



**UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA PARTICULAR DE LOJA**  
*La Universidad Católica de Loja*

## **ÁREA SOCIO HUMANÍSTICA**

**TITULACIÓN DE LICENCIADO EN CIENCIAS DE LA  
EDUCACIÓN MENCIÓN INGLÉS**

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

**TRABAJO DE FIN DE TITULACIÓN**

**AUTORA: Calderón Acosta, Laura Carmita**

**DIRECTORA: Castillo Cuesta Luz Mercedes, Mgs.**

**CENTRO UNIVERSITARIO SAMBORONDÓN**

**2014**

## APROBACIÓN DE LA DIRECTORA DEL TRABAJO DE FIN DE TITULACIÓN

Mgs.

Luz Mercedes Castillo Cuesta

DOCENTE DE LA TITULACIÓN

De mi consideración:

El presente trabajo de fin de titulación: “Factors that affect the English language teaching-learning process in Ecuadorian private high schools” realizado por Laura Carmita Calderón Acosta, ha sido orientado y revisado durante su ejecución, por cuanto se aprueba la presentación del mismo.

Loja, Febrero de 2014

f) .....

## DECLARACIÓN DE AUTORÍA Y CESIÓN DE DERECHOS

“Yo, Laura Carmita Calderón Acosta, declaro ser autora del presente trabajo de fin de titulación: Factors that affect the English language teaching-learning process in Ecuadorian private high schools, de la titulación de Ciencias de la Educación mención Inglés, siendo Mgs. Luz Mercedes Castillo Cuesta directora del presente trabajo; y eximo expresamente a la Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja y a sus representantes legales de posibles reclamos o acciones legales. Además certifico que las ideas, conceptos, procedimientos y resultado vertidos en el presente trabajo investigativo, son de mi exclusiva responsabilidad.

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

---

Laura Carmita Calderón Acosta  
Cédula: 0903329597

## DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my parents who were self-educated people who thought that to succeed in life meant to be the best person you can be. For them, success was to thrive and excel. That idea was my inheritance, and this work is an evidence of their guidance. Ever since I can remember, I have been studying something. I also dedicate this work to Franchesca, who has always been my inspiration to outdo myself and be a better person. Education is the best investment in life.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I thank the educational institutions that allowed me to visit their facilities, observe the English classes and interview the teachers, as well as, the students. I also thank the professionals from the UTPL that supported me along the career with their time, attention and answers.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

COVER.....	i
APROBACIÓN DE LA DIRECTORA DEL TRABAJO DE FIN DE TITULACIÓN.....	ii
DECLARACIÓN DE AUTORÍA Y CESIÓN DE DERECHOS .....	iii
DEDICATION .....	iv
ACKNOWLEDGMENT .....	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS .....	vi
RESUMEN EJECUTIVO .....	1
ABSTRACT .....	2
INTRODUCTION.....	3
METHOD.....	6
DISCUSSION .....	9
Literature Review .....	9
Description, Analysis, and Interpretation of Results.....	25
Conclusions .....	66
Recommendations .....	68
REFERENCES.....	69
ANNEXES .....	71

## RESUMEN EJECUTIVO

La estructura investigativa del presente trabajo consiste en la descripción y análisis de los factores que influyen en el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje de inglés como segunda lengua, en algunos colegios privados del país y la incidencia que tienen en el rendimiento académico de los estudiantes.

La muestra estuvo constituida por 15 docentes y 15 estudiantes de 5 entidades educativas privadas de la ciudad de Guayaquil. Se realizaron consecutivas visitas a dichas instituciones a fin de realizar la observación pertinente y valorar algunos aspectos tanto del proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje como de la infraestructura y la gestión administrativa por parte de las autoridades de cada plantel. El estudio cuantitativo consideró cuatro áreas: a) Factores relativos a los estudiantes, b) Factores relativos a los docentes, c) Factores relativos a la infraestructura y d) Factores relativos a la gestión de los directivos.

El estudio reveló que las condiciones de los colegios privados observados son relativamente aceptables. Los maestros deben ser titulados para enseñar, la planificación y la retroalimentación son regularmente monitoreadas por las instituciones y los colegios son evaluados por funcionarios del Ministerio de Educación. Este tipo de investigación es un aporte a la información nacional de datos sobre la calidad de la educación y su progreso, estancamiento o retroceso.

Palabras claves: Enseñanza, aprendizaje, proceso, lenguaje, factores, docentes, estudiantes, métodos, cuestionarios, tecnología.

## ABSTRACT

This research study reports on the factors that influence the English language teaching-learning process in Ecuadorian Private High Schools. The main objective is to analyze the effects of these factors in the academic performance of the students. The sample included 15 teachers and 15 students from 5 private schools in Guayaquil City who were observed and interviewed, in order to learn about the conditions of the teaching process, the infrastructure, and the incidence of schools officials in this endeavor.

There were four areas considered in this quantitative analysis: factors concerning students, factors concerning teachers, factors concerning classrooms, and factors concerning educational institutions. The analysis shows that what transpires in the foreign language classrooms is inevitably shaped and constrained by the influence of these factors. The study reveals that the conditions under which students are learning in private high schools in Guayaquil are fairly good; teachers must be licensed to teach in order to hold a teaching position, planning and feedback is regularly monitored by the institutions, and the institutions are checked and monitored by government officials.

### Key words:

Technology, process, language, factors, teachers, students, methods, teaching-learning, evaluation.



## INTRODUCTION

In this global world, English is the international language when dealing with development, economy, politics, technology, science, research, education, etc. Therefore, the concern of the Ecuadorian Ministry of Education about the low academic performance of students in the English language is valid. Ecuadorian students, according to evaluation studies published by governmental educational offices, demonstrated low academic achievement when applying for scholarships; thus, important questions about the possible strategies to make changes have arisen. To assess the current state of the Ecuadorian educational system in the field of the English language proficiency levels, it is imperative to visualize the possible factors that may be influencing it. A research study of these factors will enlighten the real conditions and constraints in the process and they will be evidenced; thus, the implementation of changes will become necessary. As a result, the Ecuadorian student's academic performance will improve.

In order to answer the questions about the factors influencing the English language proficiency levels, it is mandatory to analyze the factors that influence the English language teaching-learning process. It is relevant to identify the students' English level and their needs in the classroom, to examine the classroom conditions where the English lessons take place, to identify the characteristics of the in-service English teachers and to determine the institutional facilities and norms regarding quality education.

Previous studies have examined some of the aforementioned identified factors that can enlighten the present research with facts about the decision of whether or not the use of technology in the classroom is important in the teaching process. Afshari (2009) found that young school workers and male teachers showed a positive attitude toward the use of new

technology in contrast with older workers and female teachers who preferred the traditional way of teaching. In the author's point of view, the integration of new technology in the learning process takes time and effort, but it is a challenge that all teachers will have to embrace in this new century. Moreover, it will open new opportunities for students to access to information on new tendencies and programs available in the net to empower them through knowledge.

Additionally, Chang (2010) investigated about the teaching approach to be used in the classroom to improve the level of the student's comprehension and production of language in a regular basis, and found that teachers and students are equally involved in this process. The investigation also revealed that the integration of teaching resources other than course books, help fulfill students' needs and can improve their class participation. Furthermore, results from this study showed that overcrowded classrooms, commonly found in Ecuadorian schools, make the teaching-learning process difficult.

Finally, the influence of the classroom arrangement and seating locations were proved important through the investigation conducted by Marx, Fuhrer & Harting (2000) when they found that location predisposed students to make questions and promoted their participation in class, which in turn improved the learning process. When referring to a foreign language it is more unlikely that students participate in class due to youth reticence; therefore, the way teachers arrange the seats to conduct the planned activities is very important.

Revealing that indeed there are factors influencing the English teaching-learning process will benefit not only students but also teachers, and educational institutions. As indicated before, English language is used all over the world, the improvement of its proficiency at the school level is very important among Ecuadorian high school students to

open opportunities to obtain scholarships from the international community, as well as jobs in Ecuador and in other countries.

The exposed results could be the basis for changes and improvement in the educational system, the Ministry of Education can use it as the base work to enhance conditions, revise curricula, and evaluate teachers and educational institutions in order to obtain an optimal environment for teachers to teach and for students to learn.

The investigation was limited in terms of the universe of the research study; a larger universe would have delivered more conclusive results. Another limitation was the observation time. In order to have a well-informed view of the teachers performance and be better prepared to issue an opinion, it would have been necessary to follow up the same teacher for at least a week, in this way, I, as a researcher, could comment if the class I observed was an initial class, a follow-up class or a wrap-up class, in other words, if the teacher was introducing a theme, continuing or if he/she was finishing it. The observation sheet should have had more aspects regarding the semantics and the procedural attitude of the students.

The logistics to conduct the observations need to be formal. UTPL should contact the institutions and ensure that documents like lesson plans would be available to make a better assessment of the class. Lack of time with the students during the interview at the end of the observed class, did not permit to build a trusting and nice atmosphere for the interview because they needed to rush and not be late for the next class. Moreover, the conversation with the student was held in Spanish eluding the opportunity to learn about the student's understanding and pronunciation when answering the questions.

The suggestion that the researcher can check the lesson plan before the class would allow assessing if teachers are planning according to the new standards.

## METHOD

### *Setting and Participants*

This research study about the Factors that influence the English Language teaching-learning process was done in Guayaquil City located in the Guayas Province. 5 private schools were part of this research study. From the 5 schools, 2 were located in the south part of Guayaquil and 3 in the Samborondón area in the northern side. The study was conducted in October and November 2012.

Fifteen teachers from 5 different private high schools were observed, interviewed and surveyed, and 15 students registered in the secondary term, that is, in 8<sup>th</sup> grade of basic education through 3<sup>rd</sup> of Bachillerato were interviewed as well. These students are between 12 and 18 years old.

### *Procedures*

Bibliographic research from books, journals, academic articles, and previous studies about new approaches on teaching English as a foreign language, as well as, some factors that may influence the English language teaching-learning process was compiled in the literature review, document used as basis to guide the research study.

Letters requiring collaboration and permit to observe 3 secondary level English classes were sent to 5 educational institutions. Once the English Department approved the petition, the study began with the collection of data using questionnaires, interviews, and surveys, tools supplied by the UTPL.

The quantitative method was used and each variable was described and discussed individually. The research of the factors that influence the English language teaching-learning process was organized in four main areas: a) Factors concerning teachers, b) Factors concerning students, c) Factors concerning classrooms, and d) Factors concerning

educational institutions.

The quantitative analysis section shows the report of the interpretation of the graphs containing the percentages from the questionnaires, interviews and surveys. During the 40 minute class hour, the observation sheet was used to register information about important aspects during the development of the class concerning the four main investigation areas. Some of the relevant questions were about awareness of students' needs and proficiency level, method used, kinds of activities, time management, objectives, feedback, and control of discipline.

The observation sheet also considered questions about classroom size and number of students, enough space to move and participate in dynamic activities, appropriate seating arrangement, teaching resources, and time of use of the English language during class.

The teacher's questionnaire was applied after the class hour; it took about 15 minutes to ask 20 questions and it was registered in a conversational way. None of the interviewed teachers requested to fill out the form themselves.

This teacher's questionnaire was designed to learn about the teacher's level of education, if they considered the students' needs and their proficiency level when teaching their class, the method that they used during that class, if they usually do whole-group, individual or group work activities, if they used English during class most of the time, if they planned their lessons, and if they considered discipline, feedback, and instruction to teach their lessons.

Additionally, they were asked how many students were there in their class, if they felt comfortable with that number of students, if they had enough space to work with the group of students, if they arranged the seats according to the activity, how many students they thought it was appropriate to teach English, if they had teaching resources and which

ones, and if these teaching resources were appropriate. Furthermore, the questions aimed to learn if the institution reviewed their lesson plans and if the classes were monitored.

The student's questionnaire was administered in Spanish and it had 14 questions. It was designed to discover if the students liked to learn English, to discriminate between easy and difficult activities in class, if the teacher taught in English most of the time during the class hour, if the activities they performed were interactive, if the teacher controlled the discipline, if the management of time was suitable, if they received any feedback, and if the instructions were clear.

There were also questions about the classroom and if they felt comfortable with their group and if the group helped them in any way in the learning process, if they agreed with the seating arrangement, and if the resources were appropriate.

Finally, there was also an interview to be applied to the teachers to check on their proficiency level in the English language. There were 6 questions about themselves and their opinion about teaching English as a foreign language. The questions were increasingly difficult in grammar construction and the interview should stop when the teacher could not answer due to lack of understanding of the question. The questions were labeled A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, and C2, being A1 the easiest one.

## DISCUSSION

### *Literature Review*

The English language is very important for Ecuadorian students because it can help them access to information about higher education and scholarships opportunities offered by the international community. However, the results of the evaluations done by the government showed that the Ecuadorian students' knowledge of English is low and it is not adequate for entering the university, therefore, it is imperative to solve this situation.

From the perspective of SENESCYT (Science Technology and Innovation Superior Education National Secretary), English teachers' lack of language proficiency and knowledge of teaching methods could be negatively affecting the teaching-learning process in Ecuador. Thus, this governmental institution announced the launching of a scholarship program for English teachers to study in the best U.S. universities for a year in order to improve their language skills.

According to EcuadorUniversitario (2012) the Ecuadorian government has started designing standards to be met by students to be promoted to a higher level of education. Consequently, teachers will have clear objectives and means to assess student's achievements. The same source also explains that "The Ecuadorian in-Service English Teacher Standards are based on the document developed by the Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) and the organization's K-12 ESL Teacher Standards (2009) which is widely used in countries such as Albania, Paraguay, and the United States". The English Language Learning Standards (ELLS) are outcomes students are expected to achieve at the end of a proficiency level in terms of knowledge and skills expanded throughout the process. The improvement of the teachers' level of language

knowledge and the clear standards set by the Education Ministry that indicate student's proficiency levels of knowledge will help teachers, as well as students, to succeed in this endeavor.

It is important to be aware that there are factors that can affect this process, for that reason a review of methods and approaches and other elements that are involved in teaching English will be included in this section as a means of support for this research. Moreover, five studies about the factors that might influence the English teaching-learning process were chosen to learn from experiences in other parts of the world.

### *Teaching Approaches and Methods*

According to Richards & Rodgers (2001), the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach came about when a change from the old school of teaching grammatical structures to an interactive process of communication was necessary. In order to make this change, a compatible syllabus was developed emphasizing concepts rather than grammatical constructions. It soon became obvious that an important element of CLT was the imperative need to work on procedures reflecting the learners' language needs. To apply all these new ideas it was necessary to develop activities that could be used as a new methodology; so, work groups and information-gap activities were instituted. The basis of this method was that if learners needed to learn the language to communicate, classroom activities should then aim to produce fluent authentic communication and as with all creative processes, learners also needed to learn how to deal with trial and error.

