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

TRABAJO DE FIN DE TITULACIÓN

AUTOR: Cumbal Aldaz, Tania Maribel
Chávez Cunguán, Andrea Maricela

DIRECTORA: Pinza Tapia, Eliana Ivanova, Mgs.

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Magíster

Eliana Ivanova Pinza Tapia.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is devoted to my family with all my love and affection, because they have given me their loving and caring support in the toughest moments along the time I have spent while studying to become a better person for them and for the Ecuadorian society.

Thanks to you all.

Andrea

The present work is devoted to God and to my family; all of you with your love and confidence have helped me to be here. I was blessed with a wonderful family. Mom and dad thanks for your support. René and Isaac thanks for being my reason, and the fortitude of my spirit. Thanks to my brothers for trusting in me. Finally thanks God for each blessing; I know you are always in my life. I will do my best for you to be proud of me.

Thanks,

Tania

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CONTENTS

RESUMEN

El presente estudio trata sobre "los factores que influyen en el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje del idioma inglés en los colegios privados del Ecuador", el objetivo principal es analizar los factores que influyen en el proceso de enseñanza aprendizaje.

El estudio se llevó a cabo en la ciudad de Quito, parroquias El Quinche, Checa, y Tumbaco, y se basa en cuatro diferentes variables, los factores relacionados con los estudiantes, factores relacionados con los profesores, factores relacionados con las aulas, y finalmente factores relacionados con las instituciones educativas.

Para llevar a cabo el estudio, se utilizaron el método cualitativo y cuantitativo. A través del método cualitativo se recolectó información con el uso de técnicas como la observación directa de las lecciones, y la toma de notas; el método cualitativo fue sustentado con el uso del método cuantitativo para explicar, a través de un análisis estadístico, los resultados obtenidos de cuestionarios y entrevistas aplicadas a los participantes del estudio.

La población del presente estudio incluye a quince profesores y quince estudiantes de 7 diferentes instituciones educativas.

La investigación muestra las condiciones en las cuales las instituciones educativas privadas llevan a cabo el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje del idioma inglés, y la manera en la que este proceso puede mejorar a través del fortalecimiento de aspectos importantes de este proceso.

PALABRAS CLAVES: Enseñanza del Inglés como lengua extranjera, factores, colegio privados.

ABSTRACT

This study is about "Factors that influence the English language teaching-learning process in Ecuadorian private high schools"; its main purpose is analyzing the factors that influence into the teaching learning process.

This study was carried out in the city of Quito, parroquias El Quinche, Checa and Tumbaco, and it was split into four different variables, factors concerning students, factors concerning teachers, factors concerning classrooms; and finally factors concerning educational institution.

In order to carry out the research the qualitative and quantitative methods were applied. The qualitative method allowed to gather information though techniques such as direct observation to the lessons and note taking ; and this method was supported by the use of the quantitative method in order to explain through a statistical analysis the information gotten from questionnaires and interviews applied to the participants of the research.

The population of this study included fifteen teachers and fifteen students from seven different private institutions.

The research shows the conditions in which private educational institutions conduct the English teaching-learning process, and how this process can be improved by strengthening important aspects of this process, for example teachers background, physical space, available materials, among others.

KEY WORDS: English teaching-learning process, factors, and private high schools.

INTRODUCTION

The present work is about the factors that influence the English Language teaching-learning process in Ecuadorian private high schools. This study was carried   out considering that many Ecuadorian students face troubles at the moment of going to the university or applying for international scholarships because their English level is low or, they do not have any knowledge about the language when they leave high schools. This situation causes academic difficulties because it limits the academic performance of students, taking into consideration that a lot of the bibliographical information is written in English. This fact has been also considered by the Ecuadorian government, which thinking on the importance of developing the English ability on Ecuadorian students has implemented the project "Strengthening English Language" through Ministerio de Educación, the main objective of this project is that Ecuadorian students get a good level of the English language to use it in the different aspects of their lives (Ministerio de Educación 2012). In the same way, the main purpose of this study is analyzing the factors that influence the English language teaching-learning process in order to help teachers and people who have relation with this process to understand the problems involved in it and, through the analysis of those factors look for possible solutions to these problems, and find a way to improve the English level of students in Ecuador.

The specific objectives of the study are, identify students' English level and their needs in the classroom; also, determine the classroom conditions in which English lessons take place; besides, identify the characteristics of in-service English teachers; and finally determine institutional facilities and norms regarding quality education.

Many scientific studies about factors that influence the teaching-learning process of English have been developed around the world; this area of research has been considered as an essential aspect at the moment of promoting improvement of the academic level of

students. For example, Aduwa-Ogiegbaen & Iyamu (2006), in their study carried out at Nigeria wanted to determine if teachers used instructional resources frequently in teaching English language; also if English language teachers use appropriate methods in teaching English language frequently; and finally, if students learn English language in environment conductive to learning. In the same way, Muhammad (2010) conducted a study in India which main objective was explored a possible relationship between classroom learning environment and students' attitude towards English as a foreign language, taking as a reference the gender of the students. Also Ping (2009) carried out a case study at China in order to examine the relationships between students' performance in communication and social needs, learning objectives, effort, strategies, and system inefficiencies.

Teachers and students from high schools of Ecuador will benefit from the present study, because it will guide them in the process of identifying the factors that cause the low level of the English language in students and, also it will help them to promote different solutions to these problems.

One of the limitations of the study was the number of observations, because the study considered only one class observation per teacher, which was too short to accomplish a deep analysis of the different aspects of the teaching-learning process. Another limitation was that some teachers and also some students felt uncomfortable with the viewer staying in the class, and it is possible that this fact caused changes in the behavior of teachers and students affecting the results of the research.

METHOD

Setting and participants

After the literature review was built, it was time to conduct the field research; seven educational institutions from El Quinche, Checa and Tumbaco granted permission to carry out the research with its teachers and students.

A total of thirty participants comprised this study, fifteen teachers and fifteen secondary students from private high schools. Only three teachers from each institution were allowed to participate in the investigation, although some of the institutions had more than three English teachers. One student from each observed group was randomly selected in order to apply him a questionnaire.

Procedures

This research started in October 2012 in the city of Quito. The first phase of the investigation was building up the literature review, during this process specific information about the variables considered for the study was compiled. Two different sources for each variable and previous studies about factors that influence the English language teaching-learning process were searched. This information allowed to have a deep knowledge about the topic, the information was documented in data collection tables.

The information used to write the literature review was taken from books, articles and web pages related to educational studies. After reading the gathered information the most relevant, interesting, and appropriate aspects were selected, in order to keep the sight on the objectives of the study.

In addition, this research was carried out with the qualitative and quantitative methods, the qualitative method allowed gathering information and analyzing the behavior of the participants of the study and the quantitative method was used to explain through a

statistical analysis the information gotten with questionnaires, interviews and observations applied to the participants of the research.

The techniques applied were direct observation to get first-hand data and note-taking to collect bibliographic information. The instruments were observation formats, questionnaires and surveys.

In order to interpret the information, twenty questions derived from the four variables, factors concerning teachers, factors concerning students, factors concerning classrooms, and factors concerning educational institution, were tabulated and interpreted in twenty graphics that show the results in a visual way, each graphic was analyzed and support with the information gotten from the questionnaire applied to each student, the information gotten from the class observation and with the literature review.

DISCUSSION

Literature Review

At present English is the leading international language and, it is used in many areas of our life such as science, technology, business, politics, education, and employment. In most of the cases, relevant scientific and technological researches are published in English in worldwide books, journals and magazines. This is why English is referred as the language of technology, science and culture.

English has become the lingua franca at the world; consequently people have to be well prepared in this language. There are a lot of institutions that offer scholarships and great opportunities to carried out graduate and undergraduate programs at excellent foreign universities, but many universities with high academic rankings in the world are located in English speaking countries.

Ecuador as a growing country has to develop strategies to help young people not only to acquire the ability in the language, but also to use it as an effective tool for their own value and, future personal benefit (Ministerio de Educación, 2012).

At present the teaching-learning process of English in our country has lots of limitations and deficiencies, studying the factors that influence the English language teaching-learning process is a great opportunity to help teachers and students to identify some of the reasons that causes these problems, and also to give them new ideas and suggestions in order to improve our traditional way of teaching. This study will review aspects such as the teaching approaches and methods, managing learning, lesson design, class size (number of students), classroom space (physical space) and seating arrangement, classroom and teaching resources, classroom observation (institution monitoring), learning styles, and student's intelligence or aptitude to learn English.

Teaching Approaches and Methods

Though the years scientifics and educators have carried out lots of different teaching approaches and methods, some of them give more importance to the speaking and conversational skills, and others focus on teaching grammar aspects, for example the Communicative Language Teaching approach comes from a theory of language as communication and the goal is to develop what Hymes called "Communicative Competence" (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). According to Galloway (1993), communicative language teaching uses real life situations in order to accomplish communication; teachers state some situations of real life and students are asked to find solutions.

Another teaching method is the Natural Approach which is based on the work that Tracy Terrell and Stephen Krashen developed in 1983; the natural approach is one of the languages teaching methods based on the observation and interpretation of how learners acquire both first and second languages in nonformal settings (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). According to Terrell and Krashen (as cited in "The Natural Approach," n.d.), this approach pays principal attention to input, comprehension, vocabulary and meaningful communications and less emphasis to grammar, repetition, etc.; language is viewed as a vehicle for communication.

In the same way, while talking about the Cooperative Language Learning, Coleman (as cited in Coffey, 2008), says that this method was developed as an alternative to integrate students and encourage work in groups after that, competition in American schools was identified as a negative component of the educational system in 1959. This method promotes work with small and heterogeneous groups to complete a goal; solve a problem, develop a project, etc. (Coffey, 2008).

The Cooperative Language Learning approach depends on the socially structured exchange of information between the different groups of people working together; each

participant is held responsible for his own learning but also is motivated to increase the learning of others (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

Regarding the Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), Richards and Rodgers, (2001), suggest that, this approach has its basis on the theory of the use of tasks as the main unit of the planning and instruction in the language teaching. The members of the communicative language teaching movement, proponents of this approach, in 1996 present TBLT as a logical development of communicative language teaching, considering the following main aspects, activities that involve real communication are essential for language learning; activities in which language is used for carrying out meaningful tasks, promote learning; language that is meaningful to the learner supports the learning process.

