classroom. The second is to

determine the classroom conditions in which English lessons take place. The third is to identify the characteristics of in-service English teachers; and finally, to determine institutional facilities and norms regarding quality education.

Once the research project aims were identified, it was necessary to go into previous studies done by other authors in similar fields in order to count with real information that could offer an external view of the same issue. For example, the objective for Leahy (2006) was to know to what extent do participants agree or disagree with the literature that has been examined regarding those constructs believed to be related to class size, as well as to know if participants agreed with the theory that smaller class sizes increased student achievement. While this study was done some limitations were found. Some of these included not having a random sample, inferential statistics, or confidence that any of this can be transferred to other students as a sample. Also, the method that this researcher used does not lend to projection. This is just a small sample of teachers that work cooperatively within the same building in the same school district. Therefore, we were only seeing a small part of the spectrum in these results.

Also, another study was found which investigated the same topic of the present research but the mentioned study was done in Nigeria by Aduwa-Ogiegbaen, & Iyamu, (2006); the objective was to investigate if secondary school teachers use instructional resources frequently in teaching English language as well as appropriate methods. No limitations were found in this study.

In addition, there was analyzed the study conducted by Palacios, I. (1995); who wanted to investigate the students' degree of awareness in their use of language learning strategies and identify the range, type and frequency of the strategies used with particular language activities by a group of Spanish secondary school and

university students in their learning of English, as well as determining to what extent secondary school teachers and university lecturers of English were acquainted with the learners' use of strategies. Also, they were interested in finding out whether the interview could be considered as a valid and reliable instrument for the investigation of language learning strategies. Finally they wanted to come up with a series of pedagogical implications that could be of special relevance for language teaching. No limitations were found.

As it was written in the previous paragraphs, the present study research looks to identify and analyze the issues that influence the English teaching-learning process in private schools of Ecuador, for this reason it is necessary to mention that this study will benefit mostly teachers who will want to learn how students perceive their work, how the methods applied in their classes will affect or benefit in the students' achievement. In addition, teachers could have this work as a source of information when they will need to talk with principals and other commission boards about these topics.

Furthermore, the biggest beneficiary of this study are the students, who will receive all the advantages of having well-trained teachers that could know how to get to them; thus, it is clear that the teaching-learning process of the language is going to be more productive.

Moreover, the present study will help authorities to take into account these factors in order to reformulate some rules about classroom space and the number of students per class. This factor has an evident influence in the learning process. They have to consider that in this century, it is extremely important to supply modern equipment and technology to the educational institutions. In this way, they will have access to the newest teaching resources that are available in the web.

As researchers we believe that this investigation will wake up the interest for future studies. The results show that students in private high schools clearly prefer well-equipped classrooms and young professionals as teachers. Meanwhile, students in public schools are starting a new process in language learning.

To conclude this section it is important to mention that a limitation was found during the development of this study. We consider that the sample was too small. A bigger group of teachers and students could have given us additional points of view

METHOD

Settings and Participants

This study was developed in the city of Loja, Ecuador. The sample was selected from five private high schools where three teachers as well as three students were chosen per institution. The student population was teenagers who are from a high-intermediate socio-economic level. In addition attended the morning schedule and take English classes every day. On the other hand, the teachers sample were young people in their thirties who in most of the cases had an English Bachelor's degree or another English certification like TOEFL. It is important to mention that some teachers pointed out that they had the opportunity to travel to an English speaking country so they were very fluent in the language.

Procedures

In order to develop a satisfactory study process; the first step was to visit local libraries and educational websites to gather enough information to understand the teaching-learning process. The research let us have a good knowledge of the different topics related to the teaching-learning process. Also, we used the quantitative method in order to develop this study.

Once the literature review was done, the observation process was carried out. During this process fifteen classes were observed. An observation sheet was completed, which gathered information about students' needs and characteristics, classroom space and equipment as well as seating arrangement. Additionally, the observation sheet enclosed information about teacher's methods, lesson design and classroom management.

Moreover, teachers and students had to answer surveys designed for each of them. Those surveys were the teacher's questionnaire and the students'

questionnaire. The information gathered from those instruments was similar to the observation sheet. In this case, the questions tried to get their point of view about how they feel about the teaching-learning process. Also, at this stage of the process a short teacher's interview was done with the purpose of determining the teacher's language proficiency.

The next step was data tabulation. In order to organize and present the information gathered by using graphs, the office program excel was used

To conclude, the description, analysis and interpretation of data was done. In this section the teacher's questionnaire was the key for the description of results as well as the information from the literature review. The observation, the interview and the students' questionnaire were sources that let the researchers carry out the analysis and interpretation of the factors that influence the English teaching-learning process in Ecuadorian private high schools.

DISCUSSION

Literature Review

Nowadays English has become an international language and it is necessary in all aspects in our lives; therefore, the teaching learning process around the world is a priority. Today, schools are concerned about looking for update strategies and detecting factors that impact positively and negatively on students' language learning. The improvement of English instruction is urgent thus; some changes in the system need to happen.

Educational authorities conscious of the importance of English for communication and based on students' poor language skills, searched for a program that would help improve the language on secondary level at public schools. The Ministry of Culture and Education of Ecuador design a project named Proyecto de Reforma Curricular de Inglés (CRADLE) which would help keep a good level of English for a long-term.

The most important goals achieved during the first phase of the project were: a new plan and study program with five hour class during the week, six English texts with tutorials technically designed, edited, illustrated, colored and distributed nationwide, teacher training modules produced in DIEX (División de Idiomas Extranjeros), creation of the National Division in the Ministry Foreign Languages and Culture with three specialized teachers in technical curriculum, legal basis established for the process of change, and private sector cooperation for the publication and distribution of Instructional Materials, magazine publications and brochures. Later on, teachers and coordinators were trained and prepared to teach the Language using new and interesting strategies. With this information we know that the government was and is still aware about the importance of preparing students

with the knowledge of a second language. We all know that tests are taken when applying for universities and the government wanted to give opportunities to students all around the country.

Once the Ministry of Education project was described, it is relevant to continue this section focusing on teaching approaches and methods commonly used by teachers.

Teaching Approaches and Methods

Richards & Rodgers (2001) states that one of the methods used to teach a language is Total Physical Response (TPR), which is built around the coordination of speech and action; it attempts to teach language through physical activity. This method teaches oral proficiency at a beginning level, comprehension is a means to an end, and teaches basic specific skills. TPR requires initial attention to meaning rather than to the form of items. Grammar is thus taught inductively. Learners are encouraged to speak when they feel ready to speak - that is when, a sufficient basis in the language has been internalized. The teacher plays an active and direct role. It is the teacher who decides what to teach, and who models and presents new materials. There is generally no basic text and the material and realia play an increasing role.

In addition, Brown (2001) says that Asher states that children in learning their first language appear to do a lot of listening before they speak, and that their listening is accompanied by physical responses. Motor activity is a right-brain function that should precede left-brain language processing. Asher was also convinced that language classes were often the locus of too much anxiety, so wished to devise a method that was as stress-free as possible, where learners would not feel overly self-conscious and defensive. The TPR classroom, then, was one in which students did a

great deal of listening and acting, imperative mood was used and commands were an easy way to get learners to move. Like every other method it was encountered that the TPR had its limitations. It seemed to be especially effective at the beginning levels of language proficiency, but it lost its distinctiveness as learners advanced in their competence.

The second method described in this section is Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) which refers to a diverse set of principles that reflect a communicative view of language and language learning and that can be used to support a wide variety of classroom procedures. This approach aims to make communicative competence the goal of language teaching and develop procedures for the teaching of the four language skills. A variety of games, role-plays, simulations, and task-based communication activities have been prepared to support CLT classes (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Six interconnected characteristics can describe CLT classes: classroom goals are focused on all of the components of communicative competence, language techniques are designed to engage learners in the pragmatic, authentic, functional use of language for meaningful purposes, fluency and accuracy are seen as complementary principles underlying communicative techniques, students in a communicative class ultimately have to use the language, productively and receptively, in unrehearsed contexts outside the classroom, students are given opportunities to focus on their own learning process through an understanding of their own styles of learning and through the development of appropriate strategies for autonomous learning and the role of the teacher is that of facilitator and guide (Brown, 2001).

Following with the methods it is important to analyze one of the first methods used by teachers that it is still used in this century this is the Grammar Translation Method.

Richards & Rodgers (2001) suggests that Grammar Translation Method states that a way of studying a language is through detailed analysis of its grammar rules, followed by application of its knowledge to the task of translating sentences and texts into and out of the target language. Reading and writing are the major focus; little or not systematic attention is paid to speaking or listening. The sentence is the basic unit of teaching and language practice. Much of the lesson is devoting to translating sentences into and out of the target language. Grammar is though deductively - that is, by presentation and study of grammar rules, which are then practiced through translation exercises.

Besides that, Brown (2001) states that classes when teaching through Grammar Translation Method are though in the mother tongue, with little active use of the target language; much vocabulary is taught in the form of lists of isolated words. Long, elaborate explanations of the intricacies of grammar are given. Grammar provides the rules for putting words together, and instruction often focuses on the forma and inflection of words. Reading of difficult classical texts is begun early. Little attention is paid to the content of texts, which are treated as exercises in grammatical analysis. Often the only drills are exercises in translating disconnected sentences from the target language into the mother tongue and little or no attention is given to pronunciation.

The next method used when teaching English and that forms part of this section is the Natural Approach.