Similarly to the authors above, Larsen-Freeman & Anderson's (2011) view focused on the production of genuine communication among students in a social environment more than on the production of grammatically correct sentences in a lesson. Larsen-Freeman & Anderson (2011) argued that communication was more than well-structured grammatical



utterances; communicative competence was necessary. Learners needed to know when to say something, how to say it and to whom. This view changed the teaching approach being used to a more communicative one. Learners needed to know that different forms could be used to fulfill one function and one form could be used to fulfill many functions. These authors posited that small group activities would be suitable.

Another approach to teaching English as a second or foreign language is the Content-Based Teaching (CBI) approach. Richards & Rodgers (2001) and Larsen-Freeman & Anderson (2011) agree that it refers to the non-grammatical content or information selected for the students to learn other than grammatical rules. It refers to what people mean rather than to how it is said. Two main points were analyzed: information is a motive to learn a second language and it better reflects the learners' needs. Because people learn more successfully when they want knowledge, this approach was used in ESL programs to ensure that students are easily prepared for academic learning. They state that clear learning objectives for both content and language need to be set in advance and teachers must help students understand authentic texts. Students are actively involved in learning language content, often through interaction with other students. There are many exercise types and activities compatible with this approach.

While interaction with other students can help a learner advance their communication skills, Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) is another approach described by Richards & Rodgers (2001) that refers to teaching/learning a second language through tasks as the basic component of planning and instruction in language teaching. This approach is based on communicative language teaching principles like language learning needs, authentic communication activities, meaningful tasks that stimulate learning and meaningful language that reinforce the learning process.

Even though Larsen-Freeman & Anderson (2011) agree with the authors above, they add that a task-based syllabus needs to be analytical, and tasks need to be meaningful, not isolated linguistic items. The results must be clear so that the teacher can make sure that the communication was successful; one way to do this is through sequential tasks. Teachers can corroborate that the learning process occurred when the answers are right and students can identify that a problem has been solved. Significant learning materializes when previous knowledge expands. In other words, new knowledge is added to existing one, and follow up tasks will help reinforce it. Certainly, the tasks should conform to the student level of knowledge and to their needs.

Total Physical Response (TPR) is another method analyzed in this study. Richards & Rodgers (2001) claim that the TPR language teaching method was built to teach a language through physical activity. TPR, as opposed to the previously described methods and approaches, is grammar based. It aims to teach oral fluency at the beginners' level and comprehension is a way to achieve speaking skills. The first objective is to prepare learners to communicate with native speakers in a way that they may be understood. Instruction depends on the needs of the learner, and they are to be met through action-based drills using commands. Language acquisition is successful through enough comprehensible input and reduction of stress.

In addition, Larsen-Freeman & Anderson (2011) consider that the TPR approach aims to teach the language by modeling. The teacher shows the students issuing commands, and then together everyone performs. Then, these same students perform alone demonstrating they understood. After learning to respond some oral commands, the students learn to read and write them and then they begin to issue the commands. The

activities can include new commands when the students are able to speak. The authors state that other methods and techniques can be used with TPR.

A final approach contemplated in this theoretical framework is the Whole Language approach (WL) which, according to Richards & Rodgers (2001) emphasizes that language should be taught as a whole contrary to the approaches that teach reading and writing separately. The benefits that this approach offers are that it focuses on activities relevant to the learner's needs and lives; it uses authentic materials, and it is useful to support the advancement of any aspect of second language learning.

Similarly, Larsen-Freeman & Anderson (2011) feel that the WL approach, calls for language to be regarded as a whole, rather than as autonomous pieces, (words, grammatical structures, pronunciation, etc.). In addition, they maintain that students are exposed to the understanding of the whole rather than the parts. Language is meaningful and a medium through which content is conveyed. Culture is addressed in teaching to the extent that it is present in the content area being studied. The language contributes to the discourse organization of texts. Students are evaluated on their knowledge of content and their language ability.

### *Managing Learning*

Managing learning is a very important task for teachers. Davies & Pearse (2000) explain that giving and reinforcing effective instructions is very important for successful activity completion. For these authors, instructions should be simple and clear, and, if possible, standard. Accordingly, it is important to use the same language and perform routine activities. However, elaborate messages are not easy to get across especially with elementary learners. To make sure the instructions were understood a demonstration of the

activity may be necessary. Comprehension is a must and students need to paraphrase the instructions to ensure that they have understood.

Time and explicit feedback are other aspects of learning management, maybe the most common practices teachers do, that Nunan (1998) ponders. He classifies feedback as positive or negative and argues that positive feedback encourages students to excel and increases motivation through praise. Additionally, Lynch (1996) mentions Schachter (1982) comparing feedback to “nutritional needs” for a human being when referring to the input necessary for language learning. For Schachter (1982) the feedback should be cognitive and affective. According to her, there are four basic forms of input: implicit, explicit, positive and negative. Thus, teachers must be aware that negative feedback may be a sensitive affliction for students.

Managing learning also includes making sure that the students are aware of the class time and how it is going to be used. Woodward (2001) feels that the teachers’ style sets the direction of students’ behavior. Maintaining punctuality will motivate students to be punctual and use the time appropriately. Routines will aid in time management; classes can start in different ways but students must know the agenda and expectations. A familiar way of presenting the agenda for the day will help students learn what will be done and how long it will take.

### *Lesson Design*

Lesson planning is necessary and must be compulsorily done in a systematic way, as Pinter (2006) argues. It is common for a lesson to last 40 minutes; thus it must have clear objectives and operational activities to make the best use of time. The activities should not be longer than 10 minutes each in order to allow time for a warm-up at the beginning and a closing activity to finish the class. Immediately after teaching a lesson, an evaluation about

how the plan worked out, and what went well and why, should be done in order to improve the planning process on subsequent occasions. There are many attractive and informative formats that learning activities may take: stories, songs, poems, etc. These can help integrate creativity into the learning process.

As Davis & Pearse (2000) state, the teacher should be familiar with the goals, general objectives and the syllabus. In other words, it is important that learner's be aware of their performance expectations as well as the intended course outcome and study units. Dedicated committed teachers see lesson planning as an essential part of teaching. Before planning begins, it is necessary to analyze the week's work plan or learning cycle in order to be cohesive with the overall objectives. The didactic material and the tasks need to be suitable for the students in order to reach the goals. An important part of the class is the efficient use of time to make sure that all of what was planned can be finished.

### *Class Size*

Very seldom we find the right class size for the number of students to teach. Therefore, we need to do the best we can in order to maintain order, attention, interest and enthusiasm among students. For Harmer (1998), large classes make it difficult, for both the teacher and the students to be in contact. Apparently, it is very difficult to create well-structured activities and interesting and creative teaching and learning sessions when there is difficulty establishing eye contact. Big classes can be overwhelming for new teachers especially. Nevertheless, there are some things teachers can do. The use of worksheets may be a solution for teachers to handle many of the tasks which they would normally do with the whole class – if the class was smaller. At the end of the task, when it is time to give feedback, teachers can check the worksheets with the whole group; this way all the students will have the chance to check their work.

Additionally, pair work and group work could be of big help to make most of the students participate. Large groups need to be handled differently, and it is important to be extra careful to make instructions clear, to ensure students are aware how long they have to work on an item, and when to stop the activity so that the teacher has time to give good feedback.

A different case is when the class size is small or one to one. Woodward (2001) reviews this fact and indicates that many activities can be done because there will be plenty of time to do it. The relationship with the students may be a lot closer because there will be sufficient time to try new exercises and get acquainted with new materials, moreover, there will be enough time to evaluate all the feedback the teacher gives them.

#### *Classroom Space and Seating Arrangements*

The physical space and the seating arrangement are of great importance because class organization will depend on it. Gower, Phillips & Walters (1983) consider that the teacher's position and the organization of student positioning can make the difference between a successful learning process and a diminished one. Cultural differences must be considered when seating students to avoid discomfort among them. Seating can determine different aspects of behavior: attitude toward each other and to the teacher, the teacher's attitude toward students, how they interact, and the types of activities they can do.

The above mentioned authors believe that the position where students sit in a classroom must depend on the students' age, and on their characteristics and personalities. According to the size of the room, the teacher should decide what is best suited to conduct his class. In addition, the authors explain that activities should be the reference to take into consideration for this decision: the horseshoe arrangement, for instance, will allow easy eye contact between the students and the teacher. Four students sitting in a table "café style"

can work for groups, and teachers must ensure that all the students are able to see him and to listen to the instructions. This arrangement ensures that with minor adjustments, students are in a position to change to pair work and/or group work.

For Konzier (2013), teachers' experience also influences the type of seating arrangement selected for teaching activities. She explains that experienced teachers will know well the best way to arrange the seats for everyone's convenience. New teachers, on the other hand, will have to try some seating arrangements that work for them, among others, desk rows, clusters, U-shaped seating arrangement (semicircle), pairs, etc.

#### *Classroom and/or Teaching Resources*

The course book is the most used teaching and learning material that guides teachers' and learners' activities in many classrooms, Pinter (2006) states. According to her, some teachers follow the book exactly while others create their own material adapting suitable activities. Additionally, the author explains that holistic learning requires topics and many course books are topic-oriented helping in this way to introduce new content using stories, games and tasks. She also elaborates on the fact that the syllabus contains language structures, vocabulary, as well as receptive and recycling language; there is also special focus on sounds skills. Another good point about this author's thought is that changes may be made to authentic material but the essential part of the text must be saved. The creative part should be promoted to introduce new language in a natural way and at the same time make learning fun.

Another consideration about classroom and teaching resources is one by Edge & Garton (2009) who indicate that there is a great amount of available and published ELT material. English books come equipped with materials to be used in class like CDs and audio cassettes, workbooks or activity books for homework, and a teacher's book.

Materials made by teachers are a better way to manage students learning because they can be tailored to fit the students' needs using more contextually appropriate material, both in content and in cultural input. Updating the material is another way to make classes more interesting and the classroom interactions can be based on authentic materials which are commonly used in ELT. Finally, the authors mention that the internet is a friendly tool for students to be able to access all kind of information. They explain that newspapers, magazines, articles, and video clips, among others, can be used to develop grammar skills.

#### *Classroom Observation (Institution Monitoring)*

For Lightbown & Spada (2006), a number of structures have been developed to support second language lessons. There are different kinds and each contains a number of categories depending on the application. They can be qualitative or quantitative explanations and they vary whether they are going to be used throughout the lesson during interactive activities. The structures may also differ if they are used by observers while the activities are happening or if they are being analyzed afterwards through video tapes or transcripts. One example is the Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching (COLT) Observation Scheme described by Spada and Frohlich (1995). COLT has two parts. Part A describes teaching practices in terms of content, where pedagogical activities are teacher or student-centered; focus, where language form or meaning is being taught and organization of activity types; where students have a say in when choosing topics for discussion. Part B, on the other hand, defines the production of language by teachers and students and if this production is restricted in any way. It also considers the kinds of questions teachers ask, and if and how teachers respond to learner's errors. The COLT scheme has been used for classroom research to discover differences in teaching practices related to second language learning.



For Mackey & Gass (2005), classroom observations can be conducted by external researchers and by fellow teachers' instructors in order to improve their professional development, and also for research purposes. Teachers can also observe their own classes using audio or video tapes. The observer needs to be careful with the level of objectivity or subjectivity when conducting observations. It is important to be unbiased. In addition, before conducting an observation, it is imperative to ask for permission from the instructor to do so. The observation of lesson planning and implementation will suffer less impact if the instructor is aware. The instructor should be the one who sets the day and time as well as where the observer will sit in order to avoid interference.

### *Learning Styles*

Many different learning styles can be found in learners. Pinter (2006) suggests that reflective, impulsive, and interactive learners must be identified by the teacher because these personality types can influence in the learning process. This author, as well as Skehan (1998) divides cognitive categories into analytical and global learners. Analytical learners are the ones that invest time in analyzing specifics and global learners are those who internalize knowledge as a whole. Skehan also defines styles with perceptual differences. Some students prefer to listen and others need to see to be able to learn. On the contrary, others learn and communicate using their bodies, feeling and touching things.

Lightbown & Spada (2006) claim that the way people absorb, process, and retain new information is known as "learning styles". There are different ways people do this. Some are visual, some are auditory, and others are kinesthetic. According to the authors, teachers should be very careful in identifying what kinds of learners students are in order to make available all the resources to help in the learning process. Finding an instructional

approach to help learning a second language is a challenge for teachers, due to the differences in learning styles.

### *Language Aptitude*

An important factor to be considered in the teaching-learning process is the aptitude students have to learn a second language. Lightbown & Spada (2006) state that even though aptitude may be considered as an ability to learn fast, learners who persist can succeed. Some researchers suggest that aptitude tests can predict memory, understanding of grammatical rules, sounds and communicative interaction.

According to Skehan (1998), learners may not be strong in all components of aptitude. When placed in the right environment they obtain higher levels of achievement than learners who are not. Thus, teachers should be aware of the fact that achievement goes together with aptitude and the activities should be done considering the differences. He also states that there are analysis-oriented learners and memory-oriented learners. He considers that analysis oriented learners would value accuracy and would do the best they can to achieve it as part of a general orientation towards working on complex language systems. On the other hand, low analysis learners, would have smaller and less differentiated systems, and they might be less able to articulate anything about such systems.

High memory learners might not need a complex analytical system to engage in communication. Low memory learners, in contrast, would not have a large amount of lexical elements, and might not have the multiple representations characteristic of high memory learners. As a result, they would have to use other resources in order to cope with real time communication.

In addition to the theories previously analyzed, this section includes studies that have based their criteria on factors influencing the teaching-learning process in other countries contemplating some facts that are appropriate for this investigation.

The first study selected to build the theoretical framework of this study was done by Afshari (2009) by examining the factors that may influence teacher's decisions to use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in the classroom and highlighting models for integrating technology into teacher training programs.

The study took place in the University of Putra in Malaysia and through classroom observation and teachers' surveys, 63 male and 251 female teachers were tested. Teachers' characteristics such as individual's educational level, age, gender, educational experience, experience with the computer for educational purposes and financial position were taken into account to determine the effectiveness of the inclusion of ICT in the training program.

The results showed that the decisions of men and younger worker were more strongly influenced by their attitude toward using the new technology. In contrast, women and older workers were more strongly influenced by the traditional way of teaching.

In conclusion, the researcher determined that the proliferation of technologies has hindered the teaching-learning process and finding ways to integrate technology into classroom practices is one of the challenges that teachers in the 21<sup>st</sup> century face. Providing computers and securing a connection to the Internet is not enough and technology integration takes time; time to learn about the innovation, and time to be adequately prepared to use it.