Finally, the Total Physical Response Method was developed by Asher in 1977, he saw successful adult second language learning as a parallel process to child first language acquisition (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p.). Asher states that "most of the grammatical structure of the target language and hundreds of vocabulary items can be learned from the skillful use of the imperative by the instructor" (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). According to this method the verb and, especially the imperative verb is the central linguistic element around which, language learning process is organized (Alternative Methods, n.d.).

Managing Learning

It is a complex process; it includes many different aspects that teachers need to have under control in order to accomplish an excellent lesson and help students to achieve the target language. One of these aspects is the appropriate use of language in the classroom, this involves that the teacher uses the language that best suits the learner and the situation, and also uses the language to accomplish his purposes. Some of the purposes of a lesson are instructing, explaining, correcting, checking understanding, etc. (Spratt, 2005).

Instructing is giving directives in any of the stages of the lesson in order to carry the class out. Depending on the learners' level instructions could be imperatives, especially for beginners and intermediates, and more complex language forms for advanced levels. Correcting is a way to show learners where and how they made a mistake so that they can improve it. Checking understanding refers to a feedback system which is considered a progress monitoring in action (Fisher, Pulverness & Williams, 2005). According to Hattie and Timperley (as cited in Fisher, Pulverness & Williams, 2005), when checking understanding is done correctly this is a powerful way to boost students achievement, it consists on checking on the students' progress through asking learners to carry out activities related to the lesson or class they already received such as homework, cues, etc.

Another aspect is the lesson time management; teachers should not underestimate this point because they can lose the control over the class if there is free time that teacher did not consider. A suggestion is writing out the times for each aspect of the lesson and put it on a place where it is easy to see (Williams, n.d.).

Lesson Design

Milkova (2012), states that a lesson plan is the teacher's road map of what students need to learn and how it is going to be done during the class time in an effective way; according to him, a successful lesson plan addresses and integrates these three main components, objectives for student learning, teaching/learning activities, and strategies to check student understanding.

In the same way, Celce-Murcia (2001), says that teachers plan in order to decide what to teach, the order for each activity and, the time assigned for each stage. The lesson plan is well considered as a checklist that shows a kind of sequence of what comes first and what comes later; also it reminds the teacher the goals and objectives of the lesson. This is why Celce-Murcia also suggests that a lesson plan is a record of what a teacher did in class; of

course this information is very valuable at the moment of planning assessment measures such as quizzes, midterms, and final exams, also if the teacher needs to give the same course again, there is a point of reference that can be improved but it is not starting from cero.

As a matter of fact being a good teacher and, waiting from the students to be prepared for a class also means that the teacher is well prepared for his class, and planning the lesson is the first step and maybe the most important (Celce-Murcia, 2001).

Spratt, Pulverness & Williams (2005), say that:

> "the aspects we need to consider at the moment of planning a lesson are the level and number of learners; timetable fit, how is connected the last lesson and the new lesson; main aims, what students should learn, subsidiary aims, additional activities that carry learners to the main aims; assumptions, what teachers thinks learners already know; anticipated language problems; possible solutions; teaching aids, materials, equipment; procedure; task and activities for each stage; timing; interactions patterns; homework" (p. 128).

However it is important to remember that, the plan of the lesson is not written in stone, it is mutable, a good lesson plan does not dictate what and how to teach, it only guides in the teaching process (Celce-Murcia, 2001). The successfulness of the lesson will depends on the criteria of the teacher in order to create a realistic timeline, adjusting the objectives to students' needs; if these aspects are well defined so some flexibility will be allowed during the lesson, and as a result of the process the teacher will be able to accomplish his goal (Milkova, 2012).

Class Size

Maxwell (as cited in Brown, 2011), says that, "No football coach in his right mind would try to teach 150 players, one hour per day, and hope to win the game on Friday night".

The standards for the English Language Arts mention what students should learn: reading, writing, speaking, listening, viewing, and visually representing; and of course the class size plays a very important role at the moment of achieving these goals. A teacher, who works with a group of 25 students, in a class of 50 minutes, has no more than 2 minutes per pupil in the best conditions for one to one interaction (Brown, 2011).

Taking into consideration the aspects mentioned before, it is very important that the National Council of Teachers of English (1990), states that:

> …students have the right to: ample opportunities to engage in writing activities, frequent opportunities for meaningful oral interaction in the classroom, frequent, timely, substantive feedback and assessment of their written and oral work, etc.; and also have the right to teachers who develop individual instructional relations with their students, device creative curricula which honor individual learning styles; guide students in their critical evaluation and use of various technologist, print and non-print media, etc. (para. 5).

The Secondary Section of the National Council of Teacher of English (1990), recommends that schools prepared their activities and plans resulting in groups of no more than 20 students.

The Size Class is one of the aspects that teachers and researches have studied from many different points of view. Although most of the studies have found that large classes bring many disadvantages such as discomfort cause by the physical space, discipline problems; lack of individual attention; difficulty on evaluation; etc. some researches as Ur and Hess argue that large classes bring opportunities for creativity, XuZhichang (as cited in Wang & Zhang, 2011), notices that more students mean more ideas, and more options for co-student´s interaction.

Classroom Space and Seating Arrangment

According to Hue Ming-Tak and Li Waihing (as cited in Zerin, 2009), the classroom space and specially the seating arrangement, time ago, was viewed as a way to control students. Recently this conception is changing and, now it is viewed as a way of establishing a good climate for learning. Manitoba's Government (2012), considers that a critical factor in promoting positive behavior is the physical arrangement of the furniture, supplies, and resources in the classroom. In order to provide students with a pleasant atmosphere for learning, it is important taking into account some aspects such as the floor space, wall space, closet space, seating arrangement, etc. (Zerin, 2009). Hue Ming-Tak and Li Waihing (as cited in Zerin, 2009) consider that there are some common seating arrangements for example horizontal rows, vertical rows, circle and long tables, each of these are useful for different purposes but a good seating arrangement is the one that facilitates the development of specific learning task and, activities and; communicates the teacher's beliefs about learning and teaching.

It is necessary that teachers remember that changing seating arrangement is a positive action that, promotes the interaction of students with different people in the class (Zerin, 2009). Also, teachers should plan for movement, when students can move freely they feel less anxious, more concentrated and, more relaxed. A student that stands at the same place for more than 20 minutes will feel uncomfortable, and will lost the interest on the class (Manitoba's Government, 2012).

Finally, teacher's position in the classroom is a very important factor of classroom management and seating arrangement; teachers have to move freely in the class so they can go to different parts and, control the entire group; it is necessary to leave enough space in the classroom, teachers need easy and efficient access to different groups of students; also, daily routine movement areas of the classroom should be free of congestion (Zerin, 2009).

Classroom and Teaching Resources

Classroom and Teaching Resources are all the materials, and options that a teacher can use in his classes to back the teaching-learning process up. The main objective of these materials is helping the teacher to accomplish the goals of a lesson (Geek, 2003).

According to Spratt, Pulverness and Williams (2005), there are a lot of aids or resources that can be used for many different purposes, blackboards or whiteboards are useful to write ideas, important information that comes during the lesson, explaining any topic, etc; besides cassette recorders or CD players allows to present new language in forms of dialogues or stories; also a video recorder can help to introduce to a new topic and carry out gap task; a computer is an ample source for different activities; learners can work with programs, online dictionaries, online language test, etc; a language laboratory promotes pronunciation and listening practice; also teachers can use realia which is working with real objects that can be easily taken to the class and help students to learn new vocabulary, built dialogues, etc.

Other resources are flashcards which work in a similar way of realia, and help student to improve their vocabulary; while working with young learners using puppets is an excellent resource to teach, this source make students feel relax and comfortable so it is easy for them to remember a dialogue, vocabulary, introduce a new topic; also teachers can work with posters, wall charts, maps, series of pictures, etc, in this way students can work in different activities and the class come more interesting and funny (Geek, 2003).

Finally, this author also mention that, a teacher can use his hands, his body and his expressions to explain or transmit students what he needs them to understand.

Classroom Observation

One of the most important aspects to guarantee an excellent academic level in students is the excellence of teachers. Good teachers are not simple good teachers; they have faced a process in which they became that way (Tingley, 2011).

Recent studies showed that, it takes around five years for a teacher to become competent in instruction and classroom management, however the same studies also showed that after eight years some teachers have not improved at all (Tingley, 2011).

The aspects mentioned before demonstrate the importance of supervision and evaluation in the teaching-learning process. The goal of supervision is helping teachers to detect some of their deficiencies so that, they can improve their classes, it can be considered as "another set of eyes", supervision is not a kind of judgment to the teacher, in excellent conditions the supervisor is an assistant or a trusted mentor in helping the teacher to enhance institutional and classroom management skills (Tingley, 2011).

However, Marshall (2009) found that, although people think that the best way to improve teaching is through supervision and evaluation to teachers, the traditional way of supervising and evaluating such as long visits to classes, and writing lots of reports, does not cause any positive impact on the teaching process and less on students' achievement. At the same time, Marshall has come up with a new option for evaluation and supervision, this model includes four interconnected components; mini-observations, which include conducting short unannounced visits and, later feedback to the teacher; besides, working together with the teachers team in the curriculum planning; also, working with the teachers team to analyze interim assessments, and; finally, giving special attention to teachers evaluations rubrics, so the teacher know about his evaluation. The main objective of the system proposed by Marshall is that teachers and principals work together to improve teachers' practice which directly results in students' achievement of the goal (Marshall, 2009).

Learning Styles

It is recognized for many people that, each person has a different learning style and technique. Although, everyone has a predominant way to learn, each person has a mix of

learning styles, also people use different learning styles depending on the situation that are facing. The use of multiple learning styles and multiple intelligences for learning is a new approach that has been introduced in the last years, traditional education systems tend to use techniques and methods based on logical development (Advanogy, 2004).

Woolfolk (2007) says that, most of the educational psychologists are skeptical about the value of learning preferences, she stands that the validity of these theories and the importance they have received depends on a commercial aspect, and not necessarily on a scientific point of view. Coffield (as cited in Woolfolk, 2007), stands that researches points to the person in context, the entire teaching-learning system as a better way to understand student learning.