The Natural Approach mentions prolonged period of attention to what the language learners hear before they try to produce language. The procedures in the Natural Approach are based on the acquisition- learning Hypothesis, the monitor hypothesis, the natural order hypothesis, the input hypothesis and the effective filter hypothesis (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

In addition, Brown (2001) states that the Natural Approach advocated the use of TPR activities at the beginning level of language learning when “comprehensible input” is essential for triggering the acquisition of language; the Natural Approach was aimed at the goal of basic personal communication skills. The initial task of the teacher was to provide comprehensible input. Learners need not to say anything during this “silent period” until they feel ready to do so. In the Natural Approach learners presumably move through what Krashen and Terrell defined as three stages. The first is the preproduction stage in which the development of listening comprehension skills occurs; the second is the early production stage, which is usually marked with errors as the student struggles with the language. The teacher focuses on meaning here, not on form, and therefore the teacher does not make a point of correcting errors during this stage; the last stage is one of extending production into longer stretches of discourse involving more complex games, role-plays, open-ended dialogues, discussions, and extended small group work.

The fifth method described in this part is the commonly used Cooperative Language Learning (CLL).

Cooperative Language Learning is group learning activity organized so that learning is dependent on the socially structured exchange of information between learners in groups and in which each learner is held accountable for his or her own learning and is motivated to increase the learning of others. CLL provides

opportunities for naturalistic second language acquisition through the use of interactive pair and group activities. Provide teacher with the methodology to enable them to achieve this goal and one that can be applied in a variety of curriculum settings. Enable focus attention to particular lexical items, language structures, and communicative functions through the use of interactive tasks. Provide opportunities for learners to develop successful learning and communication strategies. Enhance learner motivation and reduce learner stress and to create a positive affective classroom climate (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

The last method included in this section but not the less important is the Content Based Instruction.

According to Brinton, Snow & Wesche (1989: vii), Content Based Instruction is the “integration of content learning with language teaching aims. More specifically, it refers to the concurrent study of language and subject matter, with the form and sequence of language presentation dictated by content material.” Such an approach contrasts sharply with many practices in which language skills are taught virtually in isolation from substantive content. Language takes on its appropriate role as a vehicle for accomplish a set of content goals. Content- based classrooms may yield to an increase of intrinsic motivation and empowerment, since the students are focused on subject matter that is important to their lives. Students are pointed beyond transient extrinsic factors, like grades and tests, to their own competence and autonomy as intelligent individuals capable of actually doing something with their own language. Challenges range from a demand for a whole new genre of textbooks and other materials to the training of language teachers to teach the concepts and skills of various disciplines, professions, and occupations, and/or to teach in teams across disciplines (Brown, 2001).

Continuing with the literature review the following lines are going to describe some educational issues that have a clear influence in the teaching-learning process. *Classroom Management*

Classroom Management includes all the activities and the process that a teacher could use in order to maintain the interest and the commitment of the students. Harmer (2007) suggested that teachers have to bear in mind some aspects in order to handle the classroom in an effective way; the first aspect is to consider the classroom distribution and the possibility to fix it to get a better flow; second, teachers have to time every single activity and consider how the students are going to be working (pair work – group work) so valuable time will not be wasted; third, educators have to consider the way in which they give instructions, remembering that the instructions must be clear, simple and logical. Additionally, to those aspects but not less important is the feedback. Watson (1997) said that teachers have to remember that students work better when they receive feedback because students can manage their progress and they can check their performance.

Another remarkable issue regarding the teaching process is Lesson Plan.

Lesson plan

A lesson plan is a detailed description of the activities, materials and equipment, course book contents, timing, objectives, drawbacks, etc., that a teacher will use in a determined class in order to have a guide of the order of the events. Gower & Walters (2005); Harmer (1998) agree in some points about the benefits of lesson design; the first agreement is the advantages. For instance, when teachers plan a class they will know what to expect from students to learn at the end of the period of class; additionally, teachers can use the planning program as a source for useful information about page numbers, tracks, materials, etc. Finally, the lesson plan can

function as documentation for teachers that may need some reference in the future. The second point that the authors shared is the content that is going to be on the lesson plan: aims; procedure; timing the activities; materials; methods; students arrangement; comments about the group; and finally the redaction of some suggestions for working or doing in a conflictive situation or issue. Concluding, both authors said that it is important to redact the lesson plan as meticulous as possible because it is going to be the clue of how the activities are going to be introduced to students.

Another close element that without discussion is a concern for many educators is class size.

Class size

There is no misunderstanding in the definition of class size, which refers to number of the students enrolled in a specific class. The problem lies on how the number of students affects the teaching process. The study about how the class size affects students' achievement reports that almost all the teachers that participated in this research were totally convinced that a crowded class turns the work difficult for the teachers and the performance of the students. Students that are part of those classes might not get benefited from individual work and feedback. Additionally, they will be dealing with noise and limited physical space. Similarly, teachers will have to face some problems that include dealing with discipline, exhausting grading of large amount of students' works and having to adjust the activities to the small setting where they have to work (Leahy, 2006).

Working in a class where teachers can personalize their work is not the reality for many but some authors suggested some recommendations that could assist teachers that work with large classes. Brown (2001) proposed that teachers should

learn the name of the students so they could feel part of the group; teachers have to organize activities that include group work as much as possible, because all students can participate; teachers have to use a lot of visual and audio material in order to get students attention; and finally, teachers could use peer editing for grading the tasks and work.

Closely related to the number of students are the classroom space and seating arrangement, which are the topics that are going to be considered in the following lines.

Classroom space and seating arrangement

The classroom is the room assigned for students to attend a class; it has to have some characteristics in order to make the teaching activity more comfortable for teachers and students. Edge (1996) said that teachers should learn to work in different types of classrooms where the conditions and size vary. Those factors cannot be modified unless there is another room available. According to this author, the teachers must try to feel comfortable with the space provided for they to work even if it does not fit to their wishes, luckily for teachers Edge offered some recommendations to solve that issue such as making the space more familiar by sticking stuff on the walls and if possible organizing the furniture in a better way.

In addition, Harmer (1998) indicated some sitting arrangements and its benefits. The first arrangement is called *Orderly rows* named like that because students have to sit in rows; it presents many advantages especially for teachers who can see all the auditory controlling the discipline and the attention of the students. The second ordering combines *Circle and horseshoes* these organizations are used for a small group of students bringing the sense of parity between teacher and

students. To conclude, the last arrangement is *Separate tables* these formal organizations of the class allow teachers to move around the class freely and to assist students who need some help. It is important to say that unless the tables are fixed to the floor it is the job of teachers to change the arrangement into the best organization depending on the activity that is going to be made.

Teaching resources

Teachers' work is not only adjusting the classroom into an attractive space for students; also, they have to look up for the resources and equipment that are essentials for their work.

The teaching resources are all the facilities, equipment, and materials that are offered to the teachers helping them in the process of teaching. Gower & Walters (2005) pointed out that the use of classroom equipment if available is remarkable since that turns the class more interesting. The same authors described some classic resources and how to give the best use of them. The first element they mentioned is using the board in which, notes including with the most relevant information can be posted, in order to help students remember things. The second advice is to use the overhead projector (OHP) as a tool to build an interactive class where many ideas can be shown in a different format. The third element is using visuals; they could be real objects (realia, manipulatives) or pictures, the point is to create a connection with the topic of study. The fourth advice is having an organized store of worksheets handy, so they can be used with many courses. The next equipment is the cassette recorder that must be in fine condition and the recommendation for teachers is to prepare in advance the tracks and the listening material to avoid problems. The final elements are computers and a photocopier. The suggestion here is to learn how to use

them and get the license to use those elements. Harmer (2007) brought teachers to the XXI century talking about the use of the current social networks, blogs, and podcasts that every teacher in training must know how to use if he or she wants to be always in contact with their students.

Unquestionably the traditional form in which the education system was conceived is changing and these days more and more educational institutions consider relevant to monitor some classes in order to give a feedback to teachers and to determine strategies that benefit students.

Classroom observation

Wajnryb (1992 p. 7) defined observation “as a focused activity of observing a lesson in progress, which focuses on one or a small number of aspects of teaching or learning and requires the observer to collect data or information from the actual lesson”. During centuries teachers felt uncomfortable when someone else was monitoring their classes, they believed that observers were there just to identify the negative points of the class management or for criticize the teachers’ level of instruction. But Saville (2006, p. 429) said “Teachers are coming to understand that seeing one’s actions through another’s eyes is an indispensable tool for classroom research as well a potentially enlightening experience for both observer and observe”. According to this author times are changing and its crucial for teachers get used to been observed because that is an excellent instrument to know what are the weakness and strengths of their work, noticing that whereas the weakness are mentioned a suggestion comes; the observee is not just doing his job for criticize, his responsibility is to offer another point of view.

The same author presented another form of monitoring called “self-observation” that is the observation that teachers can do to their labor recording

several times any element of the teaching that is a concern until they could identify the result that can be positive or negative and then think about solutions for it.

These days teachers are more conscious about their role as a formers thus teachers in training respond better to the observations, additionally teachers are more involved with the factors that influence the language teaching-learning process that is way the following theme refers to Learning Styles.