A second example is a study performed by Chang (2010) conducted in Taiwan for investigating the factors affecting the implementation of Communicative Language Teaching (CTL) in English classes. For the purpose of this study, the researcher conducted

face-to-face, semi-structured interviews with 8 in-service teachers. Each interview lasted 45-60 minutes and they were translated and transcribed into English. To ensure accuracy and reliability, the researcher asked each participant to review and approve the transcripts.

All eight interviewees suggested that sufficient teaching resources can assist the use of CLT, on the other hand, they reported that teachers' lack of such knowledge and skills could deter its implementation. Moreover, students' resistance to class participation was one of the main barriers they faced in implementing CLT. The interviewees also mentioned that it is challenging to use CLT in the classroom with more than 50 students because they have to give every student opportunities to practice English; it is more difficult to monitor classroom activities in large classes than in small ones.

A third study was conducted by Zu (2001) in China for investigating large classes and strategies to cope with them. The study was done with 380 second-year college students who answered a questionnaire about the advantages and disadvantages of learning English in large classes versus small classes. The results showed that 77.1% of this group answered that the difference was not significant. Some students commented that there was not much different to attend a large class versus a small one. Another student stated that as long as he could see and hear clearly, there was no problem how many people were around him.

The conclusions of the study were that Chinese students do not feel that learning in large classes is uncomfortable because large classes seem to suit their cultural characteristics more than small classes do. Chinese students tend to follow the teacher's instructions and wait until they are asked to participate even in small classes.

A fourth study was done by Martin (2004) for determining how three beginning teachers' conception of classroom management affected their development of teaching

practices. For that purpose, he applied a qualitative approach combined with a longitudinal study that required interviewing three participants at the beginning and end of student-teaching and eleven times over the course of the first two years of teaching. In addition, teachers' classes were observed throughout the school year. The results showed that only two of the participants were able to establish a positive environment in their classes. In addition, several factors influenced teachers' abilities for classroom management specially their conceptions about managing social interactions. Finally, the researcher found that teachers' classroom management skills were strongly related to theoretical knowledge acquired in a course that the participants took previous to the research. Therefore, the researcher concluded that teachers' conceptions of classroom management definitively influence their teaching practices rather than other factors related to the process.

The last study considered in this theoretical framework is the study conducted by Marx, Fuhrer & Harting (2000) who investigated the influence of different classroom arrangements and seating locations when conducting debates and measuring question-asking by students. The study was conducted in Germany with 27 students as participants. The investigation aimed to discover how the location inside versus outside "action zones" predisposed students to formulate questions and to participate in class. In addition to the row-and-column seating arrangement usually found in the classroom being investigated, a different seating arrangement consisting of two semicircles was implemented: T-shaped and triangular shaped action zones. The study lasted 8 weeks and observations were made in 27 lessons in the row-column arrangement and 26 lessons in the semicircle seating arrangement. Semicircle arrangement promoted more participation than the row-column model since unobstructed eye contact might be a crucial variable. Moreover, it could also be that students have stronger feelings of being in the presence of the teacher and feel

obliged out of courtesy to pay attention and show interest while sitting in the semicircle seating arrangement.

The study revealed a positive effect of a semicircle seating arrangement. Seating in other than the row-and-column arrangement deserves further consideration as a means to promote learner's participation in class. According to the author, other factors such as the teacher's personality and teaching style cannot be ruled out and need to be included in further investigations.

It is indubitable that the success or failure of the teaching-learning process depends on the factors influencing it. Getting to know the students, choosing the right method or approach, applying the right technique, and designing the material specifically for the students will make the difference. At the end of the school year, the students who have acquired new knowledge will be better prepared to use it adequately. All elements concerning students, teachers, infrastructure, and institution administration need to be taken in account to fulfill the learning objectives. The research done in other parts of the world about these themes are also helpful to realize where we stand and what changes are necessary, to make the teaching-learning process a successful one.

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

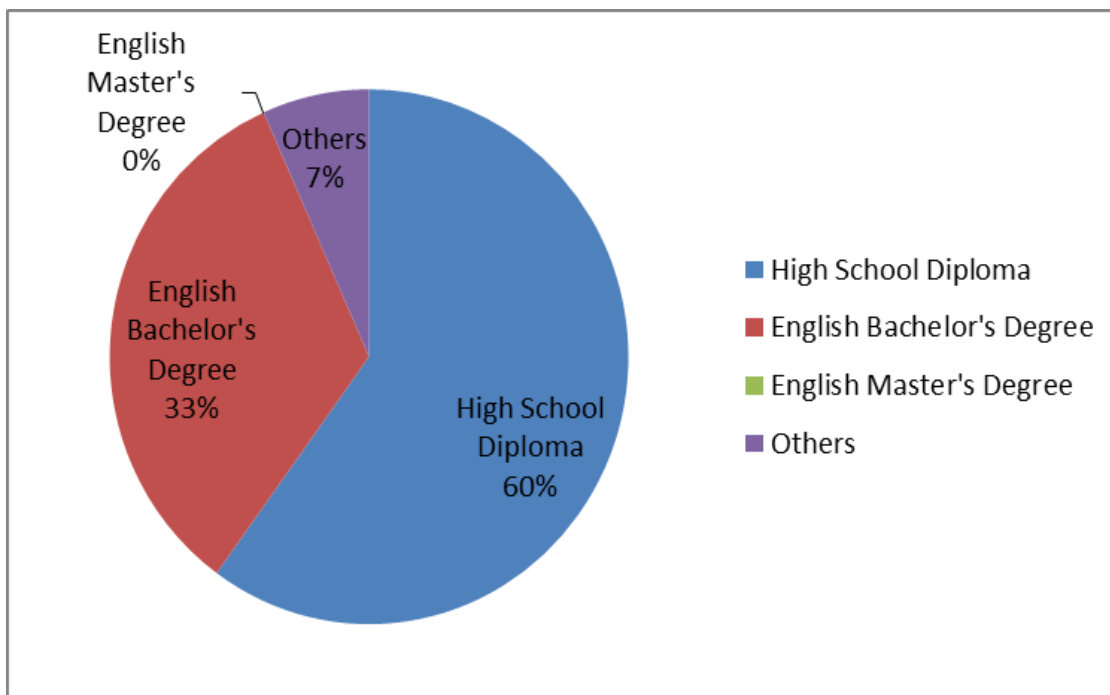
This study examines some of the factors that influence the situation of the teaching/learning English as a foreign language process in Ecuador, in general, and more specifically, in private high schools. To guide the study, four research comprehensive factors were investigated: factors concerning teachers, students, classrooms, and educational institutions. The information was collected through interviews, questionnaires and classroom observation. A quantitative method was used to determine if the deficiencies found by the government in student's English proficiency is due to lack of teachers' knowledge of the language and methodology.

#### *Quantitative Analysis*

##### *Factors Concerning Teachers*

*Which level of education do teachers have?*

Graph 1



Author: Calderón Acosta Laura Carmita

Source: Teacher's Questionnaire

Graph No. 1 reveals that 5 teachers hold an English Bachelor's Degree which represents the 33%. The graph also shows that 9 teachers have a High School Diploma only, which corresponds to the 60%. However, they are attending school and expect to earn their English Bachelor's Degree soon. Finally, one of the teachers (7%) has a Bachelor's degree in another subject (Business Administration). From this study we learned that none of the interviewed teachers has a Master's degree; nevertheless, they stated that their plan is to continue with their education pursuing it.

Some of the observed teachers have many years of experience teaching English. One of them has been teaching English for over 20 years without a degree but studying to get one. However, there was the case of another teacher who was teaching English for the first time, and similar to the previous example, was attending University to obtain her



degree. It is relevant to mention that one of the teachers, who did not hold a degree, lived many years in the United States. He studied elementary and secondary school, as well as, University there, so he spoke English like a native.

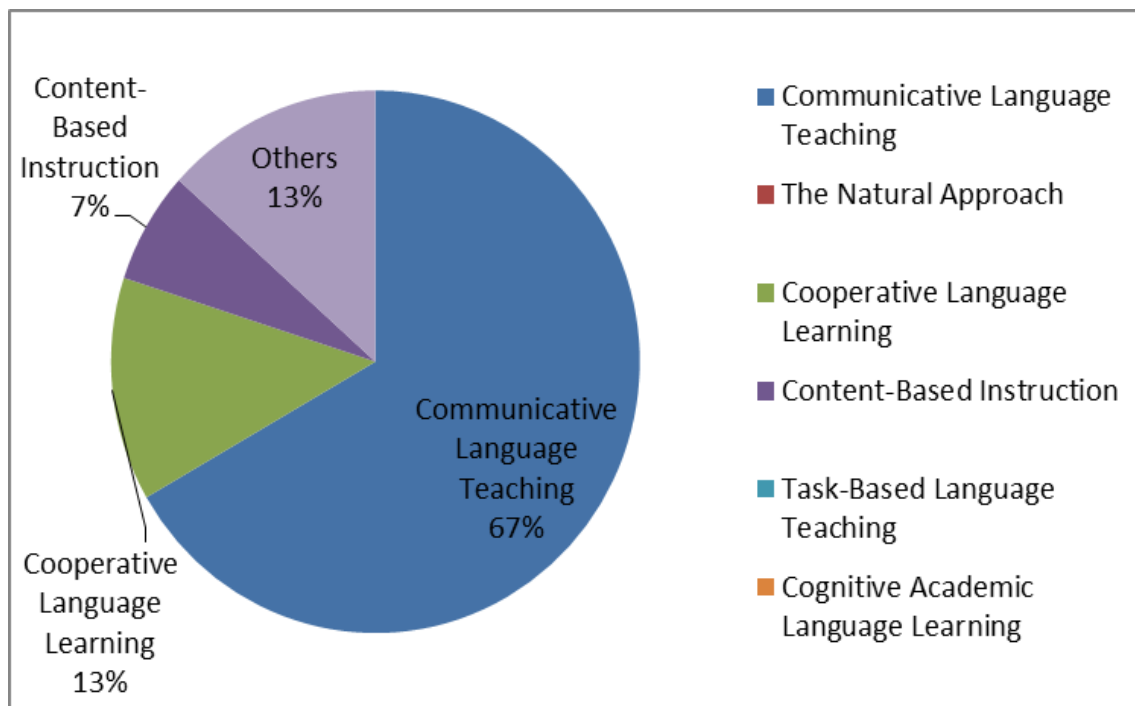
Analyzing the survey applied to the observed teachers, during the interview, using the Common European Framework as reference, the approximate results were as follows:

There were 2 of the 15 teachers who may be placed in level C because they used the language effectively for academic, professional and social purposes. Three teachers may belong to level B2 because they were able to interact with fluent English and proper vocabulary. The rest were between B1 and A2 due to the fact that they could communicate in simple English on familiar and routine matters and direct exchange of information. For instance, when assigning homework or checking it.

As stated in my literature review, according to the General Quality Standards, document published by the Ministry of Education, the Language domain regulates that the English teachers should hold an English teaching degree in order to ensure that they have the knowledge of the new major theories and the expertise to apply the new approaches and techniques based on the research related to the structure and acquisition of language, to help students develop language and literacy, as well as, academic achievement in the content areas. Additionally, teachers are required to know, understand and use major concepts, principles, theories and research related to the nature and role of cultural groups to construct supportive learning environment for students.

*Which of the following methods were used in the observed classes?*

Graph No. 2



Author: Laura Calderón Acosta

Source: Teacher's Questionnaire

According to Graph 2, 67% of the interviewed teachers used Communicative Language Teaching, placing this approach as the most frequently used. Although many teachers used mixed approaches, they considered that, in general, they used the CLT on a regular basis.

The teacher's statement about using CLT as a teaching method is not totally correct. Although during most of the classes CLT was not used, the teachers answered that this was the method used, evidencing that they were not really aware of what this theory says.

Revising the theories used as support for this work we can state that the activities performed in the observed classes did not lead to the students' participation based on a cooperative rather than individualistic approach to learning, contrary to this fact, the students had to work alone answering the questions on the work book.

According to Richards (2006), CLT does not mean teaching conversation in the absence of grammar, or emphasizing on open-ended discussion activities as the main feature in a course. The principles are goals of language teaching, how learners learn a language, the kind of activities that best facilitate learning, and the roles of teachers and learners in the classroom.

The observed classes were exactly aiming to follow the course book, filling the gaps in the workbook, reading aloud the answers and writing on the board some missing words. Real communication did not take place at all. When a change from the old school of teaching grammatical structures to an interactive process of communication came about, and pertinent activities were developed in order to accomplish it, as stated by Richards and Rodgers (2001), communication was the principal goal of this approach; nevertheless, the interviewed teachers were not aiming to fulfill this need completely. The classes were not interactive and the teachers hardly procured all of the students' participation; the main effort was to fulfill the lesson plan, which in turn, did not contemplate interaction. Communication took place on the way; consequently, the teacher's answers did not correspond to the class development.

The English Language Learning Standards are developed taking into consideration the communicative language components and the language skills as a core part of the

program: a) listening, b) speaking, c) reading, and d) writing. Therefore, class planning should show these components no matter what method or approach is being used.

Even though only two teachers recognized that they used the Content-Based Instruction, indeed almost 70% of them did it according to my observation. The fact that they reviewed subject contents when teaching English illustrates that Content-Based Instruction was commonly used as well.

Larsen-Freeman & Anderson (2011) cogitates that Content-Based Instruction entails what people mean rather than to how it is said. Referring to our analysis point, the main aspects analyzed were that the information is a motive to learn a second language and that it better reflects the learners' needs. When observed teachers were transmitting knowledge to the students, they were, at the same time, using the subject content, evidencing the weak grammatical structures in need of reinforcement. Thus, the information was used as a medium to teach and to attract the student's attention and their responses helped the teacher visualize the student's needs.

The teachers also used the Task-Based Language Teaching approach when they asked the students to complete tasks started in class as homework at the end of the class hour. TBLT refers to teaching/learning a second language through tasks as the basic component of planning and instruction in language teaching, as Richards & Rodgers (2001) state.