Nevertheless, some researchers have establish that there are seven learning styles which are: visual (spatial) pictures, images, and spatial understanding; aural (auditory-musical) sound and music; verbal (linguistic) words, speech and writing; physical (Kinesthetic) body, hands and sense; logical (mathematical) reasoning, systems, logic; social (interpersonal) groups, other people; solitary (intrapersonal) work alone, self study (Advanogy, 2008).

Although, Woolfolk (2007) mentioned that, in an extensive examination of learning styles instruments; the researchers, at the Learning Skills Research Centre in England, after a examination of reliability, concluded that the learning style instruments proposed by Dunn, Gregorc and, Riding should not be used in education or business; it is important to consider that, the learning styles and multiple intelligences are an option to help students when they have learning problems.

Students' Intelligence or Aptitude to Learn English

Aptitude refers to a specific area of performance, and intelligence carries a broader meaning, it is not specific to a discipline, but rather entails all areas of learning (Sturgeon, 2012).

According to Woolfolk (2007) intelligence is the ability to solve problems and create products or outcomes that are valued by a culture. Even though Gardner's multiple intelligences theory has not been completely accepted by the scientific community, it has been embraced by many educators. Some of the people that do not accept this theory suggest that, several intelligences are really talents like bodily-kinesthetic skill, musical ability, etc. or, personality traits such as interpersonal ability. Other "intelligences" are not new at all (Woolfolk, 2007).

In spite of the acceptance of the multiple intelligences theories or not, it is completely true that there are people who can easily learn a language than others. Language aptitude refers to a kind of prediction of how well an individual can learn a foreign language, it was suggested as "one of the central individual differences in language learning." It is also consider a consistent predictor of one's success in learning a foreign language (Sturgeon, 2012).

Scientific studies around the world are developed every day; the main objective of these studies is promoting progress in society. When talking about the teaching-learning process of languages, it is found that teachers and researchers around the world have studied in different ways the factors that influence this process; this area of investigation has been considered as an essential aspect at the moment of promoting improvement of the academic level of students.

Aduwa-Ogiegbaen and Iyamu (2006), in their study developed at Nigeria wanted to determine if teachers used instructional resources frequently in teaching English language; if

English language teachers use appropriate methods in teaching English language frequently; and finally if students learn English language in environment conductive to learning.

The instruments used to carry out the study were a questionnaire and observation schedules. An anonymous questionnaire was designed with a list of items divided in four sections, which asked students' responses on teaching strategies, instructional resources/media used by the teachers and the teaching/learning environment, the items were the result of the researchers' experience, and also a compilation of literature review. Research assistants were qualified to observe each classroom and some classroom proceedings during administration of the questionnaire. In order to validate the instruments, the questionnaire was presented to a group of referees in the areas of educational psychology, educational technology, and curriculum and instruction, who made observations and modifications on the items. The reliability coefficient of the instrument was calculated by using Cronbach alpha and it was found to be 0.86.

According to authors, public secondary schools in Nigeria have many problems, and they are "far behind time in offering multiple pathways to the teaching and learning English as a second language" (p. 1). Indicators show that the system has many weaknesses with the percentage of students who failed English Language examinations around 55% to 75% in the past ten years (Aduwa-Ogiegbaen & Iyamu, 2006). Aduwa-Ogiegbaen and Iyamu (2006), says "We are convinced that the high potential for enhanced learning through the provision of conducive-learning environment can be attained in public schools in Nigeria. It is strongly recommended that the learning environment in public schools in Nigeria should be given priority attention by state and federal governments so that children can learn well" (p.9)

Muhammad (2010), conducted a study in India which main objective was explored at possible relationship between classroom learning environment and students' attitude towards English as a foreign language, taking as a reference the gender of the students.

The instruments used for the study were two questionnaires applied in a sample of 720 students of 10th grade from six districts of the Punjab province, using a quantitative method, one questionnaire was used to collect date regarding student's attitude and the other one on classroom learning environment. Reliability of the scales was determined through Cronbach alpha coefficient, and subject specialists were consulted to validate de instrument and conduct pilot testing.

Some of the findings of the study were that female are more cooperative and their attitude is better at the moment of learning a new language than male, there are more work in equipment, they have more cohesiveness in their classroom than male students, female students get more teacher support, are more involved in classroom activities, they have higher level of investigation, girls know more about their work and what they have to, they are more cooperative in their class activities and positive in adopting language leaning attitudes. The author recommends that "English language teachers might be trained to motivate students to develop a positive attitude towards English language learning by familiarizing the students with English movies, programs and removing their fear of English through short sentences of daily routine life" (p. 586).

Ping (2009) developed a case study at China in order to examine the relationships between students' performance in communication and social need, learning objectives, effort, strategies, and system inefficiencies. The instrument used was a questionnaire composed of 6 variables, and 3 nominal questions. A mini pilot study was conducted and discussed then a final questionnaire was designed. In order to analyze the data collected the researcher used a linear regression method which is a statistical procedure used to model relationships between one dependent variable and independent variables.

There are two interesting finding, first students with goals based on English communication are expected to develop deeper learning strategies, and second, there is no

significant relationship between effort and performance. According to the author these results can be used to guide instructors to design creative classroom practice communication development. Communication is established as a two-way process and opens up the classroom as a genuine space for learning (Ping, 2009), Ping (2009) says (p.80) "communication practice must be conducted in class; extra-curriculum activities for communication must be advocated such as English corner, English club or English salon; students must be urged to make a clear English learning goal and be pushed towards this goal"

The study developed by Vanite, Phil and Veena (2012) in India had as main objective analyze the influence of the education system, methods and techniques of teaching and socio cultural factors on the reading ability of English Language.

A survey method was used to carry out this study. The main instrument was a teachers' opinionnaire with a list of items which asked for teachers answers. The finding on this study were that some of the principals reason that causes a low level on the reading ability English are low motivations, lack of English language labs, lack of scientific approach in teaching a foreign language, regarding the socio-cultural factors the absence of English speaking and listening environment and the interference of the mother tongue, but the most important cause causes for a low level on reading ability are the overcrowded classes. The author recommended that the government pays more attention into this matter as a priority and removes the bottlenecks in the education system. Another suggestion is a recruitment policy and in-service training for teachers, this should be scientifically designed, and in order to raise the level of teaching-learning of English in general and reading ability in particular the latest technology should be available to the schools.

Maware (2012), in his study tried to determine if result from a critical examination of the problems faced by Mozambique's public education impact a positive change on the country's educational policies and socio-economic situation.

The instruments used for the study were lesson observations in public schools, close questionnaires and in depth interviews. The data collected from lesson observations, questionnaires and in-depth interviews was tabulated to show frequencies before valuating analysis.

Some of the main findings of the study were the scarcity of secondary material caused by poverty and economic hardship causes poor education; also there are few Mozambican teacher able to teach and produce English textbook that can be used in schools; besides under-qualified teachers (85%) are employed to teach at public schools; and finally English is not consider as important as the rest of the subjects in the curriculum of public education.

The study sought an in depth understanding of the education stakeholder, and concluded that both teachers and students are facing serious problems in the teaching-learning process at public education. Mozambican education system needs a complete reform like introducing English in second grade primary education, investing in teacher training and hire qualified teachers from neighboring countries Critical literacy is crucial in education as "it helps teachers and students expand their reasoning capacities, seek out multiple perspectives, and become active thinkers" (Maware, 2012, p.44:45)

Description, Analysis, and Interpretation of Results

After the literature review was built and, the field research was carried out, it was time to analyze and interpret the information gotten in the field research.

The data collected on the questionnaires applied to the teachers who participated in the study, will be statistically analyzed and interpreted in twenty different graphs; this information will be supported with the data gotten from students' questionnaires, and with the information obtained through the observation of the lessons.

Quantitative Analysis

Factors Concerning Teachers

Which level of education do teachers have?

Graph No. 1
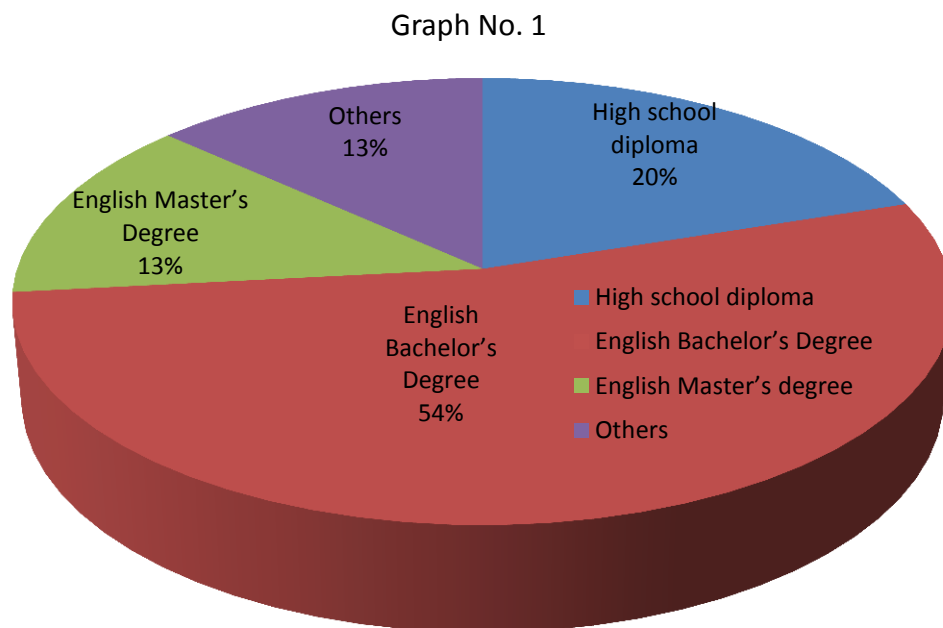
Author: Andrea Chávez & Tania Cumbal
Source: Teacher's Questionnaire

The information gotten from the teachers' questionnaires shows that, 54% of the teachers have an English bachelor's degree, and 13% have an English master's degree. According to this result, 67% of the teachers have a background in this area of study in order to teach English, which is a very important aspect to improve the teaching learning process.

On the other hand, 20% of the teachers have a high school diploma, and 13% have other kind of instruction, such as proficiency in the language through studies at Institutes. Of course this group of teachers does not have the scientific knowledge about methodology, pedagogy, teaching techniques, etc., used by teachers as learning tools, in order to help students during the teaching-learning process.