Learning styles

According with Reid (1995) the term *learning style* has been used to describe an individual's natural, habitual, and preferred way of absorbing, processing, and retaining new information and skills." which means that students adopt the form of learning that best fits with their personality and of course works better for them. There are many learning styles but Lightbown & Spada (1999) described the most common ones; visual learners who are people that responds better when graphic or visual information is presented to them; aural learners or people that remember easily something that they have heard; kinesthetic learners, the ones that learn with the help of physical movement used in games, etc. Harmer (2007), considered The Multiple Intelligences, which states that people have the following modalities of intelligences mathematical, musical, interpersonal, spatial, emotional, linguistic, bodily kinesthetic, intrapersonal, naturalistic and existential. This author expressed that one person could have more develop one type of intelligence and less mature the rest, which is going to express his or her preference to learn.

To conclude, Harmer suggested teachers to take into count the multiple intelligence theory when they are going to design the class offering a number of activities in order to benefit the students' necessities.

Learning styles are linked with language aptitude when we are talking about second language acquisition that is why this topic is described in the following lines.

Language Aptitude

The person's ability to learn a foreign or a second language in a short period of time is the main character of aptitude. According with Lightbown & Spada (1999) the aptitude issue has been study with the purpose to determine if a person will be successful in learning a second language.

The Modern Language Aptitude Test (MLAT) and the Pimsleur Language Aptitude Battery (PLAB) are the most common tests used for determine a person's talent to acquire a language. Those tests consider that the ability to identify new sounds (phonemes - morphemes), the ability to understand the function of the words, the ability to recognize grammatical rules, and finally, the ability to memorize new words are the elements that compound the aptitude issue. In addition, the authors confirmed that not all the people own the same level of abilities, that means that while for some people is totally easy memorized for others it will be complicated but they will be better analyzing how the words work. To conclude, Lightbown & Spada said one could determine learners' profiles of strengths and weaknesses and use this information to place students in appropriate teaching programs. So those are the reasons for using tests when the institutions want to assign a student in the correct level.

To conclude the literature review the results of some studies related with this investigation are going to be described briefly.

Aduwa-Ogiegbaen, & Iyamu (2006) conducted a study in 30 secondary schools in Nigeria identifying the following issues that affect the teaching-learning process in those schools; the first issue is the use of traditional materials and

equipment, teachers and students do not use technology so they cannot receive its benefits. The second factor is the dominance of the traditional lecture method in lesson design causing students do not have enough opportunities to produce the language in activities like debates or group work. Another result refers to the way in how the building characters and location affects the teaching-learning activity because most of the urban schools are located in places of continuous movement of people; the majority of builds especially those in rural areas are in poor conditions; additionally, there are not enough classrooms available and the ones that already exist do not have enough space for too many students; finally, the researchers have found that most of the schools do not have a library and if one exist it does not count with a great number of books.

Nel & Müller (2010) conducted another study documented the following results. First, the “findings of the qualitative analysis indicated that teachers made basic errors such as grammatical errors, incorrect use of tenses, concord and spelling errors...” the evidence showed that those errors are conducted to the students affecting the student’s proficiency. Second, The results of the quantitative analysis indicated that the number of students per class (99) have a clear impact in the teaching-learning process. The researchers concluded the results pointing that the language is the communication channel but if it is channel is not working fine because of the problems already mentioned, the transfer of knowledge cannot be effective for both teachers and students.

Palacios (1995) in his research conducted to College students and High School students presented the following results. First, almost all the population was aware that they use a specific learning strategy depending on the type of the activity they have to do; second, University students were capable to name the majority of

the strategies they used and to identify which one works better, in the other hand high school students were not totally sure about the type of strategy they used; to summarize this study named the type of strategy used for each group Spanish students of English at the university mentioned more cognitive and pronunciation strategies whereas the opposite trend was identified with memory and compensation strategies.”

Matsumoto (2009) in his study exposed the following results. First, students say that teacher’s commitment is bigger than their own, the researcher adds saying that there is the possibility that students try to *please their teachers* so there is not security about the honesty in this topic; second, students report that if they feel the commitment they want to be part of that, so the bigger the teacher’s commitment the higher the response of the students; finally, this study reports that elementary school students depend more of teachers’ motivation to learn because they are not capable to understand all explanations or contents, so the teachers’ personality helps students to acquire knowledge.

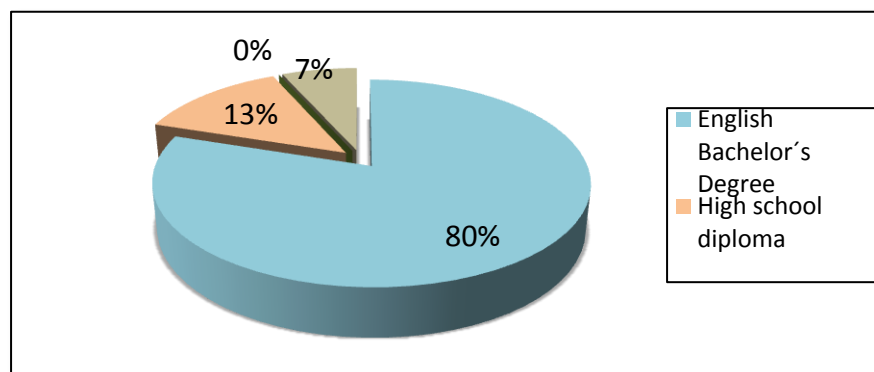
Description, Analysis and Interpretation of Results

Teaching a foreign language represents a challenge that involves many variables, not only teachers and students, but also the environment in which this process takes place. For this reason, the factors that involve teachers, students, classrooms, and educational institutions have been taken into account in order to determine the factors that influence the English language teaching-learning process in Ecuadorian private high schools.

Factors Concerning Teachers

Which level of education do teachers have?

Graph N° 1



Authors: María del Cisne Chicaiza, Helena Arteaga
Source: Teachers' Surveys

Surveys showed that from the fifteen teachers interviewed, 80% have an English Bachelor's degree, 13% of them have obtained at least a high school diploma, while the remaining 7% have other kinds of certifications. Among these certifications teachers mentioned IELTS (International Language Testing System), TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language), and CELTA. These tests measure knowledge of a language, but they do not determine the language proficiency of a teacher, neither ensure if an educator is familiar with methods and procedures used in

an educational setting. None of the surveyed teachers has acquired an English Master's degree yet.

Besides, the 13 % of educators who have a school diploma expressed that they are studying English in order to get familiar with methods, to know properly the teaching -learning process, to identify students' needs and obviously to engage them to learn the language. Those teachers said in their interviews that they have enrolled in training and updating teaching programs.

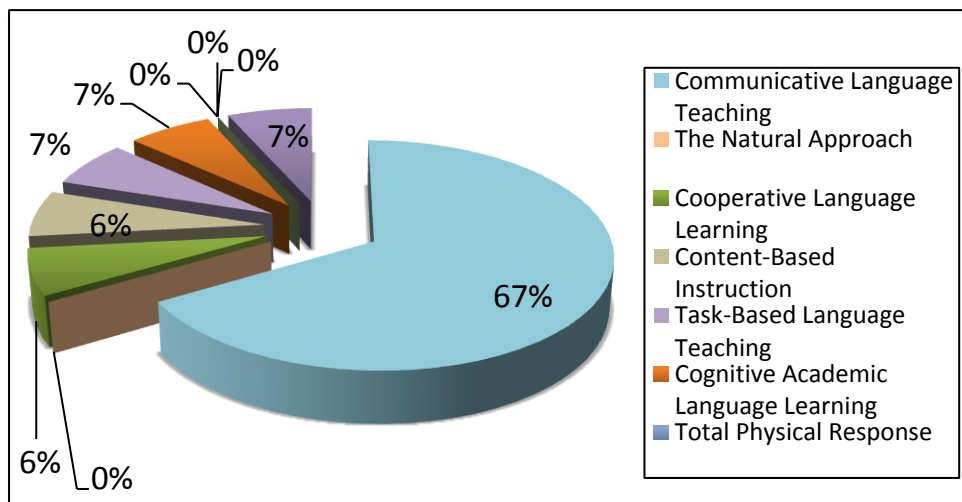
In addition, it is important to mention that 27% of teachers (some of the educators that have a school diploma and some others that possess other kind of certifications) said that they had the opportunity to live a couple of years in an English speaking country. That experience let them improve their English skills, as well as pronunciation and vocabulary. These educators are independent users of the language, having a B2 level of proficiency (CEFR), they were able to use appropriate communicative strategies, which means that they are capable to communicate with fluency and spontaneity with native speakers.

Finally, teachers who have acquired an English Bachelor's Degree are prepared to teach. They have read and studied to become teachers. They have applied methods and they know which fits better to their students. They are aware of students' needs and complement their teaching with activities that make easier the acquisition of target language. This 80 % of teachers that have an English Bachelor's Degree demonstrated through the observations and during their oral interviews that they have a B2 level of proficiency, too.

It is important to mention that no documents, diplomas, or certificates had been presented to support the previous statements.

Which of the following methods was used in this class?

Graph N° 2



Authors: María del Cisne Chicaiza, Helena Arteaga
 Source: Teachers' Surveys

The answers found in the questionnaires denoted that the method that was widely used (67%) is the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). Games, role-plays, simulations, and task-based communication activities have been observed during some of these classes, which indicates that teachers have answered the survey sincerely or that they are aware about the type of method they use. As observers, we noted that CLT was mainly used, but other methods were applied too; teachers do not use only one method in their classes, instead a combination of approaches were applied.

In addition students' points of view had been analyzed too, in their questionnaires they stated that they are 100% pleased with the way their teacher presents the class. Classes were easy to understand and sometimes we could observe dynamic and fun class atmospheres. The evidence indicates that the previous mentioned approach is the one that most teachers and students felt comfortable with.