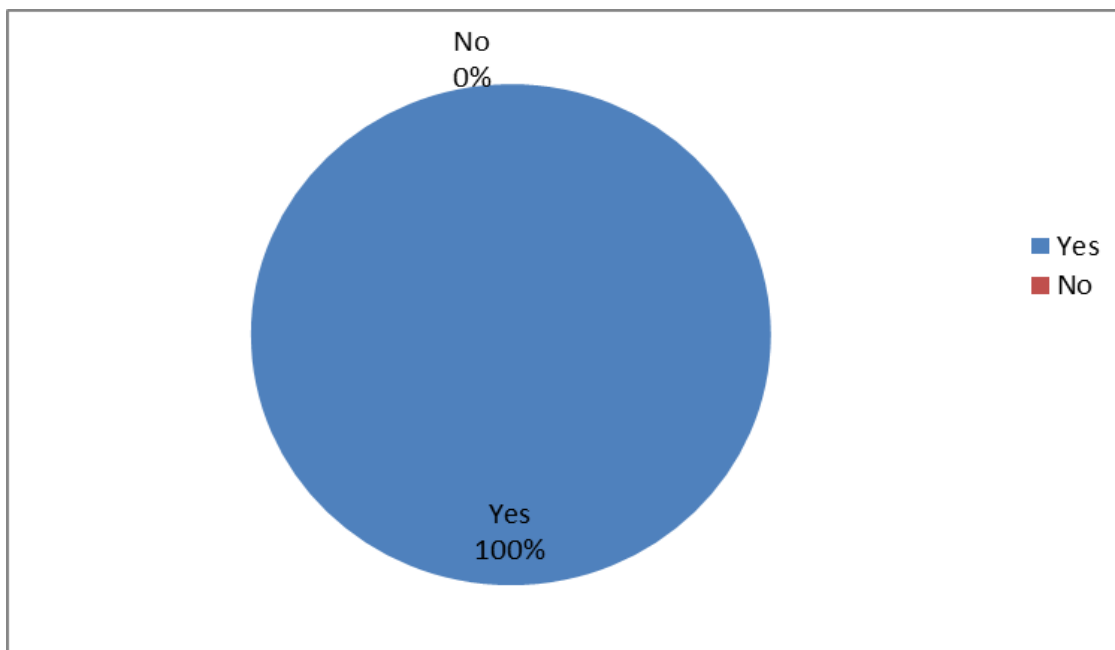
In addition, Larsen-Freeman & Anderson (2011) assert that a task-based syllabus not only needs to be analytical but also meaningful, not isolated linguistic items. Through

sequential tasks, teachers can corroborate that the learning process occurred when the answers are right and students can identify that a problem has been solved.

Cooperative Language Learning was also identified by the observed teachers as a method used during their classes. Richards & Rodgers (2001) asserts that CLL teaching through cooperative activities, involving pairs and small groups of learners in a classroom, and considered as an extension of the principles of Communicative Language Teaching, enhances learner's motivation and reduces stress creating a positive affective classroom climate. Additionally, it helps focus attention to particular lexical items, language structure and communicative functions through the use of interactive tasks.

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

Graph 3



Author: Laura Carmita Calderón Acosta

Source: Teacher's Questionnaire

In reference to Graph 3, all of the interviewed teachers stated that they use whole-group activities to teach their lessons because they can see improvement in various aspects of the students' participation and a better development of their skills. Nevertheless, some teachers stated that it depends on the theme and subject they are working on. The teachers also indicated that the whole group activities can help students to improve their general knowledge and to produce more than if they were working alone, as well as to share ideas and check their mistakes.

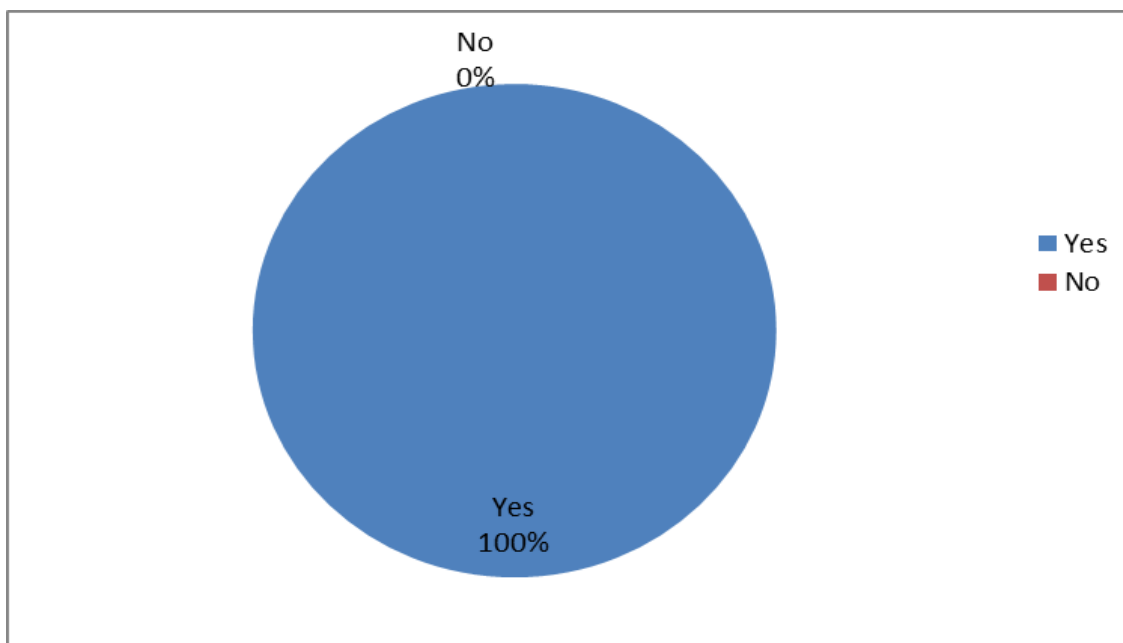
Another remark about whole group activities was that the more advanced students can influence positively on the students that are falling behind and that the students are able

to speak a lot and feel comfortable. Additionally, shy students have a great opportunity to work with others and overcome their nervousness. The interviewed students answered that the activities the teacher had them do, always allow them to interact with their peers in class.

As Harmer (2007) argues, using whole group is useful when presenting new information so that it is not necessary to repeat the information many times, and also to control the practice needed for reinforcement which is necessary in the basic level and sometimes in the intermediate level. Although this statement has proven to be true, repeating the transfer of the teaching-learning using a different methodology may be valuable for students who did not grasp the meaning in the first presentation; it would act as a reinforcement technique. Additionally, the feeling among students that belong to the group is also important during adolescence. Analyzing the answers from the teachers as of why they prepare activities for groups, it is relevant to mention that the English Language Learning Standards (ELLS) contemplates that the speaking skill should be considered as production and interaction; therefore, both aspects of this component would be covered by whole-group work.

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

Graph 4



Author: Laura Carmita Calderón Acosta

Source: Teacher's Questionnaire

As we can see in Graph 4, all of the teachers answered that at one time or another they use individual activities to teach their lessons because it helps them to identify the students' needs and timely reinforcement will fix some learning gaps. Individual activities enable teachers to hear each student's opinion measuring their understanding while interacting personally with them. Individual activities also allow teachers to allocate actual failures and successes.

Some teachers argued that individual activities are suitable to evaluate students after working in groups and that they can see improvement in students levels of understanding and production. In addition, the teachers stated that if they have to grade them individually, they need to evaluate them through individual activities. The teacher's statements coincided



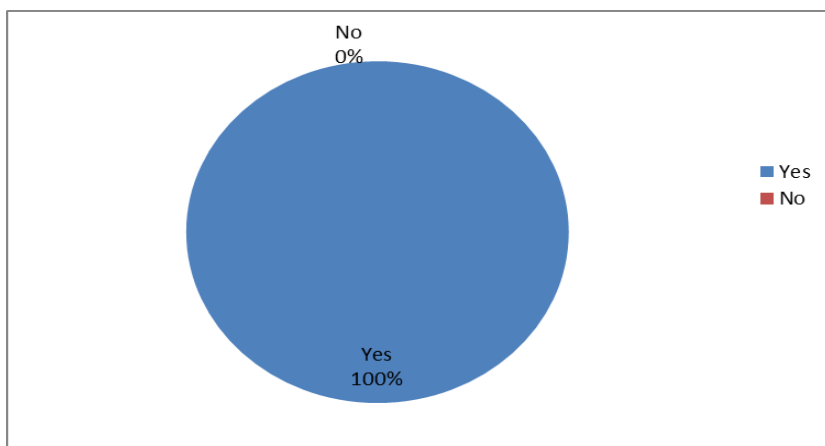
with the statement from Harmer (2007) who states that the teacher also need to make the most out of individual work, because this will free the class from working always as a whole, which has different effects from working individually.

Some teachers asked the students to work individually in their course book and to answer to questions made from the texts in the book. As indicated by Harmer, some teachers had the students work in groups first and then they were asked to finished a questionnaire or write about the results of the group-work, individually. The teacher explained that the reason to do this combined activity was to ensure that all students pay attention to the exercise in order to be able to produce based on that information.

Most of the interviewed students indicated that the activities they were requested to do in class allowed them to interact with their classmates.

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

Graph 5



Author: Laura Carmita Calderón Acosta

Source: Teacher's Questionnaire

In Graph No. 5, we can see that 100% of the observed teachers answered that they do group-work activities because they consider that it is very helpful for students to communicate with each other. In order to work in a group, they need to share ideas and information and this becomes a good practice of their skills because they need to discuss about them. The students feel more comfortable talking to their peers and it can be a lot of fun. Socializing in a second language may be very important for them in two ways: social relations are important at their age and practice of the foreign language is very beneficial. The decision about using group work to teach the lessons is based on the level and the difficulty of the subject matter being studied.

As indicated by Richards and Rodgers (2001), when analyzing Communicative Language Teaching, they stress to work on procedures reflecting the learners' language needs. To apply all these new ideas it was necessary to develop activities that could be used as a new methodology so work-groups and information-gap activities were instituted.

Larsen-Freeman & Anderson (2011) when analyzing CLT argued that communication was more than well-structured grammatical utterances; communicative competence was necessary. Learners needed to know when to say something, how to say it and to whom. The more likely to do so was when they were working in groups. The teachers that indicated that they had students working in groups admitted that the main objective in their lesson plans was fulfilled, because students practice conversation with other group members when completing the activity.

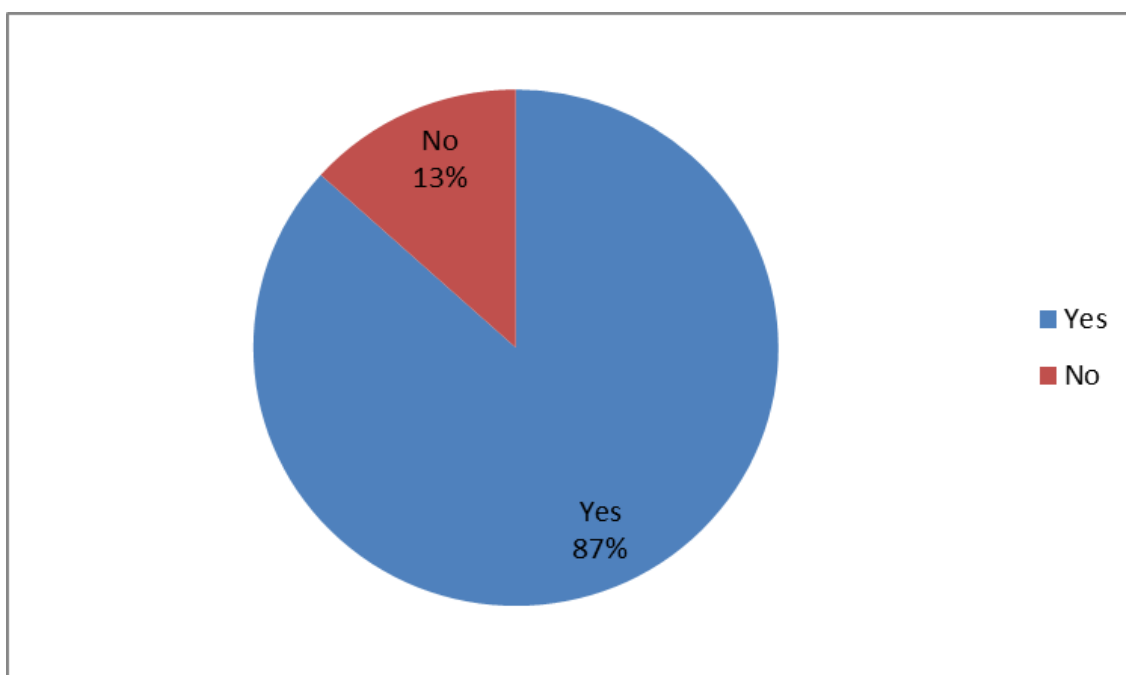
The English Language Learning Standards specifies that as the A2 proficiency level in the reading component should understand and identify longer and more complex

informational texts, students could work in groups to develop activities. On the other hand, group work could help improve the production of written texts when students share experiences or ideas with other members of the group. The listening component also could be benefited by the group work when students have to start recognizing expressions, and identify situations according to the tone of voice, stress, and intonation.

Only one out of the 15 interviewed students answered that the teacher did not promote activities that allow them to interact with the classmates. 99% of the interviewed students replied that they did interact with other students when working in groups.

*Do teachers use English most of the time in their class?*

Graph 6



Author: Laura Carmita Calderón Acosta

Source: Teacher's Questionnaire

In Graph 6, 87% of the observed teachers used English 100% of the time. There were a couple of cases (13%) when teachers were forced to explain the instructions in Spanish to make sure that the students had a clear idea about the homework. For most of the teachers, it was very familiar to conduct the class in English, for a few, it was somehow difficult due to the lack of proficiency in the language. Some teachers were trying to talk fast and they made many grammar mistakes especially when making questions or formulating negative sentences.

As the government has implemented that English lessons have to be taught 100% in English, the teachers try to follow this requisite regardless of whether they are ready for it or not. They indicated that they find very hard to fulfill this requirement with the 8<sup>th</sup> graders who are just beginning to communicate in English, as well as, to maintain their attention. This was evident during the observation.

According to the English Language Learning Standards, students in A1 proficiency level should be beginning to recognize expressions, words, and sentences in simple spoken texts related to their personal, educational, and social background. As teachers did not consider this fact, they ended up repeating in Spanish the given instructions especially. The train of thought was hard to keep due to the constant interruptions from the students because of questions about vocabulary during the class and about the instructions for homework.