During the interview, the English level of teachers was confirmed; as a matter of fact, teachers who have a bachelor' degree and a master' degree also have a better English level than the other group of teachers. Some teachers of this group have traveled to English speaking countries and this helped them to improve their language level, which benefits students.

There is a big difference between the English level of teachers who have a master' degree or a bachelor' degree, and the English level of teachers who have learned at high schools or institutes. Teachers who have a master's degree or a bacherlor's degree know and use more complex structures, and are fluent at the moment of speaking. The other group of teachers makes mistakes on basic structures, and it was not possible to sustain a fluent dialogue.

The situation described before, takes us to another aspect; it was observed that, although all the institutions that participated in the study were private high schools, there were several differences related to the socio-economic level; particularly in the aspects associated to teachers and their level of studies, it was observed that, high schools with higher socio-economic levels had qualified teachers while, institutions with lower socio-economic levels had under-qualified teachers.

According to the information provided by teachers some of the institutions ask them to fulfill several key qualifications and good results on tests, such as the TOEFL, in order to get a job; while other high schools only fulfill the vacant post, without paying too much attention

to teachers' background, studies, experience, etc. As Maware (2012), indicates in many cases English language is not considered as important as the other subjects of the curriculum, some institutions do not consider the language as one of the most important subjects for the students, and also students do not understand the importance of learning the language.

Which of the following methods were used in the class?

Graph No. 2
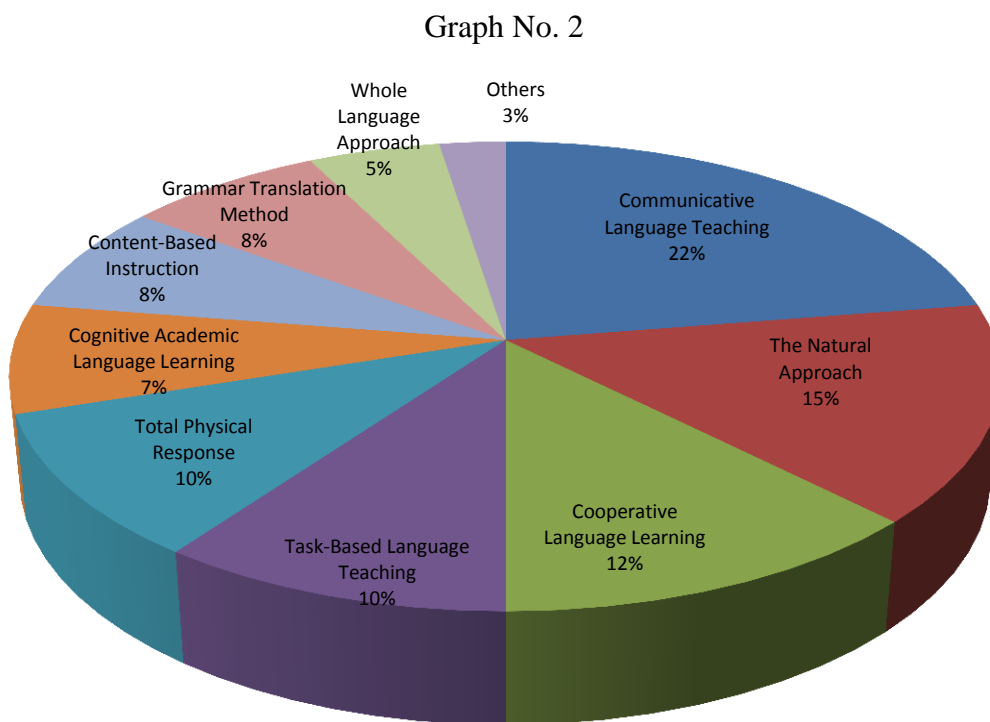
Author: Andrea Chávez & Tania Cumbal
Source: Teacher's Questionnaire

The statistical analysis of the answers provided by the teachers show that, the Communicative Language Teaching is the most used method with 22%. According to Richards & Rodgers (2001) this teaching approach comes from a theory of language as communication, the goal of this teaching method is developing what Hymes called Communicative Competence; teachers give a lot of importance to the communicative abilities; and this was seen during the observation of the lessons, where teachers develop activities like talk groups.

In second place, the Natural Approach was located, with 15%. This approach, based on the work of Tracy Terrell, allows to develop several activities in which, students are involved on real situations where they can receive a lot of input such as vocabulary, pronunciation, and real communication (Richard & Rogers, 2001). The use of this approach was observed when teachers keep talking in English during the class; they try to give all the instructions and ask students to carry out different activities in the target language, in this way students get used to listen and speak in English. While using this method, teachers are not looking for students to memorize different words, or sentences; their main goal is that students get involved in the language, they understand what is going on and, students are able to solve different problems through the use of the language. However, it was not easy for teachers to carry out all the class in English and, at some point of the lesson; most of them need to use Spanish.

The Cooperative Language Learning is in third place with 12%, similar to the methods mentioned before, it gives lot of importance to communication; in this case, teachers create different situations that students were able to solve in groups, through the use of the language. One of the best examples of the use of this approach was during one of the observed lessons, students played charades, they were divided into 5 groups and each group had to cooperate in order to find the words and win the game.

The Task-Based Language Teaching and the Total Physical Response share similar percentages, 10% each one. These methods are also similar, because teachers give specific instructions to their students to interact and also to develop specific activities. The use of commands like stand up, sit down, silence please, etc., was seen in all the teachers.

Then, the Content-Based Instruction, Cognitive Academic Language Learning and Grammar Translation methods share the same percentage, 8% each one.

Regarding the Content-Based Instruction method, as it is known, it is focused on the learning about something specific (British Council, 2013), and although teachers said they used this method, it was not observed that teachers carry out specific projects or studies.

On the other hand, teachers also said they use the Cognitive Academic Language Learning, which refers to the formal academic learning that includes listening, reading, speaking and writing skills; this teaching method takes around 5 to 6 years of study (Haynes, J. 2007), and has to do with the purposes of the institution and the planning for each year.

The use of the Grammar translation method, which is a traditional approach, was necessary in some cases, although teachers try to speak in English most of the time of the lesson, most of them use Spanish at some point of the class, because they need to explain or clarify something. Also, It was observed that some teachers do not have the academic background to carry out a class, they do not know the methods and techniques that are able to help students to understand a lesson, and this causes that teachers translate what they are saying, or they give instructions in Spanish.

On the other hand, 5% of the teacher said they use the whole language approach, this method emphasizes learning to read and write naturally with a focus on real communication and, reading and writing for pleasure (Richards & Rodgers, 2001), which is not so easy to accomplish in a class in which teachers need to follow a curricular planning. However, a few teachers ask their students to develop free topic compositions as homework.

Other methods were pointed with 3%. In this option, one of the teachers said that she uses Suggestopedia "mixture of all the methods", as the teaching approach. It was necessary to look for information about the mentioned method, and according to Bowen (2013), this approach is based on the power of suggestion in learning, so this method is not a mixture of all the other methods as the teacher suggested.

It is important to mention that the results gotten from questionnaire applied to teachers show that, teachers use several teaching methods; most of the teachers marked more than one answer, and they said it is not possible for them to work only with one of the methods.

Also during the observation of the classes it was confirmed that teacher mix some of the characteristics of each method. Teachers develop 3 or 4 different activities that involved different abilities of the language, these activities were carried out in different ways, applying the method that best adjusts to the activity and to the group of students.

Although, teachers develop several activities in which, some characteristics of the methods and approaches mentioned before, were used, it is not clear if all teachers have a deep knowledge about the methods, their positive and negative aspects, and the best way in which they can take advantage of this knowledge, in order to create a positive environment and an interactive and interesting lesson.

Finally, according to the information provided by students, most of them feel pleased with their teachers' way of teaching, they appreciate that teachers try to develop a dynamic lesson, and also they feel confidence because teachers are ready to repeat something they do not understand.

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

Graph No. 3
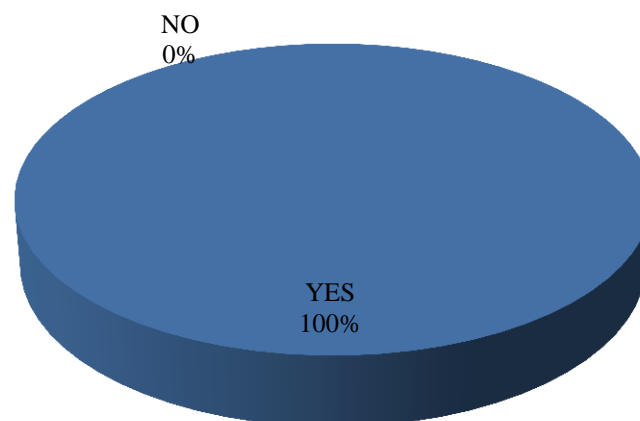
Author: Andrea Chávez & Tania Cumbal
Source: Teacher's Questionnaire

Graph number 3 shows that, 100% of the teachers said they use whole-group activities to teach their lesson.

Teachers mentioned that, they use whole group activities because students need to be merged in different activities, and through the use of this kind of activities, students can interact among them. Also students can practice cooperation, which is an important aspect in their academic training. Teachers believe that carrying out activities that involved whole group activities gives good results in the teaching learning process, besides these activities allow evaluating how effective the communication in EFL is.

Teachers also mention that, this is an excellent option to face the lack of time to develop individual activities, and some topics can be deeply understood while sharing opinions, thoughts and experiences.

One of the teachers said that, making students to share among them is a part of teaching a foreign language and, it is important to practice with a group project, because students feel excited when teachers use different activities.

On the other hand, a teacher said that although he uses whole-group activities to teach his lessons, because he finds students enjoy a lot these activities, it is difficult because two or three students often lead the topic and, shy students' ideas are either unexpressed or largely ignored. Besides, the group frequently finds difficult staying focused on the assigned task because they get side-tracked on irrelevant details.

Even though 100% of the teachers said they use whole group activities, only 70% of the students mentioned that their teachers develop activities in which they can interact with their classmates, the other students said that their teachers do not conduct activities in which they can interact with their classmates, they work individually.