Based on the pie chart data, we can see that 7% of the teachers stated that they use Cognitive Academic Language Learning; CALLA aims to help students to develop language awareness and critical literacy, learning through this approach involves higher level thinking, not just memory, and social interaction is important. On the other hand, taking into account the observed classes none of the teachers used this approach in their classes.

In the same manner, another 7% of the teachers expressed that they use Task-Based Instruction; since, this method allows them to generate physical activity from the students. Whereas, this was not evidenced in the way their classes were presented, tasks developed during classes did not required students working cooperatively.

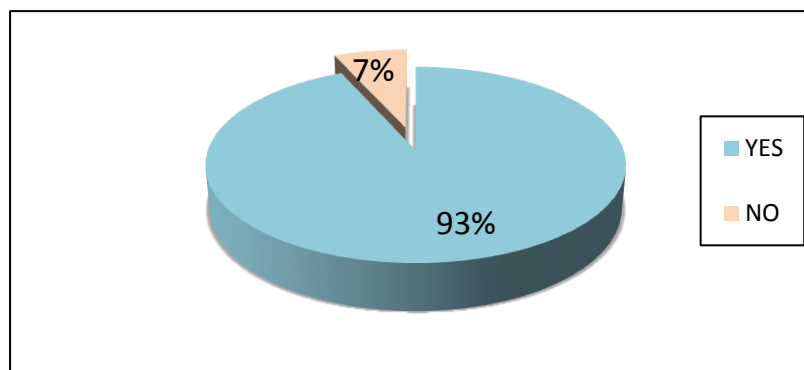
Likewise, another section of the pie chart shows that 6% of teachers reported that they use Cooperative Language Learning in their classes. CLL provides opportunities for naturalistic second language acquisition through the use of interactive pair and group activities; it means that the class has to be based on social exchange of information. However, according to the observation of classes none of teachers who picked this method used it, since instructors preferred to give lectures to explain the lesson rather than giving students the opportunity to interact, to acquire and to reinforce knowledge.

Furthermore, during the oral interviews educators expressed that all methods have positive aspects and they use many of them to teach.

Finally, a misconception of terminology or lack of information led some teachers to write down Multiple Intelligences as another method.

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

Graph N° 3



Authors: María del Cisne Chicaiza, Helena Arteaga
Source: Teachers' Surveys

Surveys showed that 93% of teachers use whole-group activities at some point in their classes. Teachers explained that this kind of activity has its benefits, for example, students have the opportunity to interact with each other.

Additionally, most of those teachers said that students who have a higher level of knowledge help their fellow classmates, so confidence increases. Also, teachers said that they use this activity to introduce language and grammar with actions designed to reach goals. As students feel confident of themselves, brainstorming, forums and debates can be used while applying whole-group activities. Teachers mentioned that whole-group activities reinforce cooperative language.

On the other hand, it is important to mention that a few of those educators mixed up terms, whole-group with group activities; which can be evidenced in their responses to this particular question, they stated that students prefer and learn better by working in groups.

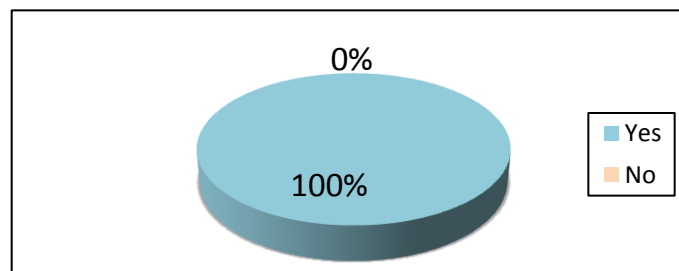
Moreover, 7% of teachers expressed that they do not use whole-group activities because it is difficult to supervise large classes. This 7% corresponds to one

teacher who expressed “I have too many students to monitor”; but according to notes taken while observing, that was not evidenced since he introduced and finished the lesson using whole group strategies. Besides, it was not a large class; 14 students formed it.

Finally, during the observations we could notice that students are used to work using this activity; since it is the simplest one for teaching, it does not demand challenges neither from the students nor from the teachers. The observations let us notice that whole-group activities should not be applied during the complete English hour; because some students participate whereas other ones might do other things not related with the subject.

Do teachers use individual activities to teach their lessons?

Graph N° 4



Authors: María del Cisne Chicaiza, Helena Arteaga
Source: Teachers' Surveys

Teachers mentioned that they use individual activities in a 100%. It could be established that the principal reason that was provided by teachers for using individual activities to teach their lessons was that these activities allow them to evaluate the level of understanding of each student. It works perfectly with students because they learn using their own method and are able to self-development. Applying individual work teachers can check whether or not students are learning and weaknesses can be found. Also, students assess themselves and they are capable of noticing their own mistakes and learn from them.

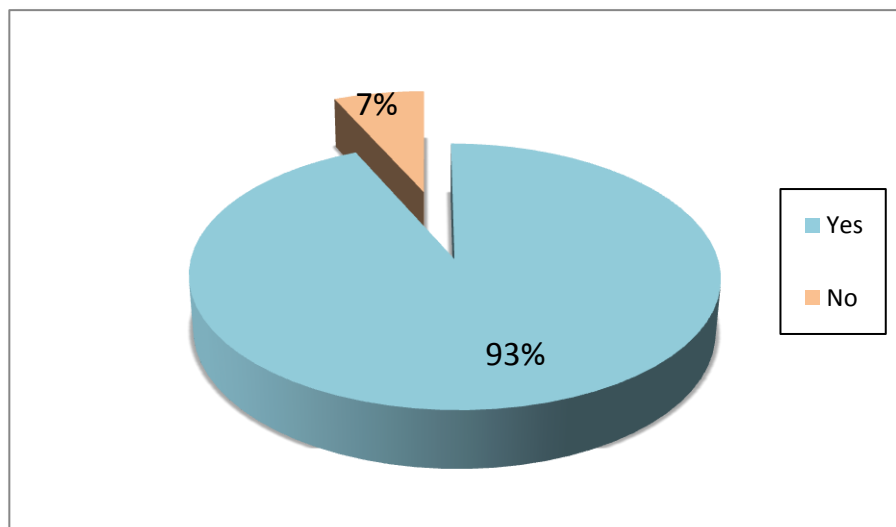
According to the interviewed teachers, by using individual activities to teach their lessons they are able to assess the knowledge each student has appropriately. Teachers also expressed that the use of this practice provide students the opportunity to express their own ideas on the tasks, which helps teachers to check students' accurate understanding of the concepts.

In addition, observation notes confirmed the statements above; teachers did use individual activities during the lessons; pupils performed activities such as reading privately and they answered comprehension questions individually.

Finally, students agree on using individual activities. Each one of them has their own method and it is used to get their best. Almost all students have stated that individual activities practiced in class motivate them to learn, and they have also admitted that they like the way their instructor teaches English.

Do teachers use group work activities to teach their lessons?

Graph No. 5



Authors: María del Cisne Chicaiza, Helena Arteaga
Source: Teachers' Surveys

Ninety three percent of surveyed teachers said they use group work activities to teach lessons. Instructors look for students to express their ideas promoting

Cooperative Language Learning (CLL). Richards & Rodgers (2001) said that CLL provides opportunities for learners to develop successful learning and communication strategies. Educators agreed with the authors on the use of cooperative activities while teaching; they stated that group work activities allow students increase their speaking skills.

Another reason why group work is used is because it is an effective tool for students to increase confidence with the language. Since pupils feel comfortable working with their classmates, teachers only monitor their progress, which provides independence to the student. Students work together without the teacher controlling them; brainstorming takes place and learning occurs. Students get the chance to explain between them in their own words.

In the observed classes just one teacher used group work technique in her class. At the beginning, it was perceived that when students work in groups they get a bit nervous, so the teacher scaffolded the assignment breaking the large task into smaller parts, she also used prompting. Due encouragement given by the teacher her students began to work independently, they overcome their fear and start working properly to practice dialogues, developing their listening and speaking skills. In some cases group work encourage students to be disruptive, teachers face difficulty controlling classroom discipline, but in this specific case there was not lack of instruction or preparation, the educator managed the classroom successfully.

On the other side, the inquired educators expressed they used group activities; even tough 93% of them did not apply this technique in their classes. It can be inferred that instructors do not seek interaction between students. As observed, because of an absence of variety in activities during lessons, students did not get

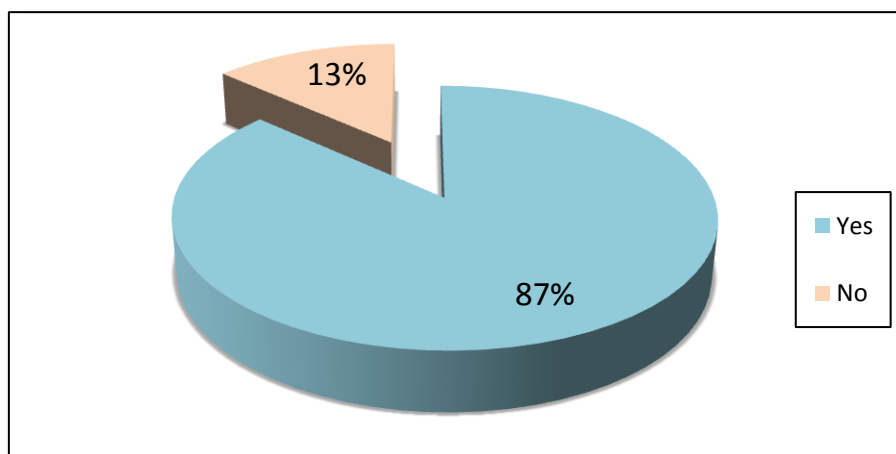
completely involved in class and some of them chose to do different activities at the moment of learning rather than paying attention to the teacher.