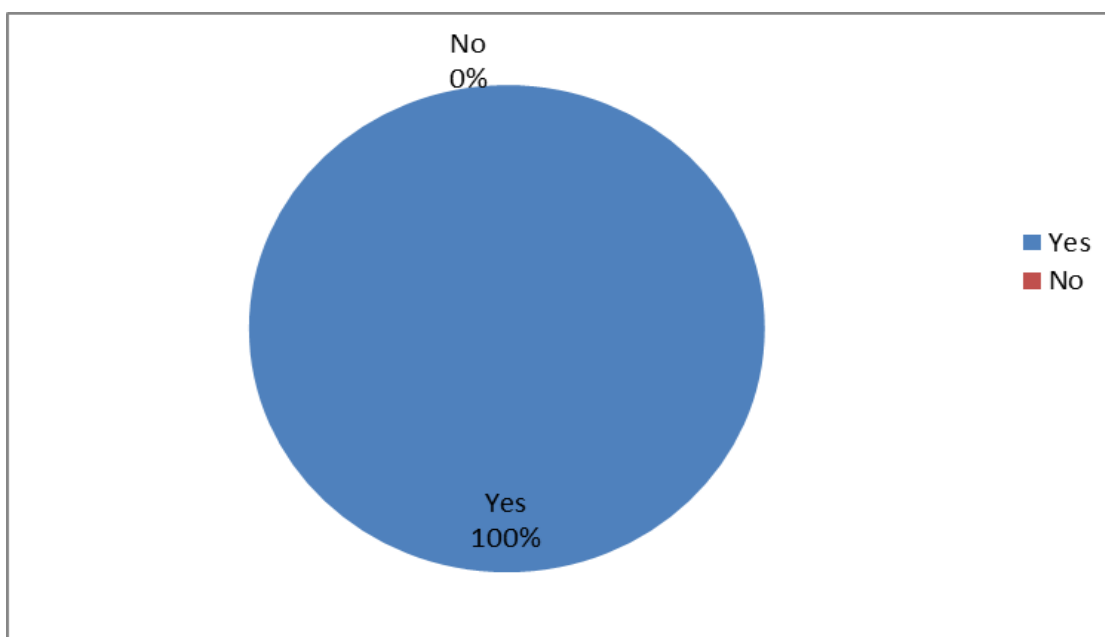
From all the observed classes, the 8<sup>th</sup> grade was the most difficult to control and to keep the student's interest especially when the teacher was introducing a new theme. The students got easily distracted because they could not understand everything the teacher was

saying. The upper classes were more receptive due to the higher proficiency level; nevertheless there were classes where the teacher had to repeat several times the instructions to ensure that he/she was explicit enough. The students in 3<sup>rd</sup> year of Bachillerato should understand the main points of clear statements and standard speech. The B1 proficiency level indicates that the students should be able to identify messages and specific details within the personal, educational, public and vocational domains.

The interviewed students agreed that the teachers used English most of the time during the class. This was verified in the observed classes.

*Do teachers plan their lessons?*

Graph 7



Author: Laura Carmita Calderón Acosta

Source: Teacher's Questionnaire

Graph 7 displays that all the observed teachers answered that they had a lesson plan to follow. Only two teachers showed me their plans from 2011. They mentioned that they were supposed to have updated their lesson plans, including the changes and new themes introduced in the new books. The evidence was that the plan framework was kept from the previous year, and they claimed that they were in the process of updating it.

Lesson planning is necessary and must be compulsorily done in a systematic way, Pinter (2006) argues. She also claims that immediately after teaching a lesson, an evaluation about how the plan worked out, and what went well and why should be done in order to improve the planning process on subsequent occasions.

Regardless of the yearly planning needing to be updated, the observed teachers said that they tried their best to follow the lesson plan of the day. A copy of the lesson plan was not delivered; consequently, an evaluation of the different components of the class hour was not possible. While visiting the schools, all the teachers were gathered in the teacher's conference room checking on plans and activities, as well as, correcting papers and marking homework during recess.

The Curriculum Development domain in the Ecuadorian in-Service Teachers Standards for Ecuadorian Secondary Education issued by the Ministry of Education states that when planning for Standard-Based English and Content Instruction teachers should know, understand, and apply concepts, research, and best practices to plan classroom instruction in a supportive learning environment for students.

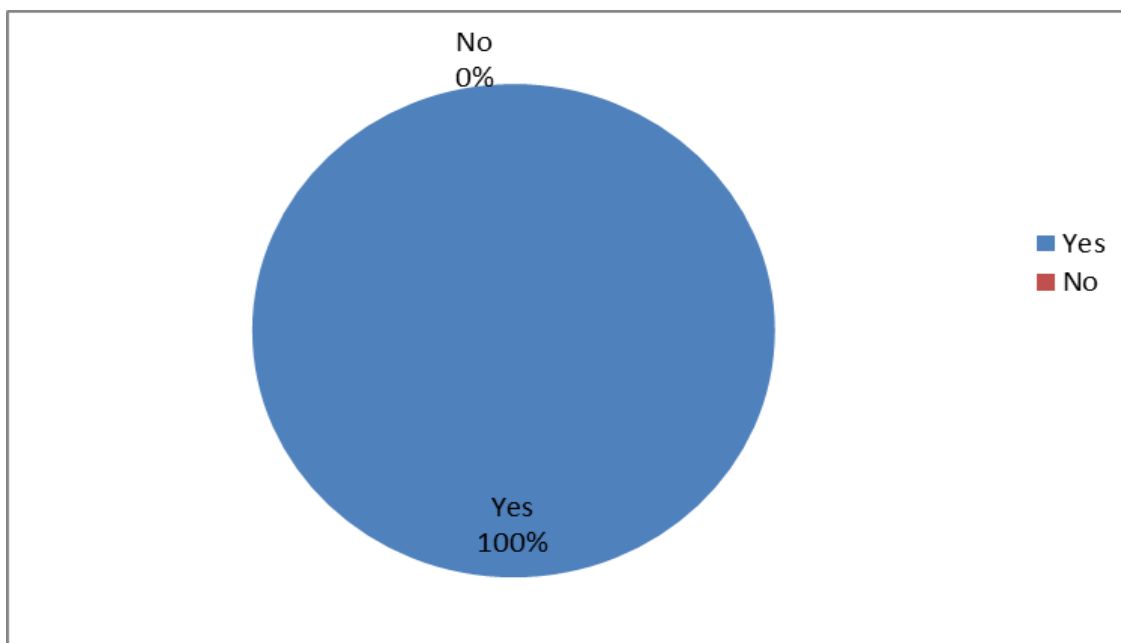
The specific standards corresponding to this general standard are: -to plan standard-based English and content instruction, -to create supportive, welcoming classroom

environments, -to plan differentiated learning experiences based on assessments of students' English proficiency, learning styles, and prior formal educational experiences and knowledge, -to provide for particular needs of students with interrupted formal education, and -to plan for instruction that embeds assessment, includes scaffolding, and provides re-teaching when necessary for students to successfully meet learning objectives. As class plans of the observed classes were not submitted, all of the above mentioned items were not examined either.

Davis & Pearse (2000) also contribute to this subject stating that dedicated committed teachers see lesson planning as an essential part of teaching. Before planning begins, it is necessary to analyze the week's work plan or learning cycle in order to be cohesive with the overall objectives. The didactic material and the tasks need to be suitable for the students in order to reach the goals and that an important part of the class is the efficient use of time to make sure that all of what was planned can be finished.

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

Graph 8



Author: Laura Carmita Calderón Acosta

Source: Teacher's Questionnaire

Graph 8 shows that 100% of the observed teachers answered yes to this question. According to them, discipline was the most important. The teachers stated that neither of the other factors mentioned in this question could be enforced without discipline. The observation coincided with their statement. The teachers had control of the discipline so they were able to comply with time, feedback, and the completion of activities as planned.

Time and explicit feedback are aspects that teachers should have as a common practice, Nunan (1998) ponders. On the other hand, Schachter (1982) compares feedback to “nutritional needs” for a human being when referring to the input necessary for language



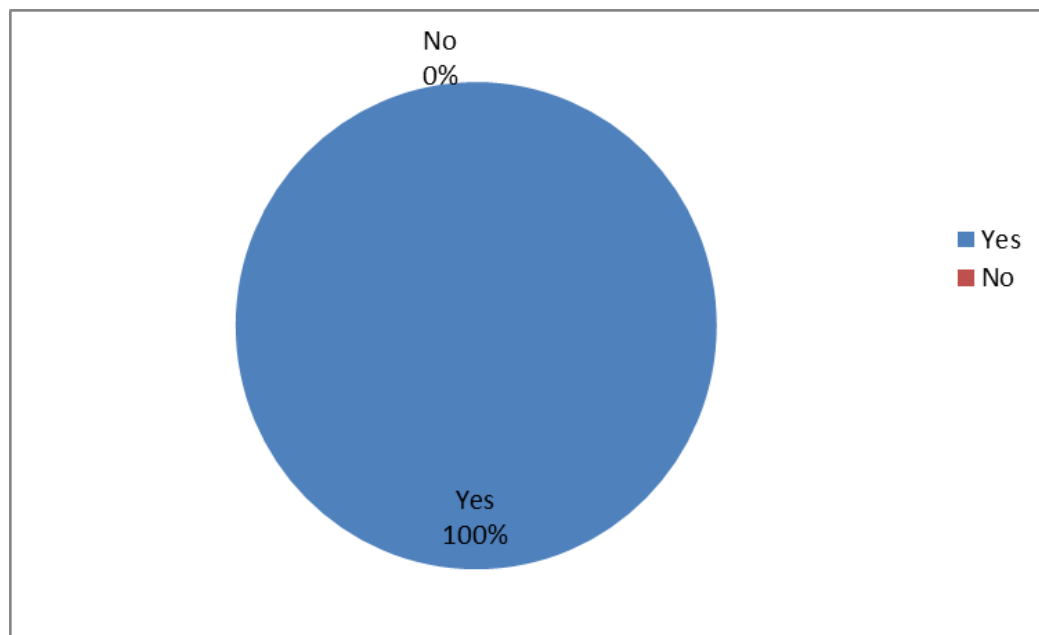
learning. For Schachter (1982), being feedback cognitive and affective, teachers must be aware that negative feedback may be a sensitive affliction for students. Additionally, Woodward (2001) advises that the teachers' style sets the direction of students' behavior. The teacher should set an example on punctuality, hence he/she will motivate students to be punctual and use the time appropriately. She also reveals that routines will aid in time management; classes can start in different ways but students must know the agenda and expectations. A familiar way of presenting the agenda for the day will help students be aware of what will be done and how long it should take.

The interviewed students' answers show that they feel that the teacher do control discipline, assigns time to work on exercises, gives appropriately timed feedback, and imparts clear instructions.

### *Factors concerning students*

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

Graph 9



Author: Laura Carmita Calderón Acosta

Source: Teacher's Questionnaires

According to Graph 9, all of the interviewed teachers responded hastily that their main concern was the student's needs but they showed that their main concern actually was to complete with the lesson. The lack of supplementary material to fill the student's needs showed that the teachers were not aware of the importance of being focused on student's needs. During the observation it was noted that the students followed the class without much interest regarding to the subject matter. In two different classes, the teacher asked for volunteers to pass to the board to write the answers and gain a point. Many students did.

The student's needs were never an issue, the program had to be met and the planned lesson had to be finished. Most of the teachers never reinforced the student's weaknesses.

Only one of the observed teachers took advantage of doubts and/or insecurities to talk about the grammar structure being studied and all the students benefited from this approach.

Pinter (2006) suggests that reflective, impulsive, and interactive learners must be identified by the teacher because these personality types can influence in the learning process and may be crucial to identify student's needs.

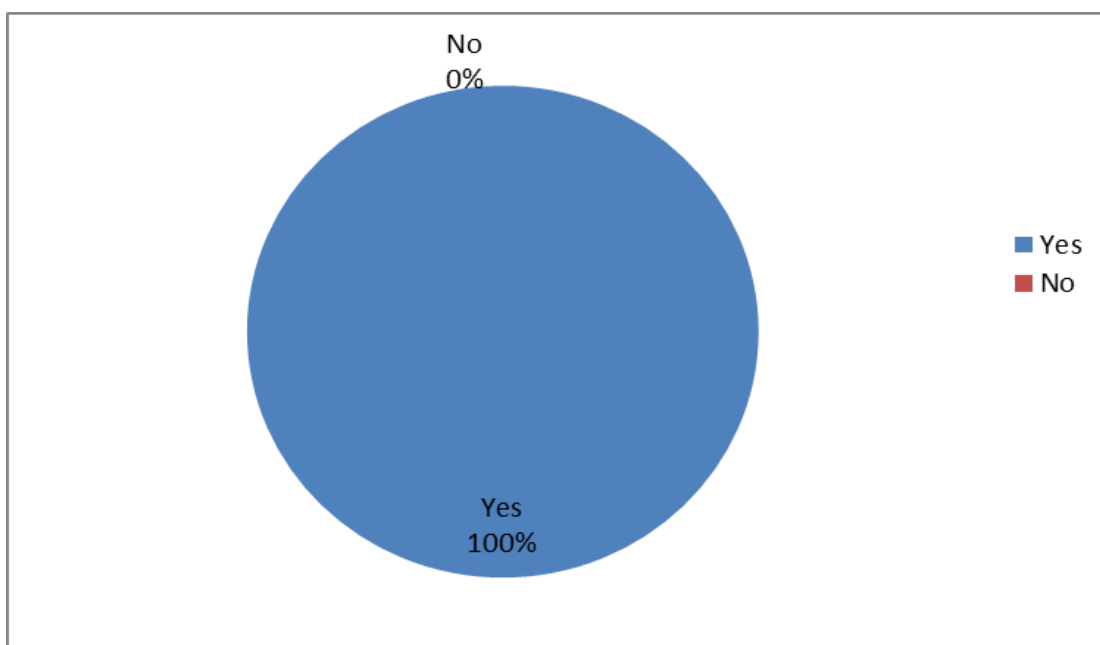
In order to identify the student's needs Skehan (1998) divided cognitive categories into analytical and global learners. Analytical learners are the ones that invest time in analyzing specifics and global learners are those who internalize knowledge as a whole. Skehan also defines styles with perceptual differences. Some students prefer to listen and others need to see to be able to learn. On the contrary, others learn and communicate using their bodies, feeling and touching things. All of these assertions are important elements to take into account when recognizing student's needs. Finally, Lightbown & Spada (2006) claim that teachers should be very careful in identifying what kinds of learners students are in order to make available all the resources to help their needs in the learning process.

As previously indicated, under the planning for Standard-Based English and Content Instruction, the Ministry of Education instructs that the planning that teachers do should envision even for students who have interrupted their studies and consequently have especial needs. Changes bring as a consequence the recreation of forms in order to observe all of the new items that teachers need to include in their daily lesson plans. Now, the assessment is based on these changes, scrutinizing for details that support the elements

considered reaching the objectives, therefore, annual planning should be modified accordingly. The different realities change every day and the students as part of these changing realities need new challenges and interesting incentives to invite them to make their best effort to learn, to build up their knowledge and to use it wisely.