During the observation of the lessons, the use of whole group activities was seen only in three different lessons. It seems that teachers are confused between whole group activities and

group work activities. Nevertheless, in the lesson that these activities were carried out, it was observed that whole group activities are used by teachers in order to get interaction among students and teachers, the best example was a teacher who played "Simon says" with her students at the beginning of the class, the game was fast and funny, and the student who won the game got a credit point.

Whole group activities are used specially to develop interaction and integration between teachers and students, and they are completely different from group work activities because they involve the participation of the whole class with the teacher, and not only the participation of divided groups.

Teachers who included whole groups activities in their lessons get the attention of students, because the psychological barrier between students and teacher was overcame, students felt more comfortable, and motivated and this environment promotes a better academic progress.

Do teachers use individual activities to teach their lessons?

Graph No. 4

NO
7%

YES
93%
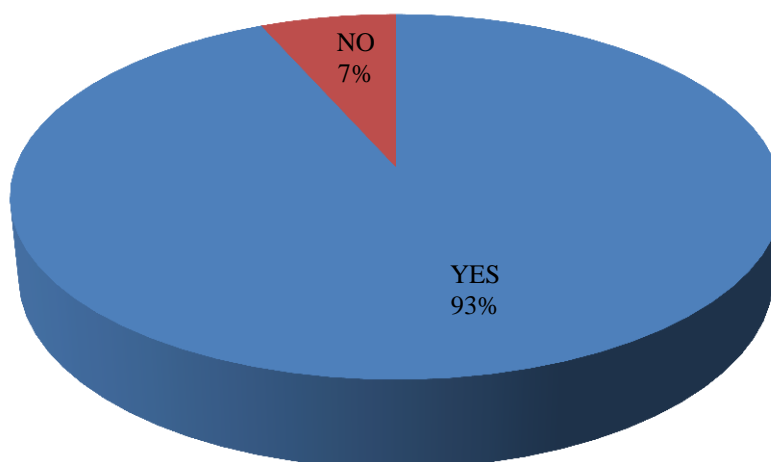
Author: Andrea Chávez & Tania Cumbal
Source: Teacher's Questionnaire

The results gotten from the teachers' questionnaire show that 93% of the teachers use individual activities to teach their lessons, and 7% of the teachers do not use individual activities to teach their lessons.

Teachers mentioned that, individual activities allow them to measure and evaluate individual skills while language acquisition happens.

According to some teachers learning autonomy is necessary, and individual activities are useful in order to get feedback, and evaluate if the student understood or did not understand the lesson. Individual activities are carried out especially at the moment of grading students, and they help to determine the aspects in which students need more help.

Teachers also associate individual activities with discipline, because while students work alone it is easier to keep the class in order.

On the other hand, teachers who do not use individual activities said that, the main reason is that they have a lot of students in the classroom, so it is difficult developing individual activities and grading them.

It is important to realize that many of the analyzed groups can be considered as big groups, and according to Brown (2011), a teacher who works with a group of 25 students in a class of 50 minutes has no more than 2 minutes per pupil, in the best conditions, for one to one interaction; so time is one of the factors that limits teachers in order to carry out more individual activities.

On the other hand, students mention that most of the teachers ask them to work in individual activities; this was also observed during the visit to the classes.

Teachers developed individual activities in order to measure the development of their students in the different language skills, they worked with listening activities asking students to complete individually their workbooks, also after a grammar class teachers asked student

by student to go to the board to solve some grammar exercises, and finally, one of the teachers gave students a written evaluation about the last lesson, at the beginning of the class.

Although working in one to one activities is hard, especially when groups are big and time is limited, it is necessary to do it, because this is the only way to evaluate individual development.

It is important to mention that individual activities carried out by teachers, sometimes became boring, also some students were faster than others and it was difficult to keep the order in the class. Besides, according to the point of view of some teachers, individual activities can be used as a tool to keep students quiet, and in silence, and in order to spend all the time of the class, this way of seeing the teaching-learning process affects in a negative way the behavior of students regarding the language, because they feel bored about the class and also they lost the interest on the language.

Do teachers use group work activities to teach their lessons?

Graph No. 5
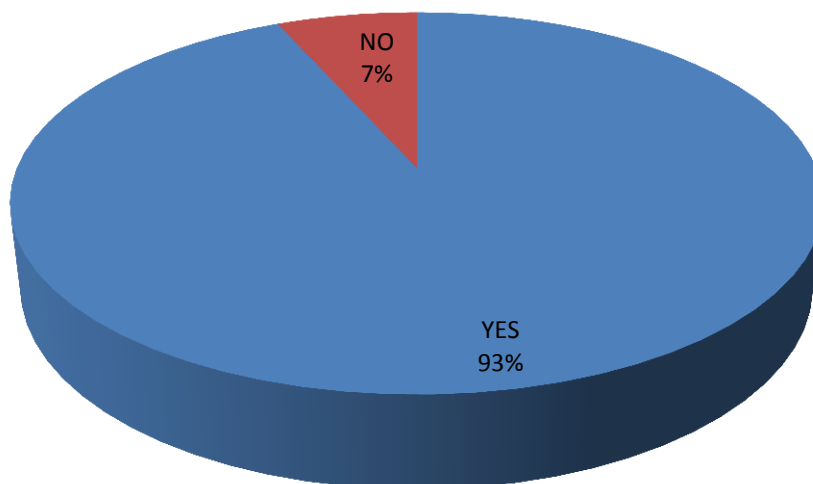
NO
7%

YES
93%

Author: Andrea Chávez & Tania Cumbal
Source: Teacher's Questionnaire

According to the information provided by teachers, 93% of them use group work activities to teach their lessons; the main goals of using these kind of activities are the following: measuring the real communicational skills, measuring cooperation and interaction, promoting team work, and providing students the opportunity to practice the language.

Teachers consider that, group work activities allow interactive learning in order to push students' language acquisition, and to assess the progress in the acquisition of the language. It is interesting when students work in groups because, they can express a diversity of opinions and ideas, and also it helps them to improve their vocabulary.

It is interesting how a group of teachers think that, group work activities can be used when the members of a group have different language levels, because when they work in groups they can share their ideas, their knowledge and learn from others; while other teachers said they do not use group work activities to teach their lessons, because students in the same class, have different levels of the language, so it is difficult to match them in groups to work in a good way.

Taking into consideration that most of the educational establishments have big groups of students, 20-25 students per class, it is important for teachers to keep in mind that group work activities can help them to promote contact and use of the language among students, specially, in order to replace the lack of time for one to one interaction between teachers and students.

Teachers can be creative at the moment of using group work activities to carry out new and interesting activities in which students can interact and participate with other classmates, helping the teacher to generate a work environment in which students feel comfortable with the language and take the risk to use it freely.

Students said that their teachers developed several activities in which they can interact with their classmates, and this information was confirmed during the observation of the lessons, students had the opportunity to work in groups and share their personal opinions,

different points of view, discuss about their criteria, also students assumed different roles in the communication process and got involved in real situations to practice the language, for example, one of the teachers developed the game charades in groups of six students, and another teacher divided the students in five groups and give them a topic, then students were asked to develop several activities with the topic and finally students had to talk to the other classmates about their topic. In a general way, and although teachers use group work activities, there is always a way to be more creative in order to find new group work activities that allow the progress of students in all the language skills.

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

Graph No. 6
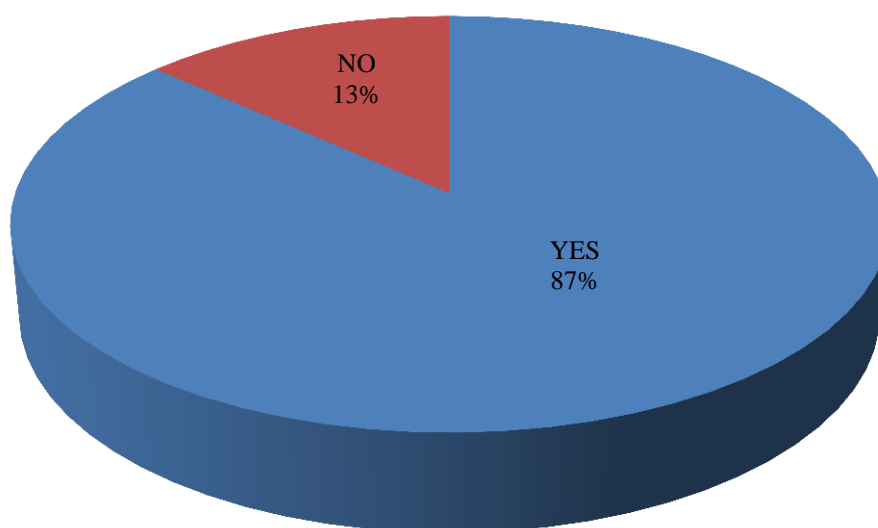
Author: Andrea Chávez & Tania Cumbal
Source: Teacher's Questionnaire

According to the results gotten from the questionnaire applied to teachers, 87% of the teachers answered that they use English most of the time in their classes, and the 13% of the teachers do not use English most of the time.

In the same way, most of the students said that their teachers use English in their classes, most of the time; and, just a few students said that their teachers use Spanish in their classes.

However, during the observation of the lessons, it was seen that at least the 80% of the teachers had to use Spanish during the lessons, in order to explain something students did not understand.

In two cases, it was seen that teachers spoke Spanish at least 75% of the time of the lesson, teachers read the instruction in English and translated everything for students, then the teachers asked students to fulfill the book or notebook with those instructions, of course this teachers' behavior does not help students to improve their English level, and generates an environment where students feel free to speak Spanish.

While talking to teachers they said that, they try to use English most of the time, but sometimes it is not possible for students to understand something about grammar or vocabulary, so they need to translate or speak in Spanish, if we check on to the graph number two, we can see that 8% of the teachers said that they use the Grammar Translation as a teaching method, which has to do with the fact that they do not use English all the time in their classes.

Teachers also mentioned that the differences in the English level of the students do not allow them to develop the class only in English, and they need to help students who do not understand the class.

Some teachers have forgotten that, one of the principal aspects of the teaching learning process is the appropriate use of language in the class (Spratt, 2005), and translating is the easy way, but not always the best.