Seven percent of teachers said that they do not use group work in order to teach lessons, because they found more helpful to teach individually and then practice as a group.

Lastly, 87% of students mentioned they like working in groups because they learn from each other and feel free to share with their classmates.

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

Graph N° 6



Authors: María del Cisne Chicaiza, Helena Arteaga
Source: Teachers' Surveys

Eighty seven percent of teachers said they use English most of the time during the class period. Since Spanish is used all the time in our everyday life, they consider properly using English at least in class. Due to this exposition to the target language students are capable to increase skills and improve their speaking awareness.

Thirteen percent of teachers expressed they do not use English most of the time. They consider that most of the information presented to the students is

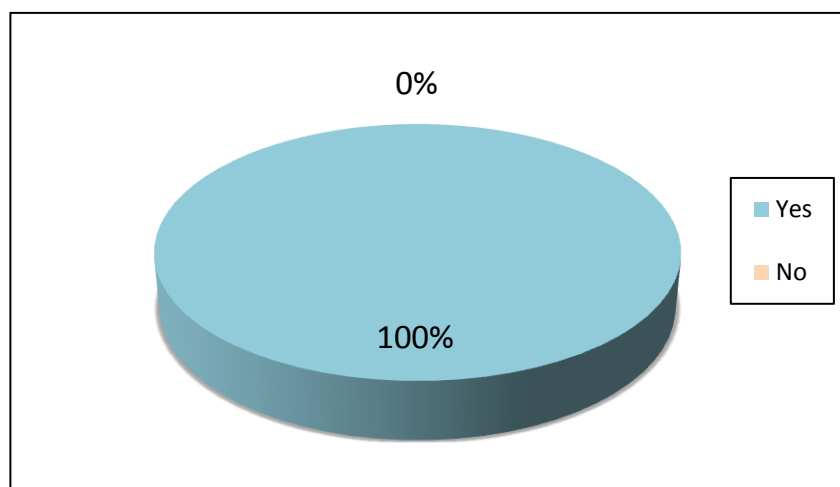
sometimes confusing for them; students do not understand all the instructions and do not comprehend what the teacher is trying to point out.

Students were surveyed too and a 93% of them stated that their teachers use English most of the time in class.

To contrast the information given by students and teachers, observations were done and we found that only 40% of educators use English in a 100% in class, thirty percent of teachers use English in a 50% and another 30% use English in a 75%. In conclusion we can noticed that teachers were not totally honest when they answered this question because there were many classes in where Spanish was used by teachers to conduct their class

Do teachers plan their lessons?

Graph N° 7



Authors: María del Cisne Chicaiza, Helena Arteaga
Source: Teachers' Surveys

A hundred percent of the interviewed teachers plan their classes in advance, they know about the importance of this aspect before teaching a lesson. Teachers mentioned that they plan their classes to guarantee a varied learning environment. Planning a lesson makes the teacher be aware of what is going to be taught and of

course goals can be reached. Educators also mentioned that discipline problems could be avoided when they keep a plan. In all schools planning is mandatory.

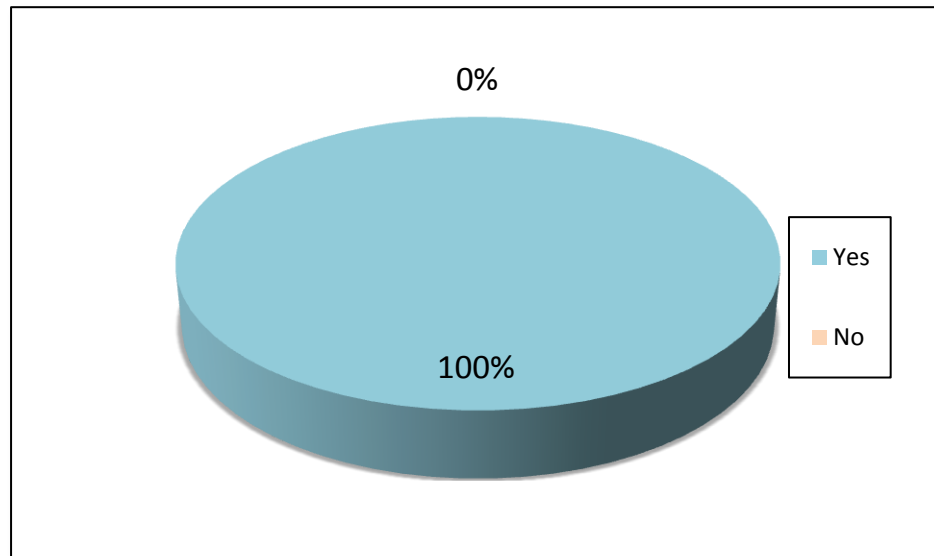
To reinforce what teachers said, Harmer (1998) agreed on some points about the benefits of lesson design; the first agreement is the advantages. For instance, when teachers plan a class they will know what to expect from students to learn at the end of the period of class; additionally, teachers can use the planning program as a source for useful information about page numbers, tracks, materials, etc. Finally, the lesson plan can function as documentation for teachers that may need some reference in the future. The second point shared by the author is the content that is going to be on the lesson plan, such as aims; procedures; timing; materials; methods; students' arrangement; and comments about the group, as well as hints and tricks to make an enjoyable teaching environment or suggestions of what to do in a conflictive situation or set back. Thus, it is seen that planning a lesson is the key for a successful class.

From the observed classes any of the teachers handle their classes based on written planning since papers or folders could not be seen. It can be considered that teachers used mental planning because they were able to conduct their classes. Through observations we detected that some aspects of the lesson plan were applied in class, such as timing, each activity had a moment and students were comfortable with it. The lesson topics were catching, since coursebooks' lessons are designed with popular themes including: real life, music, gossip, movies, and so on; which promoted that the objectives could be reached. Some teachers started their classes using warm-up activities and then they introduced a new topic. We also saw that individual and guided practice was done. Teachers gave feedback to their students

and materials and resources helped with the learning process. We concluded that planning has to be done in order to reach the proposed goals.

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

Graph N° 8



Authors: María del Cisne Chicaiza, Helena Arteaga
Source: Teachers' Surveys

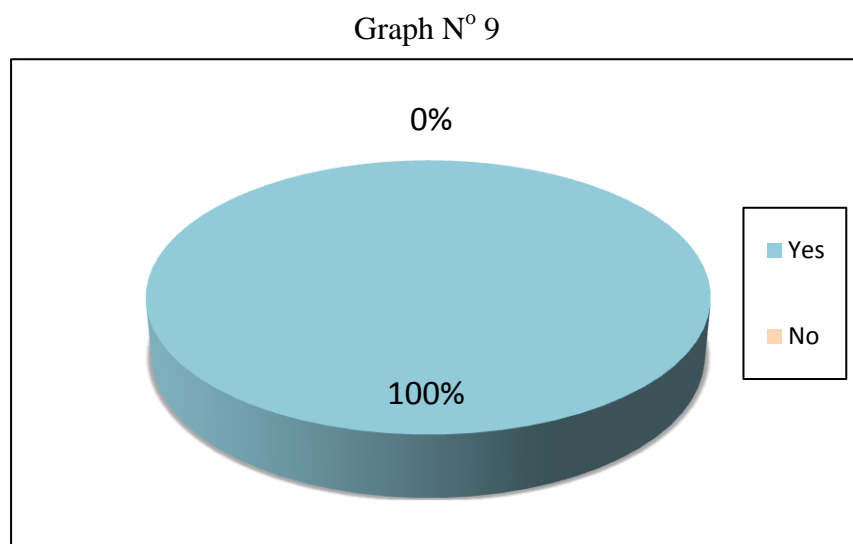
Surveys showed that 100% of teachers consider discipline, timing, feedback, and instruction to teach their lessons. They expressed that they apply these aspects because students need to be responsible and know what to do and how to behave in class. When considering and applying all those aspects teaching becomes effective and a good environment can take place if it is well coordinated. It is clear that all that features are important in the teaching process; classes could not be developed without all those aspects. All these characteristics are part of a good classroom management. Teachers adduce that considering those aspects, help them to fulfill with the curricula, effective teaching learning process takes place and they are able to know how he or she is doing in order to succeed.

Watson (1997) said that teachers have to remember that students work better when they receive feedback because students can manage their progress and they can check their performance. A teacher agreed on that, stating: “students cannot correct mistakes if you do not tell them what is wrong”. Based on this, a 7% of students felt that they do not receive feedback from teachers. On the other hand, a 93% of students feel that the instructions they receive are clear.

Observing classes, we noticed that in most of the cases discipline was well managed by teachers, so classes were organized. In some classes we did not witness time management; this was because teachers were flexible and adapted to their students without losing the class objective. Also we could observe that some educators considered the aspect related to behavior in class, even though not all succeeded in maintaining the whole group of students paying attention during the complete lesson.

Factors concerning Students

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



Authors: María del Cisne Chicaiza, Helena Arteaga
Source: Teachers' Surveys

All surveyed teachers mentioned that they take into account different characteristics and needs of their students when designing a class. The majority of educators know how to create interesting, funny and useful activities that could bring positive results to the learning process.