*Do teachers consider Student's level to teach English successfully?*

Graph 10



Author: Laura Carmita Calderón Acosta

Source: Teacher's Questionnaire

Graph 10 shows that even though all the observed teachers answered that they do consider the student's level to teach English successfully, only one took some very precarious material done especially for the class, containing information about the lesson. The majority of the teachers worked with the book and limited themselves to the activities presented in it. Almost all of the interviewed students alleged that the lesson and activities

were easy to follow and to do. According to the teachers, the classes were not divided by language proficiency level but by the age and all students corresponding to that course were registered in it. They stated, though, that school officials were working on organizing classes by levels because they could see that the academic proficiency did not improve as it should, due to the knowledge differences.

If we revise the theory presented by Harmer (2007) about the correlation of lesson planning and individual features about students, we can see that level, age range, atmosphere, etc. are important elements to be considered. The preferences and aptitude are also important characteristics that the teacher needs to know about the students, in order to plan on how the lesson will be presented, and what adaptations are necessary for the group. My observation was that the class was imparted for all the students, even though the teachers were aware that not all the students were at the same level of proficiency.

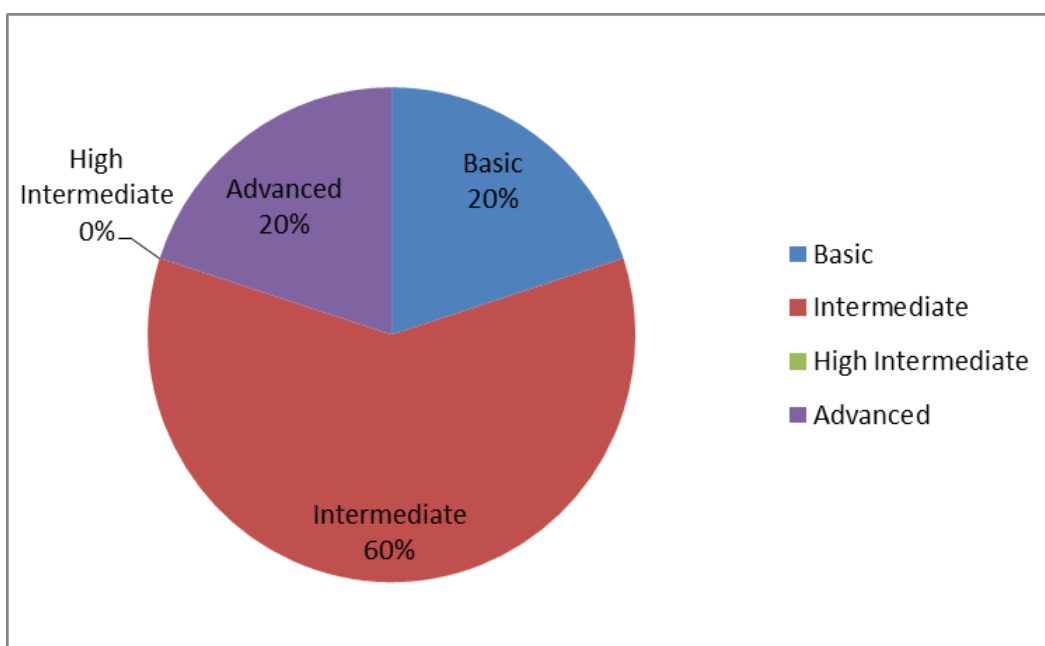
Gower, Phillips & Walters (1983) on the other hand, specify that even though a lesson plan always keeps teachers on target, it should never prevent from responding to the needs of the moment in accordance to the level. In addition, they advise that the amended lessons to fit the daily needs must be documented to be used later. The class objectives as a whole must prevail in the teacher's aim. The different problems students have, for instance students with pronunciation problems, must be taken care after class. Finally, the authors recommend planning the lessons reconciling individual needs with the levels of the whole group.

During class, the students were not very attentive to other students' participation. As the participation was orderly done, the students knew when they were going to be asked to reply or to write on the board. Some students never participated, in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade especially.

The presumable reason is that they did not understand everything that was said. They were free to talk to their peers so the instruction was translated and given to them by the ones that did understand

*Which is the level of the students?*

Graph 11



Author: Laura Carmita Calderón Acosta

Source: Teacher's Questionnaire

According to Graph 11, 60% of the students are in the intermediate level, 20% are in basic level, and 20% in the advanced level. Fifty percent of the observed classes had a homogeneous level among students, the other half, were mixed. In some classes, there were students that had better pronunciation, understanding and language production than the teachers. The students with better abilities were the ones from schools where students with a better economic status attended. These students, as stated during the interview, travel each year to the United States for three months, others had lived in the U.S. where they went to

school and now are back in school in Ecuador, and others have English as their mother tongue. The teachers were aware of this fact and respected the students with more English knowledge than themselves, allowing them to participate even though the repetition and some of the activities could have been boring to them.

The fluent English of some of the students did not change the teaching rhythm of the teachers, the advanced students in the class had to work the same exercises prepared for the intermediate ones and the students in basic level had to make a big effort to follow the class. In the beginners' classes, it was evident that the three groups made the effort to understand and respond to the teachers questions, not so much in the advanced classes where the proficiency level of the students was more uniform.

When the academic level of the students in the class is not homogeneous, Gower, Phillips & Walters (1995) suggest that the planning decisions should be done based on the different learning styles so that all of the students get attention and support correspondingly. The lessons should be paced so that everyone can follow and add an activity to have some free time to be able to help slower students or students that show some kind of difficulty with the subject matter. In order to consider and assist students with especial needs due to their level, in turn, this behavior can provide extra motivation for the students and make them feel that the teacher takes extra interest in them. The idea is to have groups working on something while the teacher pays individual attention as needed.

The request done by the teachers to the school officials about dividing the classes according to the level is an evidence that the teachers are conscious that the level of proficiency is important to advance in the teaching-learning process. As the English

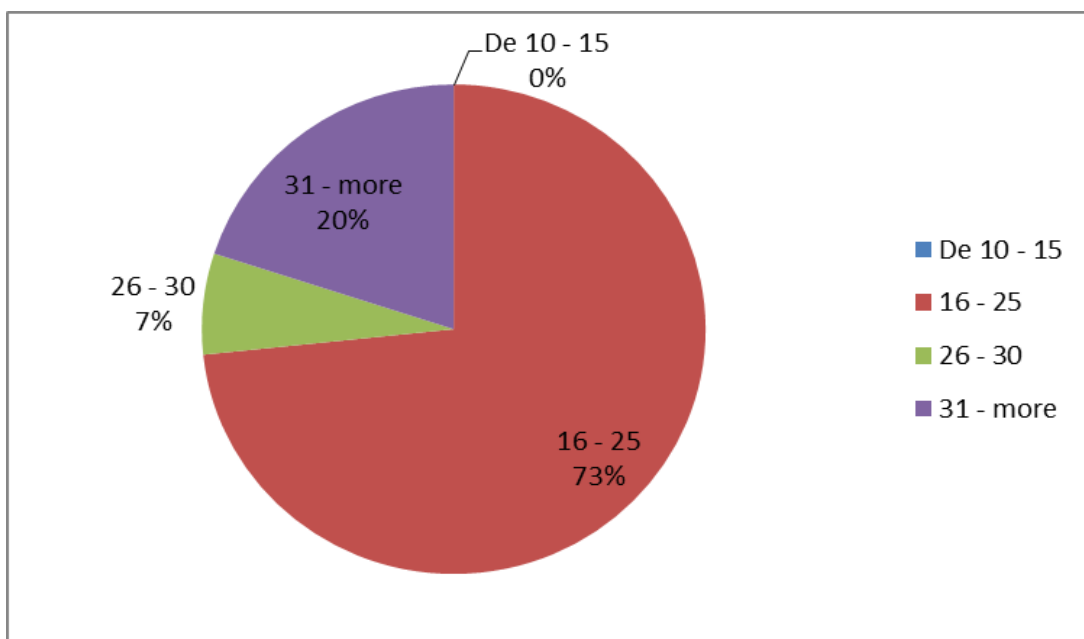
Language Learning Standards are divided in A1, A2, and B1 proficiency levels and students will be evaluated at the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> grade, 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year of Bachillerato based on these levels, the teachers are concerned about the progress of the students if they are not at the same level.

The interviewed students stated that the work they were asked to do in class was not difficult at all. According to them, the teacher was always willing to explain anything they did not understand, and most importantly the teacher always brought new ideas and new themes to class, making the learning of English easy and amusing.

#### *Factors concerning classroom*

*How many students do teachers have in their classes?*

Graph 12



Author: Laura Carmita Calderón Acosta

Source: Teacher's Questionnaire



As Graph 12 shows, 73% of the classes had between 16 and 25 students, 20% had 31 students or more, 7% had 26 to 30 students, and there was none with less than 16 students. The average class had 20 students; the more crowded were the exception. The classrooms in most of the visited schools were ample and comfortable. Nonetheless, there were some that looked overcrowded. Even so, the teachers in these small rooms, made their best effort when they were trying to change the seats for the students to work in groups.

The classes that held fewer students were more easily controlled in every sense. There was control over the discipline at all times; attention to the class from the students was obvious, and the teachers assisted more frequently to student's questions and comments. The teachers who had over 30 students in their class, complained about this fact; they felt that it was unfair to the students because they could not fulfill all of the student's needs. Additionally, some of the students felt they were left out because they did not have the chance to participate or did not get an answer to their questions.

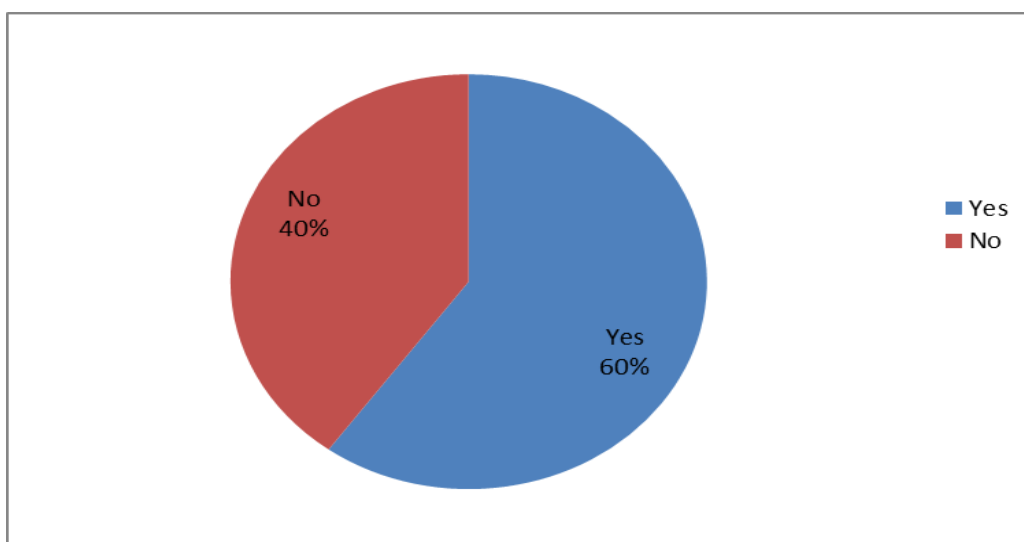
Large classes, as stated the observed teachers, are a big challenge. Harmer (1998) also feels that large classes make it difficult, for both the teacher and the students to be in contact. Apparently, it becomes very difficult to create well-structured activities and interesting and creative teaching and learning sessions when there is difficulty establishing eye contact. Big classes can be overwhelming for new teachers especially. Large groups need to be handled differently, Harmer claims, teachers need to be extra careful when giving instructions to make them clear, and ensure there will be plenty of time for accurate and explicit feedback.

On the other hand , Woodward (2001) reviews the fact of a small class size or one to one, and indicates that many activities can be done because there will be plenty of time to do it. The relationship with the students may be a lot closer because there will be sufficient time to try new exercises and get acquainted with new materials, moreover, there will be enough time to evaluate all the feedback the teacher gives them.

Large and small classes have advantages and disadvantages. There are activities that are a lot more interesting when there are plenty of actors; similarly, there are others when small groups make them feasible and meaningful. The interviewed students claimed that the number of students in their class was appropriate. Even in the overcrowded classes, the students indicated that it was fine. Apparently, the students figured that they were showing team spirit when they said that the number of students in their class was suitable.

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

Graph 13



Author: Laura Carmita Calderón Acosta

Source: Teacher's Questionnaire

The statistics presented in Graph 13 shows the teacher's opinion on whether they consider appropriate the number of students they had to work with. 60% felt at ease with the number of students they had in their class, and 40% did not.

Only one student complained about the size of the classroom for the amount of students, but according to the observation, there were several schools which had too many students in the classroom presenting a big challenge for the teacher who had to control between 30 and 40 students. Additionally, some of the crowded classes were held in small classrooms, a fact that made the situation worse. A classroom had been adapted in a room in the flat roof; it was so small, that students could not get in and out of the classroom without disturbing other students who were seating near the door.

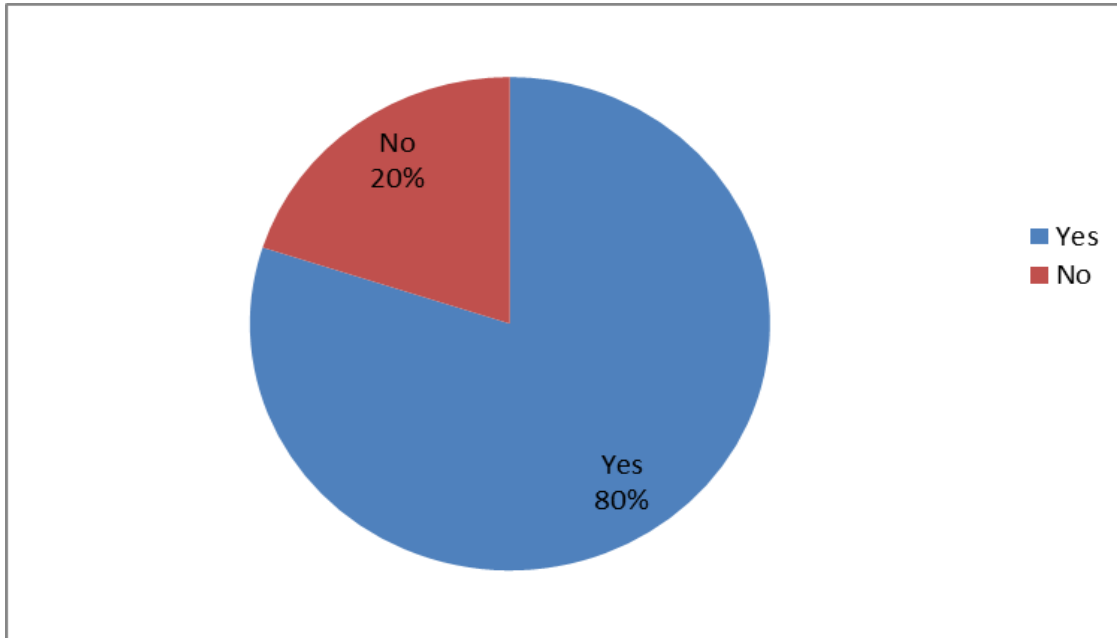
As stated in the Literature Review it is not common to find the right class size for the number of students to teach. Thus, in order to maintain discipline, interest and enthusiasm among students, teachers must be creative.