Do teachers plan their lesson?
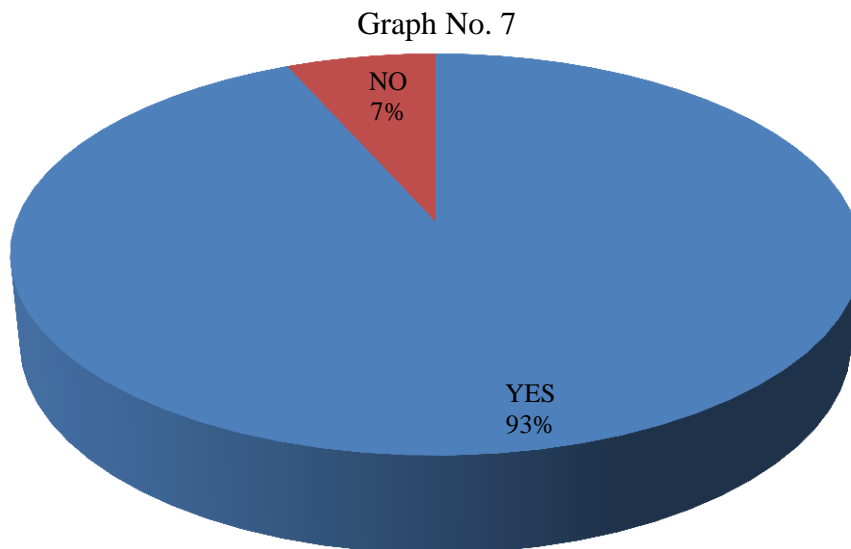
Graph No. 7

The graph No. 7 shows that 93% of the teachers answered that they plan their lesson, and 7% of the teachers said they do not plan their lessons.

This information was confirmed during the observation of the lessons, and although not all the teachers had a detailed document that showed every single activity in the class, most of them had a plan for the activities and tasks they wanted to carry out during the class, and what they wanted to teach to their students.

In a general way, each teacher began the class with an introduction, a game, a conversation, a review of the last lesson, etc., classes were focused on a lesson topic and, individual and group activities related to the topic were carried out, activities were guided and controlled by teachers, who paid special attention to timing.

Also, it was seen that most of the teachers previously prepared the material and resources they needed in order to carry out their lessons, some teachers used type records, computer labs, etc., in these cases, everything was coordinated and students had access to these spaces and resources without any problem. Paying attention to these details was really

important because English teachers shared materials and resources, so they could not improvise an activity with those resources. Finally, at the end of the lessons teachers gave time to review the topic, and also to receive feedback from students.

In a general way, teachers accomplish the requirements for a lesson plan, as Milkova (2012), states a lesson plan is the teacher's road map of what students need to learn and how it is going to be done during the class time in an effective way; a successful lesson plan addresses and integrates these three main components, objectives for student learning, teaching/learning activities, and strategies to check student understanding.

These main aspects mentioned before were considered by most of the teachers. Teachers defined the learning objectives for the students (what they wanted to teach to students), in most of the cases, the activities were not improvised, teachers previously organized the activities they carried out, finally, most of the teachers closed the class with an assessment, teachers asked students if the class was understood, they asked for questions, sent homework to reinforce the acquired knowledge, etc.

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

Graph No. 8

Author: Andrea Chávez & Tania Cumbal
Source: Teacher's Questionnaire

36
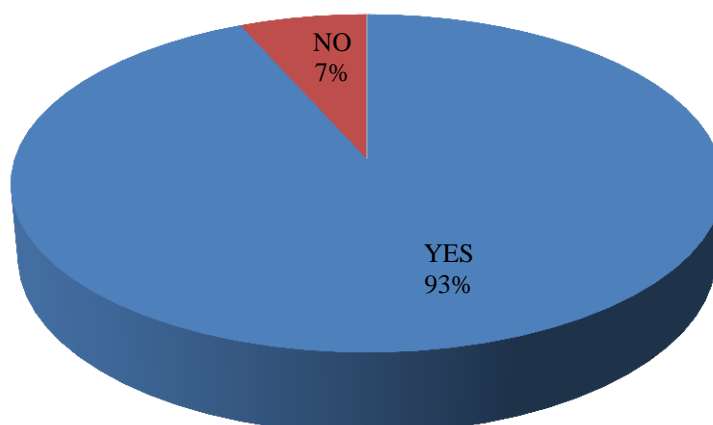
According to the information provided by teachers, 93% of them consider aspects such as discipline, timing, feedback and instruction to teach their lessons and 7% of the teachers did not consider those aspects at the moment of developing their classes.

Also students said their teachers take into consideration aspects such as discipline, timing, feedback and instructions while teaching their lessons. According to their opinion, most of the teachers control discipline while they are carrying out the activities, two students said that their teachers give them so much freedom what causes disciplinary problems in the classroom.

Most of the students also mentioned that the instructions given by their teacher are clear so that, they understand the orders given by teachers and they can carry out the activities without any problem, according to the students after developing an activity, teachers explained them what is wrong and the way they can improve it, all the students said that teachers give specific time for each activity. Finally, one of the students feels that the instructions to develop activities in class or homework are not always so clear.

It is important to remember that, the teaching learning process is really complex and, it includes many different aspects that teachers need to have under control in order to develop an excellent lesson (Spratt, 2005). During the observation of the classes it was seen that teachers have under control most of these aspects; they pay special attention to timing because they have a schedule. As Williams (n.d.) states teachers should not underestimate timing because they can lose the control of the class if there is free time that teachers did not consider.

Regarding discipline, most of the teachers are very strict with students, asking them to be quiet, keep in order, etc., some of the institutions have a code of behavior for students, so when students behave in a negative way they received a disciplinary punishment.

Regarding instructions, most of the teachers give students clear orders, using the appropriate language, imperative forms for beginners and, more complex language for advanced levels.

Finally, during the lesson, teachers seek feedback while they keep correcting pronunciation, grammar, etc. At the end of the lessons teachers checked on the understanding of students.

It was observed that, during the teaching-learning process, few teachers did not take all these aspects into consideration, good intentions are not enough at the teaching moment, a deep academic background is needed, and this is not the only point, Tingley (2009) states that good teachers are not simple good teachers; they have faced a process in which they became that way. Several studies have showed that it takes around five years, for a teacher to become competent in instructions and classroom management, however, neither institutions nor teachers keep these aspects in mind, this is why teachers do not consider training and updating their knowledge in the area as one of the main factors in order to be a good teacher.

Factors Concerning Students

Do teachers consider Students' needs to teach English successfully?
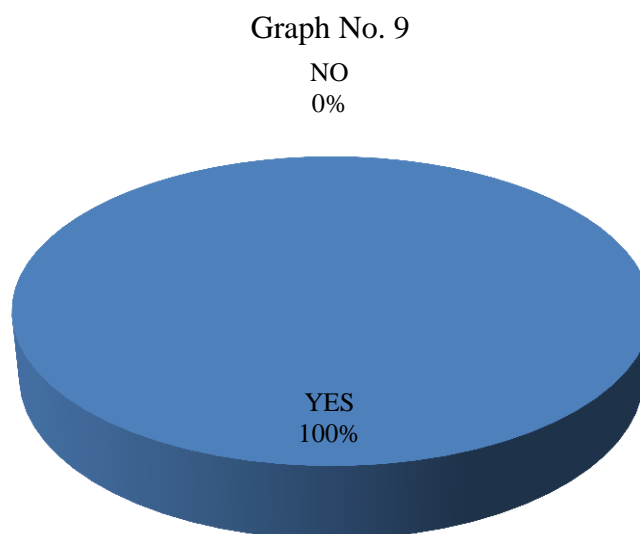
Graph No. 9

Author: Andrea Chávez & Tania Cumbal
Source: Teacher's Questionnaire

Graph No. 9 shows that 100% of the teachers consider their students' needs like age, personality, aptitude, motivation and learning styles to teach English successfully.

During the observation of the lessons it was seen that the material assigned to students was related to the age of the students, also teachers mention that the curriculum developed by the institution for each academic year has relation with the age and skills of the students.

Regarding personality, attitude, aptitude and motivation which are factors that directly affect the teaching learning process, it was seen that teachers change and vary the quantity and quality of the activities taking into consideration these aspects, and the characteristics of the group. Teachers who had more experience took advantage of the personality of the leaders of the groups in order to motivate other students to learn the language. Of course there are students who admit a lot of work and there are students that reject working in the language, and teachers were opened to find the way to help students.

Some of the students said they do not feel motivated to learn the language, they feel classes are bored, and this fact shows that, although teachers make a huge effort it is necessary to look for other options in which students join the group, so that they can find the subject easy, friendly and enjoy the teaching-learning process.

It was observed that the activities developed by teachers worked on the different skills of students such as listening, speaking, writing, reading, vocabulary, etc. Teachers carried out several activities with different resources for example, they worked with students repeating new vocabulary, they used the book, and also they use flash card and the board for explanations, etc. This variety of activities is important because not all students learn in the same way, also it is known that there are people who can learn a language easiest than others (Skehan, 1989), and if teachers keep in mind these aspects they will help students to improve the language, besides Woolfolk (2007), considered that the learning styles and multiple

intelligences are an option to help students when they have some learning problems, although "most of the educational psychologists are skeptical about the value of learning preferences".

Do teachers consider students' level to teach English successfully?

Graph No. 10
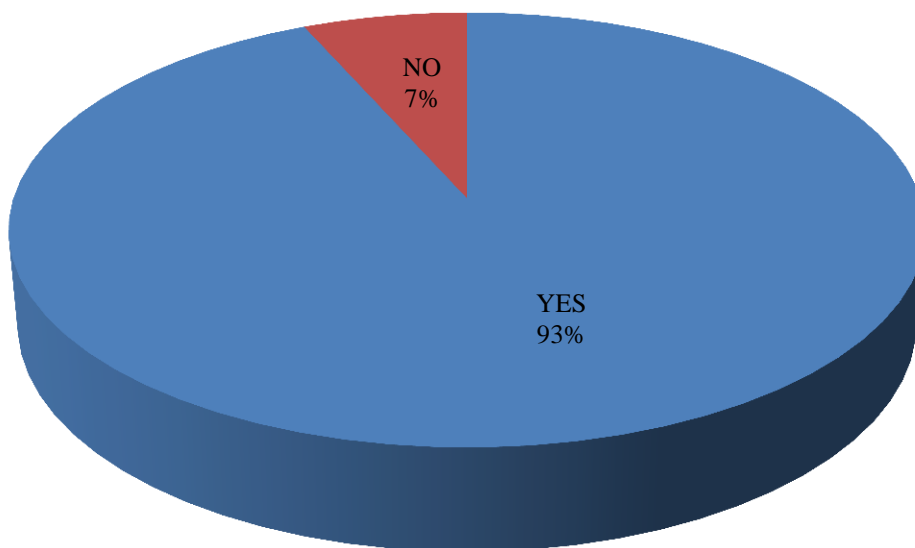
Author: Andrea Chávez & Tania Cumbal
Source: Teacher's Questionnaire

According to the results gotten from the questionnaire applied to teachers 93% of the teachers consider students' level to teach English successfully, and 7% of the teachers do not consider this aspect at the moment of teaching the language.