According to Reid (1995) the term “learning style” has been used to describe an individual’s natural, habitual, and preferred way of absorbing, processing, and retaining new information and skills.” Teachers said that they take into account students needs because they use different strategies and techniques. Also teachers think students learn faster and easier the language when strengths and weaknesses have been considered. If activities are interesting, teaching would be effective. Materials and activities are used in order to motivate and guarantee students active participation.

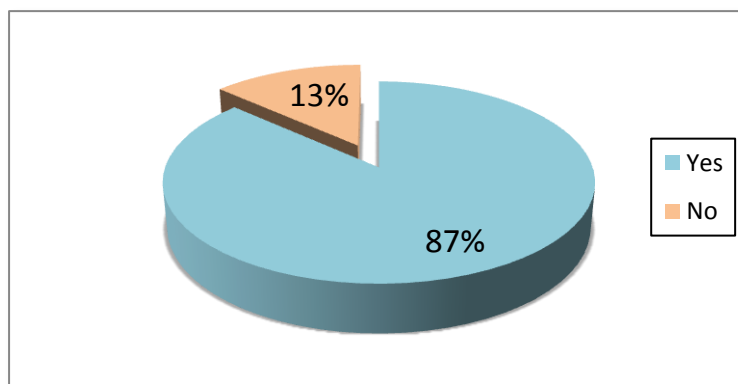
When observing classes we noted that some teachers used a lot of activities and materials to support them. On the other side, another group of educators did not consider students’ needs to present their lessons, since they use whole group activities in which students have to listen to instructions and explanations; in these classes, tasks depending on students’ learning styles were not present.

Students on a general way mentioned that teachers’ commands and instructions are clear enough, and classes are fun. We have to state that only 3 teachers applied warm up activities, which means that students were not motivated enough to start a class.

We can conclude that it is really important to have motivated students and pay attention to what they are looking for in a class.

Do teachers consider Students' level to teach English successfully?

Graph N° 10



Authors: María del Cisne Chicaiza, Helena Arteaga
Source: Teachers' Surveys

Surveys showed that 87% of teachers bear in mind students' level of English to prepare a class. They consider students' level crucial to know how good students are, so they cannot teach something beyond their comprehension. Also students' level let teachers tackle their weaknesses properly and adjust methods to their skills. If extra explanations are necessary, a teacher must repeat a class in order to make clear the topic. Teachers stated that the more students practice the more they master the language. Educators expressed that what is being taught should be challenging not too easy or beyond students understanding.

Students are satisfied with classes; they mentioned that activities are easy and interesting because teachers know what they need and how to get to them.

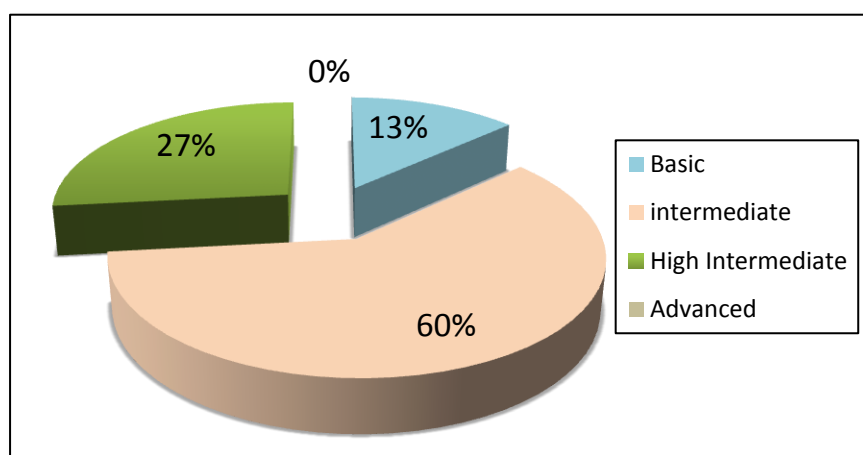
Meanwhile, a 13% of teachers do not consider necessary taking into account students' level to teach the language. They mentioned that instructions and contents are clear enough.

According to the data collected during the observations, we can state that activities used in some classes, such as listening, direct instruction, reading, writing, discussing, and illustrating; were only addressed to one level of the groups, and not

for a diversity of them. It can be inferred that those teachers did not take into account students' level.

Which is the students' level?

Graph N° 11



Authors: María del Cisne Chicaiza, Helena Arteaga
Source: Teachers' Surveys

Sixty percent of educators consider their students with an Intermediate English level. They are able to understand and make them self-clear with what they are asking. They do not have any trouble expressing their selves. From observations done, we confirmed that effectively students have an Intermediate level. Twenty seven percent of teachers said that their students have a High Intermediate level but from observations done; we determine that just a 13% of undergraduate can be considered at this level.

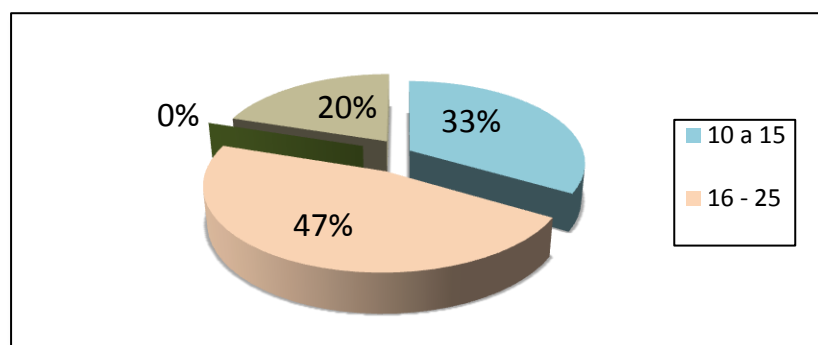
Also, we determined that 40% of students have an English basic level, while teachers considered that 13% of students has it. We could see that teachers in some cases used Basic English so students do not have to make effort on understanding instructions; the way the students answered the questions during the lessons made it obvious that their proficiency fell into the basic user.

Finally, we found out that there is not an advanced level of English in the observed classes. We can determine that students in private high schools manage an intermediate English level on a general way.

Factors Concerning Classrooms

How many students are there in this class?

Graph N° 12



Authors: María del Cisne Chicaiza, Helena Arteaga
Source: Teachers' Surveys

Forty seven percent of the observed classrooms had between 16 and 25 learners. This number of students is considered ideal to teachers and students. Tutors mentioned that classes are personalized and they are able to prevent disruptive behavior. Also, teachers stated that students can practice more and they are able to identify mistakes. This group of students makes monitoring easier and working as a team provides an opportunity for students to learn the vital skills of compromise and collaboration.

Students also agreed with what teachers said. They expressed that teachers give better explanations and they are able to express ideas; they get help from each other and pronunciation is paid attention. The obtained results are supported by a study.

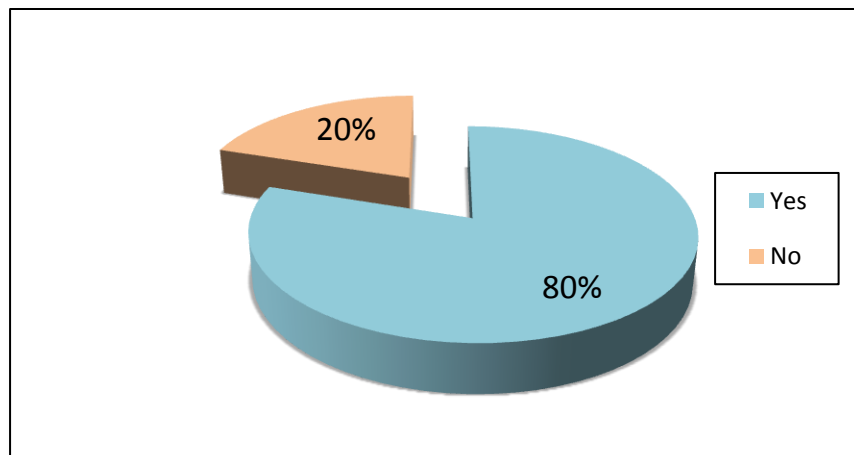
Leahy (2006) in his study reported that almost all teachers that participated in the research were totally convinced that a crowded class turns the work difficult for teachers and affects the performance of the students; luckily most of the visited Private High Schools had not big amounts of students per classroom.

Thirty three percent of teachers mentioned that they handle classes from 10 to 15 students, which is a small group, and for them group work activities are difficult to apply.

Twenty percent of teachers reported that they have to deal with groups of more than 31 students. This is a big number and discipline is not easy to manage. Taking into account the observed classes, teachers of these groups did not face problems controlling the discipline of the whole number of students; instead they had problems catching all students' attention.

Do teachers feel comfortable working with this number of students?

Graph N° 13



Authors: María del Cisne Chicaiza, Helena Arteaga
Source: Teachers' Surveys

Graph 13 demonstrates that 80% of educators felt comfortable working with the number of students in their classes. Those teachers have small groups and said that they can monitor progress and pay attention to every student. Also, teachers mentioned that they have the right number of pupils to create a good environment

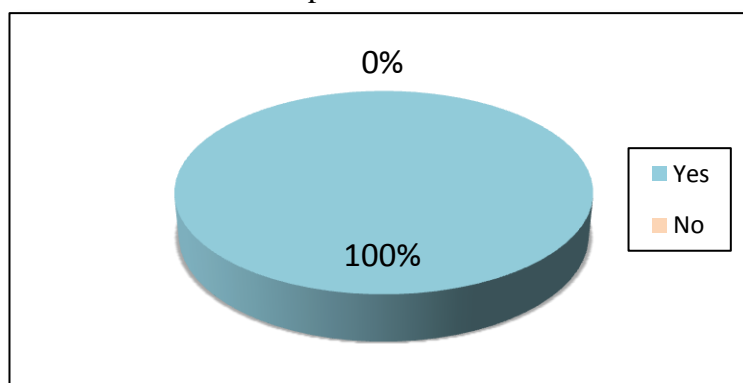
and ensure everybody's participation, besides let them to express their opinions. Finally, teachers felt satisfied with the number of students because they have active students. As well as teachers, students feel free to work with their classmates. Sixty seven percent of students feel motivated and participative. Classes of 16 or 20 students are ideal because educators can assess the group and assess students individually.