Harmer (1998) indicates that it is difficult to teach large classes, for both, the teacher and the students. Well-structured activities and interesting sessions are hard to conduct when it is not easy to establish eye contact and large classes can be very difficult to handle, especially for new teachers. Additionally, he explains that whenever teachers feel uneasy because of the number of students they have to teach, there are some things that can be done. The use of worksheets may be a solution for teachers to handle many of the tasks which they would normally do with the whole class – if the class was smaller.

According to Gower, Phillips & Walters (1983), the physical space is of great importance because class organization will depend on it.

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

Graph 14



Author: Laura Carmita Calderón Acosta

Source: Teacher's Questionnaire

On Graph 14 we can see that 80% of the interviewed teachers considered that the classroom size was adequate to work with the amount of students attending the class. On the other hand, 20% did not consider that the space was suitable for the group.

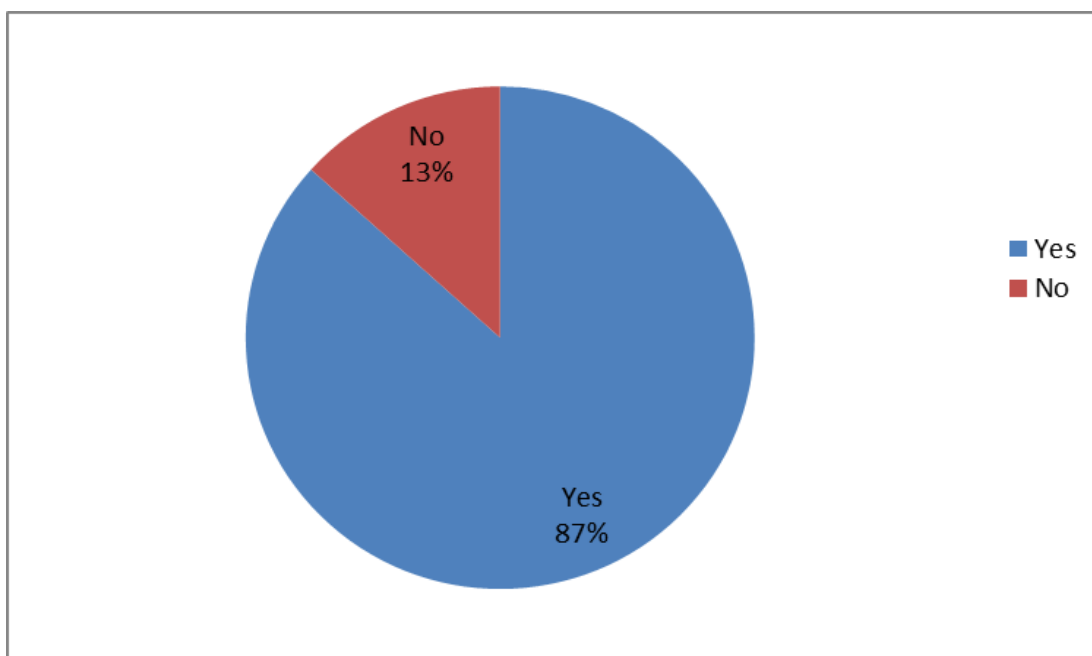
During the observation, both scenarios were present. Some classrooms were too small for 20 students, which is an acceptable number, or the number of students was too high for a suitable classroom size. The space was sufficient in 70% of the classrooms for the amount of students and 30% was not, according to my observation. Controversially, 87% of the students stated that the space was appropriate and 13% disagreed.

Although just a few classrooms among the observed ones were too small for the group, the daily managing for those groups was very difficult. To walk to the board between chairs if necessary, to ignore the natural class noise when all students are close together, and to handle the heat during the hot season in the coastal region, are some of the inconveniences of a small classroom.

Gower, Phillips & Walters (1983) maintain that a successful class depends on the teacher's position and the students positioning. If the space is not large enough, experienced teachers will know how to handle the group in order to avoid discomfort. They also advise that the kind of activity should go according to the class space available.

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

Graph 15



Author: Laura Carmita Calderón Acosta

Source: Teacher's Questionnaire

The seats in the classrooms where the observation took place were in a row design with the teacher's desk in the front and the board on the wall behind the teacher and in front of the students. Graph 15 shows that 87% of the observed teachers do arrange the seats according to the activity they are managing, and only 13% answered that they never move the seats. The teachers that answered no, had a very small room designated for that class and too many students for it.

According to the observation, only in one occasion, the students had to work in groups; therefore, they had to move their seats. From all the other observed classes, neither one had activities that the teacher considered appropriate to do so. Two of the classes were asked to face each other in order to work in pairs, but the seats were not moved due to lack of space.

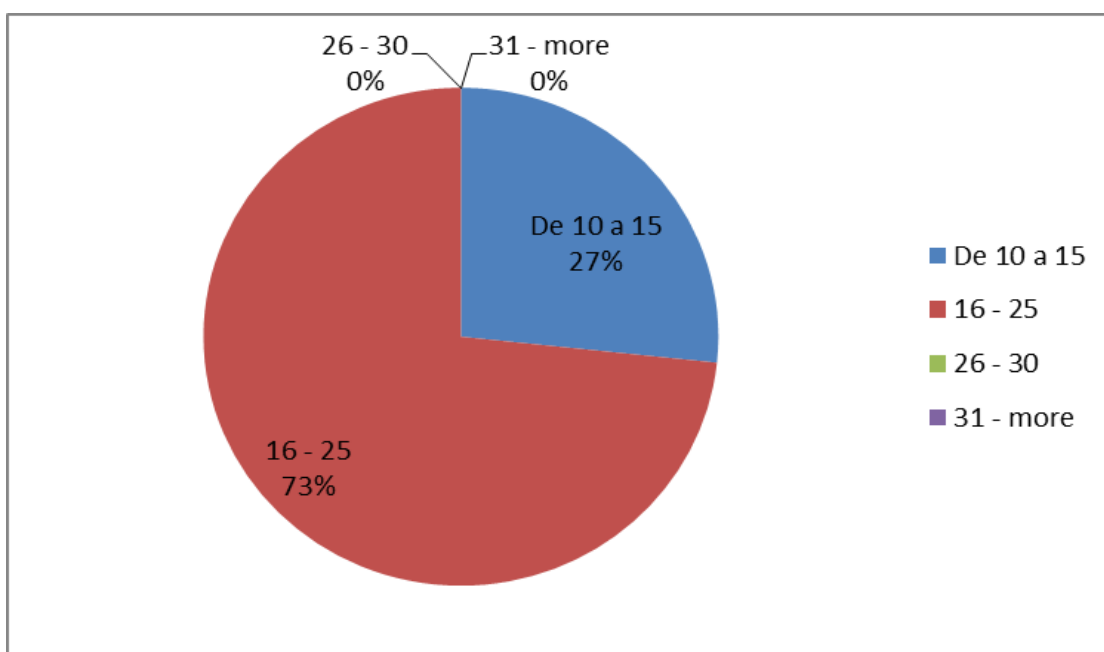
Two of the interviewed students stated that no matter what kind of activity they were doing, the seats were never moved. They mentioned that they always work on the book, never in groups. Gower, Phillips & Walters (1983) consider that the success of teaching a class can depend at times of the teacher's position and the organization of student positioning. As most of the classes showed some kind of integration, the authors claim that cultural differences must be considered when seating students to avoid discomfort among them. Seating can determine different aspects of behavior: attitude toward each other and to the teacher, the teacher's attitude toward students, how they interact, and the types of activities they can do.

The above mentioned authors believe that the position where students sit in a classroom must depend on the students' age, and on their characteristics and personalities.

According to the size of the room, the teacher should decide what best suited seating arrangement to conduct his class is. In addition, the authors explain that other arrangements like the “horseshoe” or the “café style” to work with groups can help to establish eye contact and students are able to listen properly to all instructions and indications for classwork as well as for homework.

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

Graph 16



Author: Laura Carmita Calderón Acosta

Source: Teacher's Questionnaire

As shown on Graph 16, 73% of the observed teachers responded that they considered between 16 and 25 students an appropriate number to teach a second language and no more. They mentioned that they would prefer fewer students than what they have, but they claimed that they understand that to have classes with less than 20 students must

not be economically profitable. The teachers argued that the unsurpassed possibility is the one to one teaching-learning process, but for the general education it is difficult to do.

Twenty seven percent, on the other hand, responded that the optimal number of students in a foreign language class should be between 10 and 15 students. They analyzed the real needs of students learning a second language and all of the time that must be invested in all aspects of the teaching-learning process. To teach a second language correctly, 15 students at the most, is the best alternative.

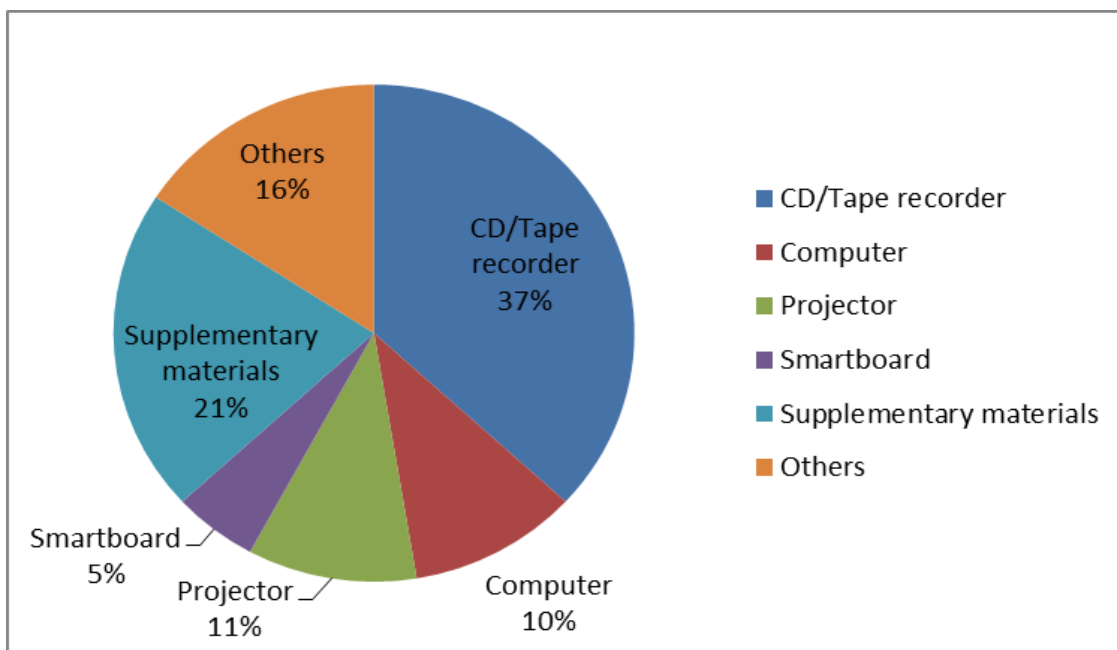
When working with classes of over 25 students, it is proper to mention the assertion of Davies & Pearse (2011) who stated that the basic principles of teaching English are the same for small or large groups, but the grade of difficulty will increase with the number of students. Larger groups of students may have difficulty seeing the teacher or the board, thus creating communication problems. For instance, the students may be confused about the task and not do it properly, the noise level may raise, the students may drift apart from the subject matter, and the students may make and repeat many errors.

All of the aforementioned facts (difficulty seeing the teacher, noise level and lack of comprehension, and error repetition) may influence in the success of the teaching learning process. Furthermore, it will be difficult for the teacher getting to know all of the students. The students, consequently, get less individual practice due to the quantity of pairs or groups to monitor. Nevertheless, as stated before, careful preparation, organization and training may help to correct this. Finally, students cannot often get individual feedback on written work.



*Do teachers use teaching resources? (TV, Tape/CD recorder, computer(s), projector(s), smart board, and supplementary materials)*

Graph 17



Author: Laura Carmita Calderón Acosta

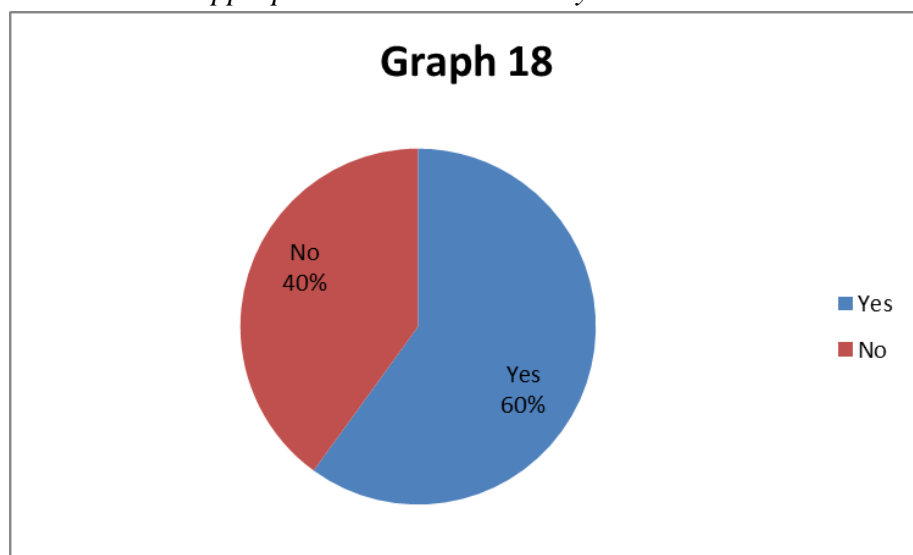
Source: Teacher's Questionnaire

Graph 17 shows that all of the observed teachers answered that they used teaching resources. Although all of the schools had some of the teaching resources, some of them were better equipped than others. Only one teacher from one of the schools presented supplementary material and two schools had a computer and projector for each class at all times. The rest of the schools had a computer lab where the students went for computer classes, but the English teacher did not have a computer or a projector. Some teachers needed to make an appointment to use the computer and projector when needed. One of the observed classes had asked for computer and projector beforehand and was able to work with this teaching resource.