The perception of students is divided, some of them believe that the activities developed in classes are easy, which means that they need more challenging activities, and other students think that the activities are difficult, this fact shows that some students are in lowest level.

During the observations of the lessons it was seen that, there are big differences, in the English level, among students who share the same class, and this is the reason that causes the students' perception described before. Teachers are working with a diversity of groups in

terms of their language level, because students are not divided according to their English level, formal education is divided into levels according to the age of the students, and English is just one more subject that students need to pass in order to approve the scholar year, of course this fact complicates the English teaching learning process.

In spite of the information provided in the previous paragraph, it was seen that teachers try to carry out several activities in which they can involve and include students with low and high levels of the language.

Teachers mentioned that they try to help students with the lowest levels to improve the language, but also, they have to avoid that other students get bored of the class.

Working with groups of students with big differences in their English level is a hard work, but it is completely important and essential taking into account these differences, in order to determine students that will need help, and students that can support their classmates during the teaching-learning process.

Some of the visited high schools offer a service called "Recuperación Pedagógica" that is a system in which students who have a low academic performance attend extra classes in the afternoon, and work in their weaknesses in all the areas. This system support students with low language levels, because they can receive extra help in order to overcome their weaknesses.

Which is the level of the students?
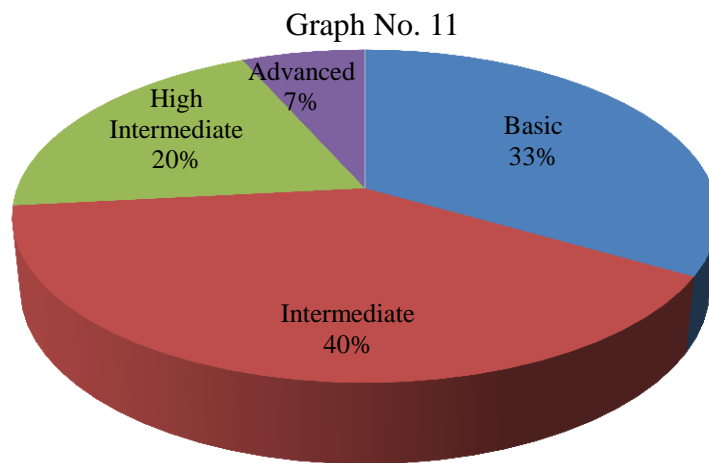
Graph No. 11

Graph No. 11 shows that, 40% of the teachers consider the English level of their students is intermediate, 33% basic level, 20% high intermediate level and, 7% advanced level.

As it was expressed in the last question, during the observations of the lessons it was seen that, there are big differences among the students' English level in a same class, and these differences cause troubles during the teaching learning process, a group of students said they feel bored with the activities that teachers carry out in a class, because they are too easy; while other group of students feel anxious because the activities are difficult.

It was possible to establish that most of the students are in basic and intermediate levels of English, and a short group of students are in high intermediate or advanced levels. It is important to mention that, some of these institutions asked, as a requirement to get a quota in the institution, that one of the parents speaks English in order to help the student during the learning process; and this situation allows teachers to get better results during the teaching learning process, because students have support in the language at home. However, this is not

a public policy and, many of the students do not have more access to the target language than the classes they receive at the classroom.

It is important to remember that, the goal of the Ministerio de Educacion is that students achieve a proficiency level of the language by the end of the secondary school, but many high schools are still far from achieving this goal, because there are a lot of deficiencies in the system.

Finally, it was observed that the differences in the English level of the students has to do with their socio-economic level, because students with highest socio-economic levels have access to a media in which they have direct contact with the target language, for example, many students have gone on vacations to the United States of America, Canada or other English speaking countries, and also their parents know the language and use it at home; on the other hand, students with lowest socio-economic levels do not have access to these benefits.

Factors concerning Classroom

How many students do you have in this class?

Graph No. 12
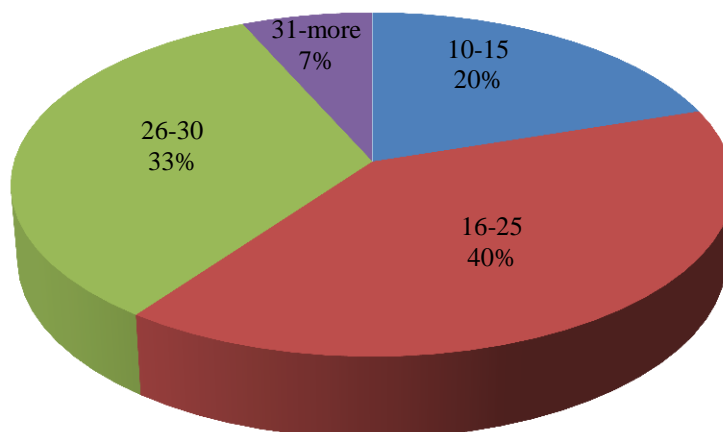
Author: Andrea Chávez & Tania Cumbal
Source: Teacher's Questionnaire

According to the information provided in the teachers' questionnaire, 40% of the groups of students have around 16-25 students per class, 20% of the groups of students have 10-15 students per class; on the other hand, 33% of the groups of students have 26-30 students; and, 7% 31-35.

The number of students per class has a close relation with the recommendation of the Secondary Section of the National Council of Teacher of English (1990) which says that, institutions should prepare their activities and plans resulting in groups of no more than 20 students, because working with bigger groups do not produce the expected results.

Based on the current Ecuador's educational law, high schools can have a maximum of 35 students per class, but it was observed that developing an English class with a group of more than 20 students demands a huge effort, and the teaching learning process is weakened.

The idea of the perfect number of students for a class has been discussed for a lot of researchers and teachers, but as we mentioned before the National Council of Teacher of English suggests groups of around 20 students, also many studies have found that large classes bring many disadvantages such as discomfort by the physical space, discipline problems, lack of individual attention, difficulty on evaluation (Wand &Xhang, 2011).

Although most of the students said they feel comfortable with the number of classmates they have, it was observed that teachers with smaller groups could develop more activities and interact with students, which directly benefits the teaching learning process. On the other hand, teachers who have big groups mentioned that, they do not have enough time in order to work in one to one activities, so that they prefer to carry out whole group activities or group activities.

Do teachers feel comfortable working with the number of students they have been assigned?

Graph No. 13
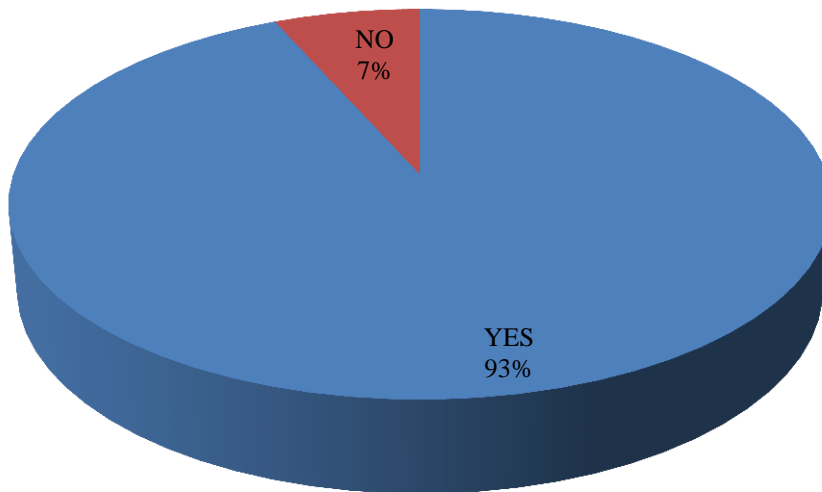
Author: Andrea Chávez & Tania Cumbal
Source: Teacher's Questionnaire

93% of the teachers said they feel comfortable working with the number of students they have in their classes, because most of the groups of students do not have more than 30 students per class; 7% of the teachers said they do not feel comfortable with the number of students they are working with because they have groups of more than 30 students.

In the same way, few students said they do not feel comfortable with the number of classmates they have, and this answer is related to the classes that have 25 to 35 pupils.

Although, teachers' answers and, students' answers show that they feel comfortable with the number of students and classmates they have in a classroom, the observations of the lessons allowed to identify that, teachers who worked with smaller groups gave students more opportunities to practice the language, and it was easier to work faster than teachers who work with big groups, in which there are a lot of problems regarding the physical space, airing, timing, aspects that limit working in one to one activities.

As a matter of fact, teachers who work with big groups make a huge effort in order to give enough time to each student to transmit them their knowledge.

In these circumstances teachers need to organize several group activities that allowed them to involve students with the language. Unluckily, it is not always possible to control all students, and the accomplishment of the goals to reinforce their knowledge.

It is true that managing big groups demands a big effort, but also big groups need to be seen as an opportunity to develop creativity. As it was mentioned according to the Ministerio de Educacion, groups of 35 students are allowed, so teachers have to manage this number of students. Although the English teaching process is different from other subjects, teachers need to learn how to deal with the number of students.