The remaining 20 % of teachers affirmed they do not feel satisfied teaching this number of students. The larger the class the more the attention is divided and it is more difficult to focus on every student considering their own individual needs. These educators do not feel comfortable working with bigger groups because it is hard to control discipline, and give feedback is quite impossible.

In one of these crowded classes we could observe that there were some problems in discipline especially with some students who did not want to cooperate and participate in the class. Likewise, some uninterested pupils were doing different activities and bothering others.

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

Graph N° 14



Authors: María del Cisne Chicaiza, Helena Arteaga
Source: Teachers' Surveys

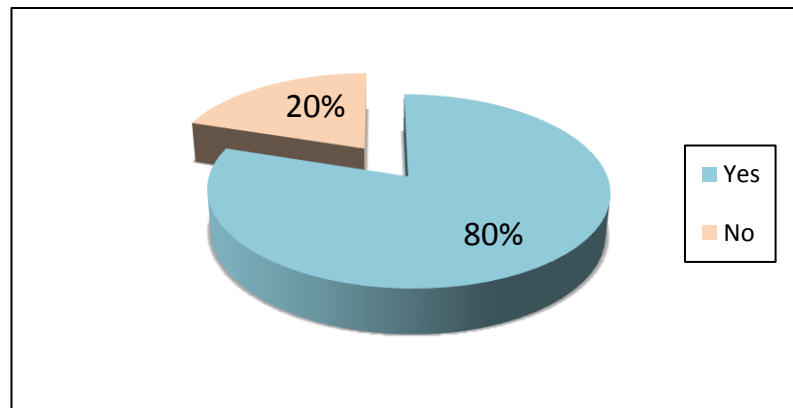
In this question 100% of educators answered that they consider they have enough space to work with their students.

Observations done made us agree with the majority of instructors on the room they use to teach a class. This aspect let activities go on. Individual, pair or group work can be done with any trouble. Even though all of the teachers felt that they had enough space to work with their students in class, from the 15 classrooms visited during this study 3 of them did not had enough space for the students to move around and participate in dynamic activities. It was evident during the observations that the educators of these particular classrooms could not stride up and down the aisles between the chairs due to the current classroom space.

As well as teachers, students were surveyed too. Forty percent of them expressed they feel uncomfortable with the classroom space since it is too small and moving freely does not take place. On the other hand, some students consider their class too big, so it turns annoying and noisy. Edge (1996) said that teachers should learn to work in different types of classrooms where the conditions and size vary. Those factors cannot be modified unless there is another room available. According to this author, the teachers must try to feel comfortable with the space provided for they to work even if it does not fit to their wishes, luckily for teachers Edge offered some recommendations to solve that issue such as making the space more familiar by sticking stuff on the walls and if possible organizing the furniture in a better way.

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

Graph N° 15



Authors: María del Cisne Chicaiza, Helena Arteaga
Source: Teachers' Surveys

Eighty percent of teachers arrange students' seats in relation to the activities planned for their classes. On the other hand, the remaining 20% of them did not consider changing seats distribution.

Educators who correspond to the first group said that they consider seats rearrangement once in a while, depending on the activity and especially when working in groups. Also, they think it is necessary to get the students' attention. We were able to see that most of teachers use orderly rows to instruct their classes. According to Harmer (1998) this distribution presents many advantages especially for teachers, who can see all the auditory, controlling the discipline and the attention of the students. In the observed classes it was demonstrated that just one of the educators who was studied changed the order of seats because he used pair work activities and allowed students to work together arranging seats first.

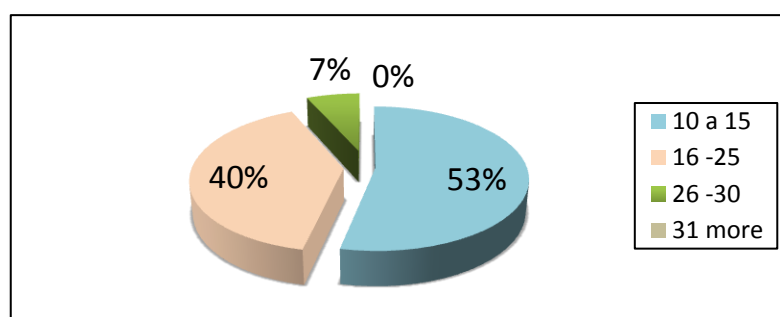
Bigger groups were organized in lines. Teachers who do not consider necessary arranging seats according to their planned activities simply applied the current seating arrangement in all class activities and do it because seating

arrangement is not considered as an important factor for them and due to the insufficient classroom space.

Although teachers estimate space and distribution properly, only 64% of students agree with them. Thirty six percent of students do not like to work in groups because they stated that only a few work and is too noisy. Also, they mentioned that personal stuff disappears when changing seats.

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

Graph No. 16



Authors: María del Cisne Chicaiza, Helena Arteaga
Source: Teachers' Surveys

The graphic shows that 53% of teachers of private institutions in the city reported that a group of 10 to 15 students is the appropriate number to work; this group of teachers believed that a group like that lets them to control discipline issues in a better way; also they supported their answer mentioning that while the class is smaller the lesson gets more personalized; in addition, teachers alleged that the fewer the students are the more time they have to practice; finally, they said that it is a good number to foster interaction.

Moreover, the graphic shows that 40% of the population manifested a preference for a group of 16 to 25 students primarily because the number of students is conducive for group work activities and that is an easy number to control; furthermore, some of them believed that with this number of students they will be

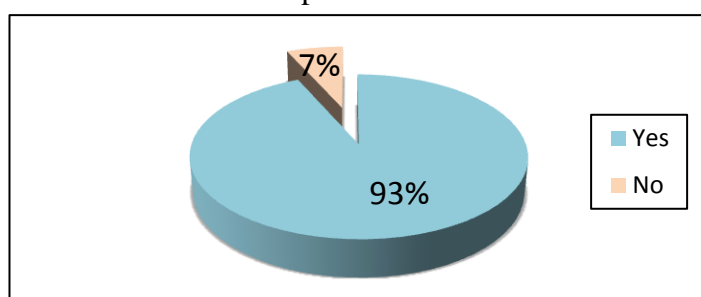
able to transmit their knowledge in an appropriate form. In a manner in, which each and every student development or acquisition of the English language is monitored and evaluated on a daily basis.

Finally, 7% of the population selected groups of 26 to 30 students because they believe it is possible to personalize a class with this number of students, it is important to mention that the teachers who selected this range, work in classes with the bigger number of students. During these observed classes it was seen that the number of students affects the way teachers handle their classes, since teachers have to spend more time on grading students, getting total control of the class is difficult since students are noisy and having more than 30 learners to be quiet requires more effort than a small class. Furthermore, in these classes, it was evidenced that students who were shy do not participate in class, they stay in silence during the whole period of class and the teacher did not take them into account for class participation.

To conclude, it is important to say that Ecuadorian teachers and teachers who participated in a study conducted by Leahy in U.S.A shared quite the same opinion about how the number of students influence in the acquisition of knowledge. Teachers of both studies believed that students that form part of bigger classes might not receive individual attention and feedback.

Do teachers use teaching resources?

Graph No. 17



Authors: María del Cisne Chicaiza, Helena Arteaga
Source: Teachers' Surveys

The graphic shows that 93% of teachers manifested they do use the teaching resources available, some educators mentioned that they use the Internet while teaching and also used it in order to prepare attractive classes more according to their students' interests; besides, those educators said that in the web they find a lot of teaching resources that are easy to apply in their classes. According to the teachers' surveys, the majority of instructors used varied materials and resources to teach; even though most of the observed lessons did not include those resources.

On the other hand, only 7% of the population manifested they do not use teaching resources but their answer about why they do not use them is not clear so here is the quotation "*to have variation in class*".

Taking into account the observed classes, it was seen that just 1 of the 15 teachers used a CD recorder to complete a task in the book. Two instructors used power presentations to present their classes, and one of them surfed the web to search the meaning of words; while the remaining amount of educators did not use any device or resource to complement their classes.

In contrast, with the information given by teachers and the observation, there were 33% of students marked NO when they were asked about the use of teaching resources in the class. These students matched with the observed classes as explained before in which lack of use of teaching resources was clearly evidenced.