Regarding to the mostly used resource, Davis & Pierce (2000) analyze the great support of the board and explains that it should be used in a wise and orderly fashion. As schools vary in infrastructure and resources, the authors evidence the fact and the advantage of some schools that have plenty of didactic stimulus and teaching materials. Even so, teachers can teach effectively in either case by means of their creativity, skills, and organization, without them, sophisticated resources will not help.

Visual materials like wall-charts, cue cards and realia, mime and gesture, video and audio cassettes are teaching aids and materials that facilitate the teaching-learning process. Appropriate material and activities can be very useful and fun. Moreover, Edge and Garton (2009) sustain that no matter how good the published materials may be the teachers will need to make the appropriate adaptations to suit the particular group of students and the objectives of the class.

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



Author: Laura Carmita Calderón Acosta

Source: Teacher's Questionnaire

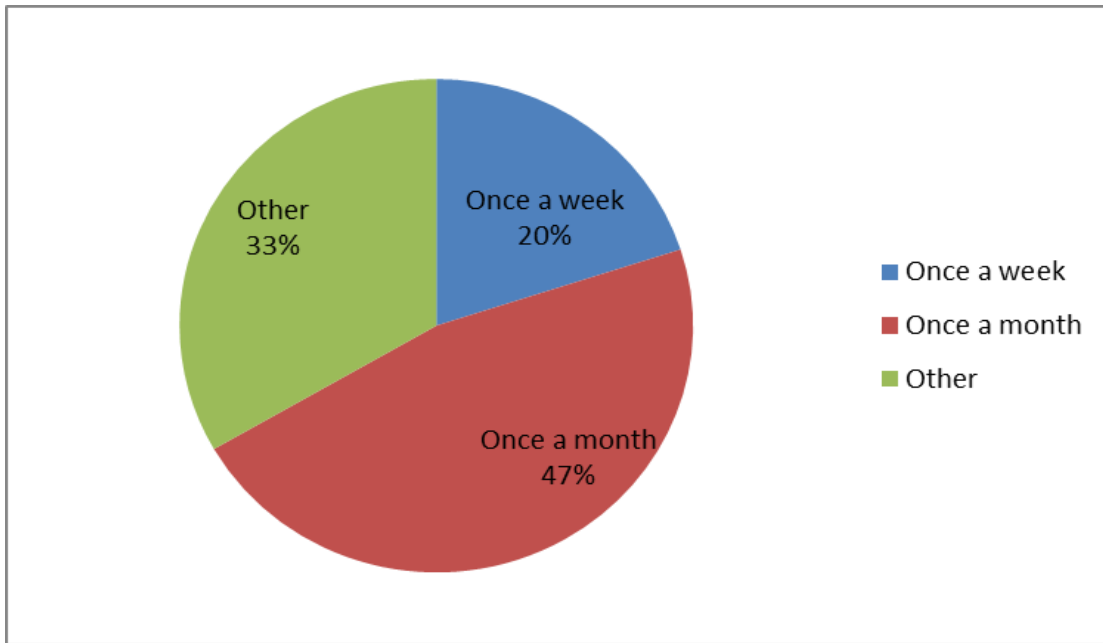
As we can see on Graph 18, 60% of the observed teachers think that the resources available in the classroom are appropriate. However, 40% think otherwise. Whenever they answered yes, they added: “they could be better”. Some teachers claimed openly that the school administration should make an effort and invest in computers, projectors, tape and CDs recorders, etc. for each classroom. On top of the above mentioned teaching resources, Edge & Garton (2009) suggest that the published materials that can help with the teaching process can be adapted in order to make lessons more interesting and varied, and be appropriate for different learning style. These adapted materials can include particular interpretations of the local context, as well as, culturally suitable activities and, finally, they can be updated regularly. The adaptation can also miss out complete activities or sections, make replacements, extend and modify the materials, etc.

Authentic materials, on the other hand, according to Edge & Garton (2009), refer to examples of language that were not originally produced for language learning purposes but are now used in that way. Any article out of a newspaper, for instance, used in class is an example of authentic material. Real objects can also be used as authentic material, known also as realia. Textual realia such as brochures, leaflets, menus, timetables, etc., make it complicated to differentiate between the classroom and authentic social contexts. The authors find two reasons why authentic materials are so important: language and motivation. A new kind of resource for language teachers is the internet, according to Edge & Garton (2009) all information on newspapers, for instance, can be found anywhere in the world through the internet. As with other materials, what the teacher finds in the internet needs to be considered critically and adapted with caution.

### *Factors concerning Educational Institutions*

*Do the institutions review teachers' lesson plans?*

Graph 19



Author: Laura Carmita Calderón Acosta

Source: Teacher's Questionnaire

According to Graph 19, all teachers stated that they are required by the institution to plan their lessons. 20% claimed that the institution officials reviewed their lessons plans every week, 47% indicated that the institution reviewed their lessons plans once a month and 33% had different time frames like every two months, and annually. Two from the three lesson plans checked were updated, the third one was using his planning from the previous year. The teacher mentioned that the yearly planning was exactly like the year before and the only thing he needed to do was to change the year on the pages because they were using the same book.

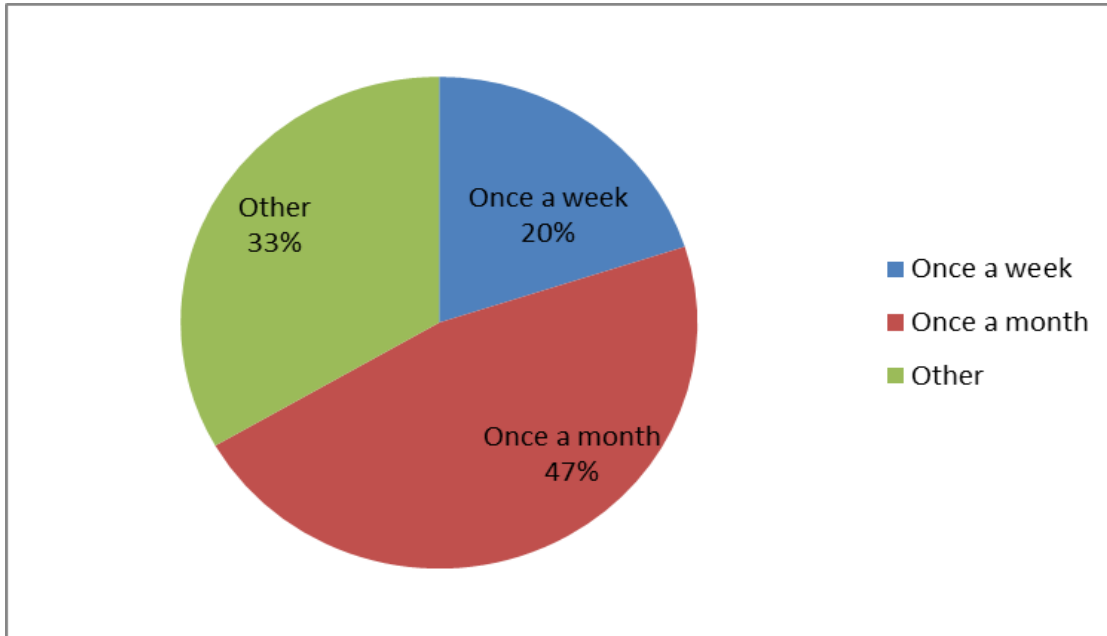
The review of the lesson plans from the institutions is important to ensure that the sequence of lessons provide the teaching with continuity and coherence. Davis & Pierce (2000) claim that lesson planning should not be optional because it is essential preparation for teaching. According to the observation, not every school had an English Department, but English teachers only. Some of these teachers explained that the reviewing of the lesson plans were not performed every week or every month. The best scenario is that school officials should review lesson plans every week, but if this is too demanding, the review should be done twice a month.

Pinter (2006) places a series of questions like if the lessons fit together well, if there is logical progression from one lesson to the next, and if the second lesson is built on the first to expose the need of frequent review of the lesson planning. Moreover, she continues enquiring about the balance in terms of variety in the activities, skills, and interaction patterns. She presents several questions to check these elements: Are there both listening and speaking practiced and is there any group or pair work? Do students listen first and then speak in the activities? Are the activities meaningful for the students? Is the language being taught useful in the real world? The activities need to be different and optional activities available for those pairs or groups that finish early. Are there warmers and closing activities such as homework check and finally has timing of each activity been included?

These questions make the researcher understand why lesson planning is very important not only because is a guide to follow and to control the fulfillment of the material to be taught but also because it keeps track of supportive activities to reinforce the teaching-learning process.

*Do the institutions monitor their teaching?*

Graph No. 20



Author: Laura Carmita Calderón Acosta

Source: Teacher's Questionnaire

It is shown in graph 20 that 47% of the interviewed teachers indicated that the institution monitored their classes once a month and 20% answered that it was done once a week. The other 33% specified that they were monitored twice a year by the Foreign Language Department. Teachers from another school stated that the institution monitored them twice a month. In addition, one of the institutions monitored their teachers once a year. Another school monitored their teachers quarterly and finally twice in a quarter.

In reference to the results found about the frequency of institution's monitoring, Mackey & Gass (2005) argue that classroom observations can be conducted by external researchers and by fellow teachers' instructors in order to improve their professional

development, and also for research purposes. Teachers can also observe their own classes using audio or video tapes. The observer needs to be careful with the level of objectivity or subjectivity when conducting observations; it is important to be unbiased. This monitoring exercise from other teachers or one-self routine can help revise all of the questions formulated by Pinter when monitoring from the institution is not very frequent.

## Conclusions

- In most instances the in-service English teachers do not hold an English teaching degree; they are in the process of getting one, thus, the majority is not accredited to teach English in the Ecuadorian school system. Although all of the interviewed teachers who fall in this category indicated that they are in the process of getting one, some of them have been teaching under these circumstances for over 10 years.
- Regardless of the yearly planning the teachers claimed to have, there was no lesson plans to follow. Thus, objectives were not clear and the time management was poor. The students were not aware of the objectives and verification of learning was not performed.
- The importance of the teaching resources was most emphatically cited by teachers and students. All of the private schools visited counted with teaching resources even if the teachers had to make an appointment to have the right to use them. They count on external resources to get acquainted with the daily use of the English language at home through TV shows and movies in English without subtitles.
- The students' needs and level were considered important. As the Communicative Teaching Approach prevailed among teachers' preference, the subject matter was adapted to be relevant to the students' needs and level in some cases. The teachers complained about the proficiency level mixed groups they had to manage, but there was no evidence that the needs and level were assisted.
- As private high schools situated in the Samborondón area offer their service to medium to high socio economic families, they are, in general, newly built and spacious. The classrooms are ample, ventilated and bright. The two visited schools



located in the south area were also well equipped and comfortable. The teachers had the choice of seating arrangements suitable for their activities and the students had all of their classroom comfort to work in a nice atmosphere. In some specific cases the classrooms were very small and held too many students.

- Private Educational Institutions are aware of the importance of lesson planning and class monitoring; thus, the teachers are being observed and monitored. Additionally, the Ministry of Education visits the schools sporadically to check on yearly planning and at times to observe a class.

## Recommendations

Research studies like this, must be fostered regularly by the government in order to accompany the changes and verify if these changes are reaching the goals and objectives planned. The English Language Learning Standards (ELLS) aim to assess the proficiency level at the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> year of Educación Básica General (A1); at the end of 1<sup>st</sup> year of Bachillerato (A2); and at the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> year of Bachillerato (B1). These results need to be analyzed and compiled in a national research study to learn if Ecuadorian students are reaching the Quality Learning Standards.

Secondary schools need to work with these standards to ensure that the proficiency levels are met at the right stage. Teachers and students must be allowed time to evaluate the work done frequently and during the whole school year. Schools directives should implement training sessions about standards regularly, so that teachers are aware of the progress the students are making or the deficiencies that need improvement.

## REFERENCES

- Afshari, M. K., Bakar, A., & Su Luan, W. (2009). Factors affecting teachers' use of information and communication technology. *International Journal of Instruction*, 2.1
- Chang, M. (2010). *Factors affecting the implementation of communicative language teaching in Taiwanese college English classes*. Retrieved from <http://csenet.org/journal/index.php/elt/article/view/10754>.
- Davies, P., & Pearse, E. (2000). *Success in English Teaching*. Oxford University Press.
- EcuadorUniversitario (November 12, 2012). *Enseñanza del Inglés en el Ecuador*. Retrieved from <http://ecuadoruniversitario.com/opinion/ensenanza-del-ingles-en-el-ecuador/>
- Edge, J., & Garton, S. (2009). *From experience to knowledge in ELT*. Oxford University Press.
- Estándares de Inglés (November 7, 2012). *Factors implied in teaching English as a foreign language in Ecuador*. Retrieved from <http://www.educacion.gob.ec/estandares-de-ingles.html>.
- Gower, R., Phillips, D., & Walters, S. (1983). *Teaching Practice. A handbook for Teachers in Training*. Oxford: Macmillan Publishers Limited.
- Harmer, J. (1998). *How to teach English*. Harlow: Pearson Education Limited
- Konzier, M. G. (January 15, 2013). *Traditional classroom seating*. Retrieved from [http://www.ehow.com/info\\_8673261\\_traditional-classroom-seating.html](http://www.ehow.com/info_8673261_traditional-classroom-seating.html)
- Larsen-Freeman, D., & Anderson, M. (2011). *Techniques & Principles in Language Teaching*. (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.) Oxford University Press.

- Lightbown, P., & Spada, N. (2006). *How languages are learned*. (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.) . Oxford University Press.
- Lynch, T. (1996). *Communication in the language classroom*. Oxford University Press
- Mackey, A., & Gass, S. (2005). *Second Language Research. Methodology and Design*. Routledge. Lawrence Earlbaum Associates, Inc., Publishers.
- Martin, S. (2004). *Finding balance: impact of classroom management conceptions on developing teacher practice*. Retrieved from <http://www.units.muohio.edu/eduleadership/FACULTY/QUANTZ/martin.pdf>
- Marx, A., Fuhrer, U., & Harting, T. (2000). Effects of classroom seating arrangement on children's question- asking. *Learning Environment Research* 2, pp. 249-263
- Pinter, A.M. (2006). *Teaching Young Language Learners*. Oxford University Press
- Richards, C. J., & Rodgers, S. T. (2001). *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Cambridge University Press
- Savater, Fernando (1997). *El valor de educar*. Editorial Ariel, S.A. Córcega, Espana.
- Skehan, P. (1998). *A cognitive Approach to Language Learning*. Oxford University Press.
- Woodward, T. (2001). *Planning lessons and courses*. Cambridge University Press.
- Zu, Z. (2001). *Problems and strategies of teaching large classes in the People's Republic of China*. Retrieved from <http://www.lsn.curtin.edu.au/tlf/tlf2001/xu.html>

## ANNEXES