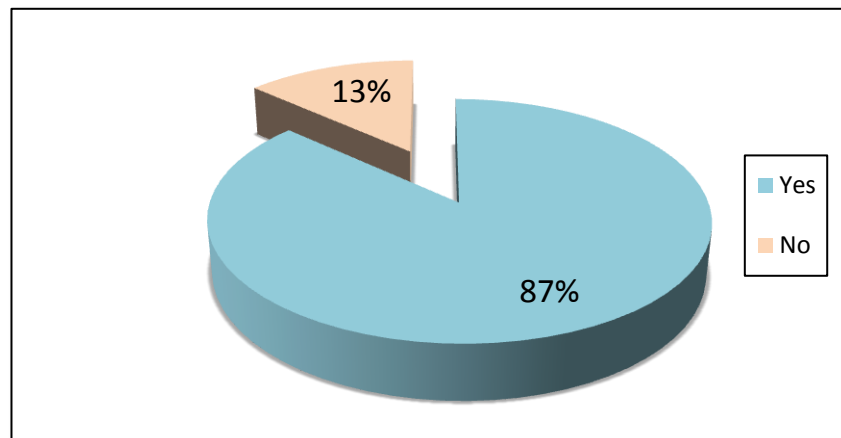
Moreover, the observation showed that some of Ecuadorian private schools are well equipped with projectors, smart boards and so on in order to face the requirements of the new generation of students who grew up using technology.

To conclude, most of private school teachers said that the use of resources is important; so we could deduct that the adequate use of resources benefit the teaching- learning process. But since the majority of teachers did not use any type of

the available teaching resources in their classes, they are not helping their students to receive the necessary input in order to allow them to develop skills in acquiring English as a foreign language.

Do teachers consider appropriate the resources they have in class?

Graph No. 18



Authors: María del Cisne Chicaiza, Helena Arteaga
Source: Teachers' Surveys

Gower & Walters (2005) pointed out that the use of classroom equipment if available is remarkable since that turns the class more interesting. This point of view is shared by 87% of Ecuadorian private school teachers who believe that the resources they have are appropriate since that equipment make students feel more motivated; in addition, they said that teaching resources let them to use a variety of strategies and activities. Even though these researched institutions were provided with technological tools to be used, teachers were not confident of using them or did not planned the classes taking into account the available resources.

On the other hand, 13% of the population did not consider the resources they have as good enough because they registered only a cd recorder and supplementary materials as the assets available to teach; in addition, they mentioned that their students need more classroom resources especially the ones that could improve their listening skills. Taking into account the observed classes just one teacher used a CD

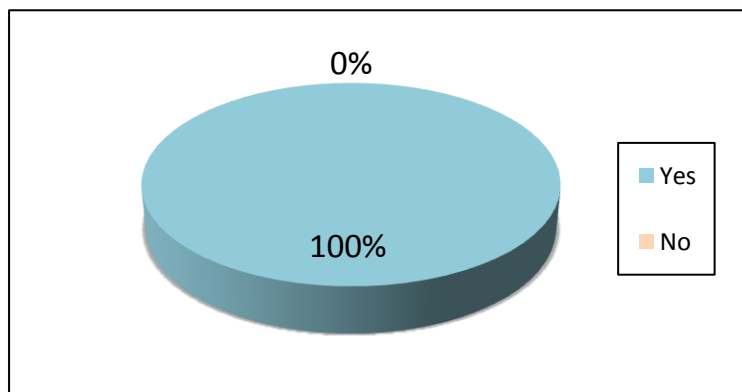
recorder to teach the lesson, during the whole lesson students were aware of the topic and they got involved in it with no difficulty, since they enjoyed doing this type of task where they receive oral input of a different accent apart from their instructor.

To summarize, teachers of private schools in Ecuador believed that the resources are an influential factor in the teaching- learning process because of the reasons mentioned before.

Factors concerning Institutions

Does the institution review teachers' lesson plans?

Graph No. 19



Authors: María del Cisne Chicaiza, Helena Arteaga
Source: Teachers' Surveys

All teachers who participated in the present study manifested that the educational institutions where they work demand from them an elaboration of a lesson plan per each class they have; which must be presented to the English area coordinator to be evaluated. The same question asked teachers to mention how often the plans are reviewed so 67% of teachers mentioned that they have to present a lesson plan once a week and the remaining 33% mentioned that they have to submit lesson plans once a month. Furthermore, some teachers mentioned that they have to present another plan for each semester.

The teachers' affirmation was confirmed during the observations in which we could notice that classes were planned in advance because teachers knew what to do, students were prepared too, and in each class it was observed activities management. According to the observed classes, instructors did not have any written plan on their desk to follow during the lesson, since it was inferred they kept plans in mind.

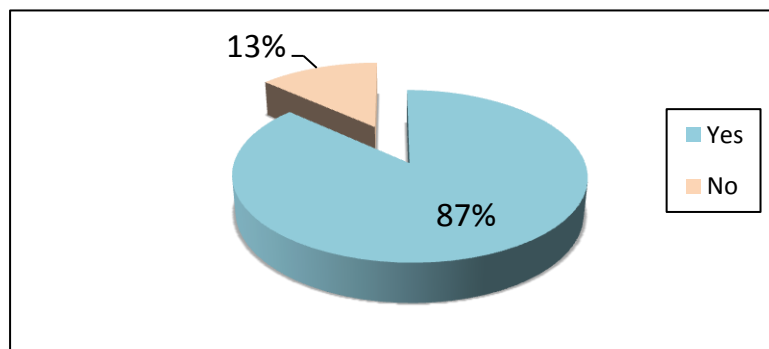
Furthermore, it is necessary to mention that there were different answers and disagreement between people working in the same institution. For instance, one educator stated, "lesson plans are reviewed every week", and the two others specified that planning is checked monthly. These disagreement of answers can be considered to be the result of the absence of control in lesson plans in their institution, since teachers are not supposed to reply in a different way about a widely used aspect as planning revision.

To sum up, Private High schools of Ecuador consider important to had lesson plans in order to achieve their English area objectives in the programmed time. Teachers claimed that periodical meetings are organized with the area Coordinator in order to verify that the academic lesson plans, and to check if curricula from the teachers are fulfilled, but this information could not be proved as the researchers only did one observation per class and more time is required to confirm these statements.

To conclude, teachers considered that the elaboration of a good lesson plan is a primordial factor that determines succeed or failure of the learning process.

Does the institution monitor teachers' teaching?

Graph No. 20



Authors: María del Cisne Chicaiza, Helena Arteaga
Source: Teachers' Surveys

The graphic shows that 87% of teachers marked that the Educational Institution where they work monitor their classes in most cases once a month, for others the observation is conducted in each semester, for few the observation is each week and finally some teachers said they are monitored at random. On the other hand, 13% of the population said that they were no observed. In the observed classes there were no supervisors, and monitoring was not regularly handled because of lack of time.

Saville stated, “teachers are coming to understand that seeing one’s actions through another’s eyes is an indispensable tool for classroom research as well a potentially enlightening experience for both observer and observee”; (2006). Unfortunately this way of perceiving monitoring is not shared by some teachers who were not willing to accept the presence of the observers in their class. Talking to some teachers they revealed they do not feel comfortable when having someone else monitoring their classes. There was one teacher in the chosen private high schools who denied to be observed by the researches of this study. She did not want to collaborate, and then she had to cooperate since the principal had granted permission for the observations.

Finally, the information provided by teachers about monitoring and the evaluation of lesson plans conducted us to assume that the teaching-learning process has positive results when monitoring is performed regularly.

Conclusions

- In Ecuadorian private schools factors like classroom space and equipment, teaching resources, classroom management, lesson design, and classroom monitoring have a positive influence in the teaching-learning process, as evidenced by the good level of the observed students.
- Private high school students have an English Intermediate level. Students demonstrated that are familiar with grammatical structures in English; they do not have any trouble expressing themselves.
- Many classrooms in private schools are equipped with the latest technology and the space provided for teaching is good; consequently, students can learn in a comfortable environment.
- Institutions monitor teaching; in this way the lesson plan is accomplished and the teaching-learning process is successful. We conclude that monitoring is a crucial factor that benefits the teaching-learning process.
- Most teachers who work in private schools are young professionals who are very fluent in the language; these factors help students to develop the listening and speaking skills in a better way.
- According to the observations, we concluded that group work activities are really beneficial, they increase students' participation, talking time and oral fluency; in this kind of activities students felt more comfortable to speak and they talked more than when they did activities that were focused on whole class activities or individual activities.

Recommendations

- Private high school methodologies and infrastructure should be taken into account as a basis for a national English language teaching development plan. In this way, all students will have similar opportunities for learning English.
- It is important for institutions to hire well-prepared people to monitor English classes.
- Teachers should motivate students to learn the English language by using interesting materials and computer programs that help them to practice the language.

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ANNEXES



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

| | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION: | |
| DATE: | |
| YEAR: | |

1. Which level of education do you have?

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

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

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

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

| | |
|--|--------|
| Students' Level (<i>Basic, Intermediate, High Intermediate, and Advanced</i>) | |
| 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 _____ |

Thanks for your cooperation!!!!!!



UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA PARTICULAR DE LOJA

La Universidad Católica de Loja

MODALIDA ABIERTA Y A DISTANCIA

CARRERA DE INGLES

STUDENT'S QUESTIONNAIRE

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION: | |
| DATE: | |
| YEAR: | |

21. ¿Te gusta aprender Inglés?

| | |
|--------|--------|
| 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 aprender 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 () |
|--------|--------|

GRACIAS!!!!!!



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

| | |
|--|--|
| EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION: | |
| DATE: | |
| YEAR (desde 8vo básica a 3ro bachillerato): | |

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

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

YES () NO ()

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

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

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

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

3. Which of the following methods are used?

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

4. Which of the following activities are used?

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

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

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

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

| | |
|-----------------------|-----|
| Discipline | () |
| Feedback | () |
| Activities management | () |
| Time management | () |

7. How many students are there in the classroom?

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

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

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

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

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

NOTES:

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

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

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

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

TEACHER'S INTERVIEW

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

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