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

Graph No. 14
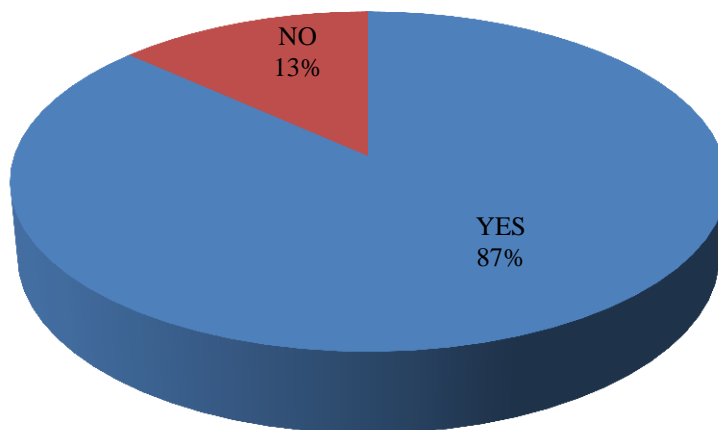
Author: Andrea Chávez & Tania Cumbal
Source: Teacher's Questionnaire

According to the information provided by teachers, 87% said they have enough space to work with their group of students, and 13% do not have enough space.

Also, most of the students feel comfortable with the space they have in the classroom to carry out their activities. Students from big groups feel uncomfortable with the space.

The observation of the lessons showed that most of the high schools have enough space. There is good airing, lighting, and students can walk around the class without any problem. Teachers can develop several activities to avoid students get bored, and students feel comfortable during the teaching-learning process.

On the other hand, few institutions did not have enough space for students, teachers could not walk around the classroom and they could not control the activities students carried out. Also, teachers who had big groups and small spaces could not develop activities that demand a lot of movement of students; it limits the possible activities teachers carried out with students.

According to Zerin (2009) in order to provide students with a pleasant atmosphere for learning, it is important taking into consideration some aspects like floor space, wall space, closet space, and seating arrangement, but there are some institutions that do not think about this, and physical students' needs are not covered.

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

Graph No. 15
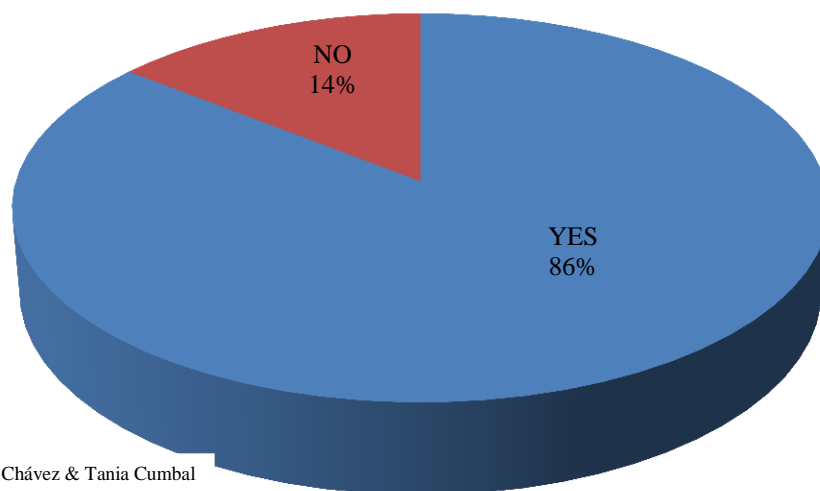
Author: Andrea Chávez & Tania Cumbal
Source: Teacher's Questionnaire

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The results gotten from the questionnaire show that 86% of the teachers said they arrange students' seats in relation to the activities planned for the lesson; and 14% of teachers do not arrange the seats for the lesson.

Teachers mentioned that, the most common way to arrange the seats is desk rows, which main characteristic is locating one seat behind the other.

Other teachers said that sometimes they arrange the seats in the horseshoe way, which is basically a U, with this seats arrangement, teachers and students can see each other at the same time.

Few students did not like the way in which teachers arrange the seats for the class.

The organization of the classrooms in one of the visited high schools was interesting, first of all this school use the American System, it means that students, depending on the subject, move around the high school in order to go to the classrooms, so the teacher have the freedom and time to organize the class as he needed.

In the same way, there were 3 institutions that have especial classrooms for the English class and for Computer Science. Teachers consider this fact as an important and beneficial aspect, because they can organize the seats depending on the activity they planned to carry out that day, and also they have all the needed material, and resources in the same place.

The other 3 institutions used the traditional method in which, teachers have to move around the high school to go to the classrooms, in this case teachers use the seats in the way they are located when they arrive at their classes because the time is not enough to prepare something different.

Students from the high school that uses the American system, and also students who moved to a different classroom during the English class, were more motivated to learn, and to participate in the activities proposed by the teachers. This aspect has relation with the concept

promote by Manitoba's Government (2012) that states that "the physical arrangement of the furniture, supplies, and resources in the classroom is a critical factor in promoting positive behavior".

Recent studies have showed that, teachers' view over the seating arrangement need a change; this should not be a way to control students, it should be a way to establish a good climate for the teaching-learning process (Manitoba's Government, 2012).

Unluckily, not all the teachers take advantage of these recommendations, and miss the opportunity to create different environments to improve the teaching- learning process.

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

Graph No. 16
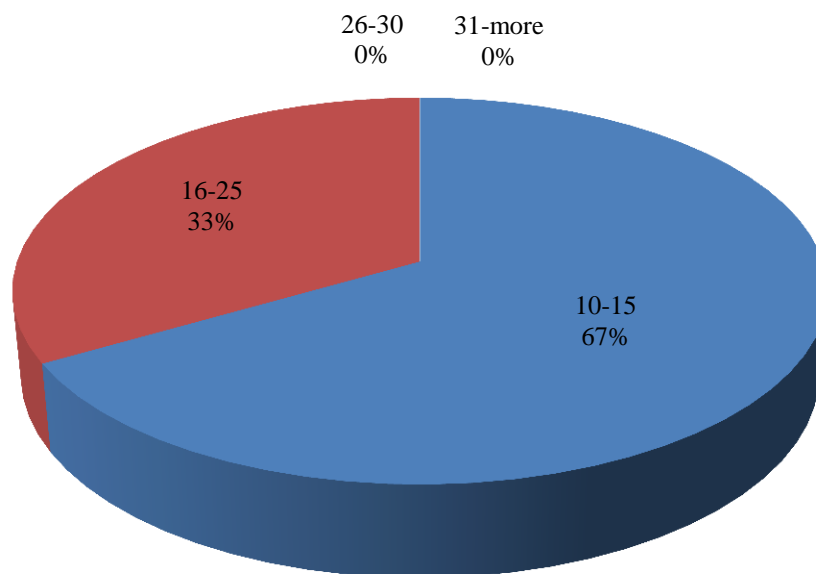
Author: Andrea Chávez & Tania Cumbal
Source: Teacher's Questionnaire

Graph No. 16 shows that 67% of the teachers think that, the appropriate number of students of a class is 10-15, and 33% of the teachers think that, the appropriate number is 16- 25 students.

In both cases, teachers agree on the idea that, a short number of students is the appropriate number in order to carry out a class in a best way. Students can have more contact with the target language when they are in small groups, also teachers can give more time to each of the students for one to one interaction.

Sometimes, classes with less than 10 students also cause some troubles because, there are not so much possibilities to work and interact with other people, and it becomes boring. On the other hand, although several studies have found that large classes bring many disadvantages such as discomfort, discipline problems, lack of individual attention, and problems on evaluation; there are some researches such as Ur and Hess who argue that large classes bring opportunities for creativity, Xu Zhichang notices that more students mean more ideas, and more options for co-student´s interaction (Wang & Zhang, 2011)

The observations of the lessons allowed establishing that, teachers who had less students in their classrooms developed more interactive and productive lessons, and students actively participated. Teachers who work with big groups had limited time to one to one interaction.

Do teachers use teaching resources?

Graph No. 17
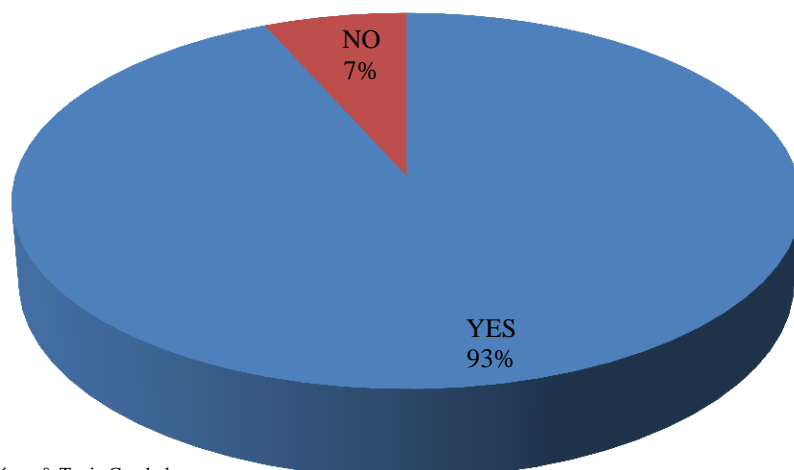
NO
7%

YES
93%

Author: Andrea Chávez & Tania Cumbal
Source: Teacher's Questionnaire

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The results gotten from the questionnaire show that, 93% of the teachers said they use teaching resources during their lessons; and 7% of the teachers said they do not use teaching resources.

However, according to information provided by students not all the teachers use teaching resources like TVs, CD or type recorders, computers, projectors, smart board and supplementary materials, during the lessons.

During the observation of the lessons it was seen that, several teachers use different teaching resources, one of the most common was the CD recorder which is useful to promote activities to improve listening skills; also teachers used flash cards, and objects from the classroom in order to teach new vocabulary. The board was another of the main resources that teachers used to write basic information, explain grammar, etc.

It is also important to mention that, some of the high schools had independent classrooms for English classes and, in these cases teachers had access to a lot of teaching resources like TVs, computers, and supplementary materials such as flash cards, puppets, videos, books, etc.

On the other hand, although teachers had access to teaching resources like TVs, computers, or labs, they did not take advantage of these resources; the lack of experience and background did not allow teachers being more creative to introduce interactive activities by using the available resources.

According to Wise (2003), the main objective of teaching resources is helping the teacher to accomplish the goal of a lesson, and some teachers do not take advantage of these materials, because they find easier to work only with a book or a notebook, than preparing additional material with other resources. All the material, a teacher uses in a class, can influence in a positive way students' performance, because they help the teacher to carry out more interesting classes.

Do teachers consider appropriate the resources they have in class?

Graph No. 18
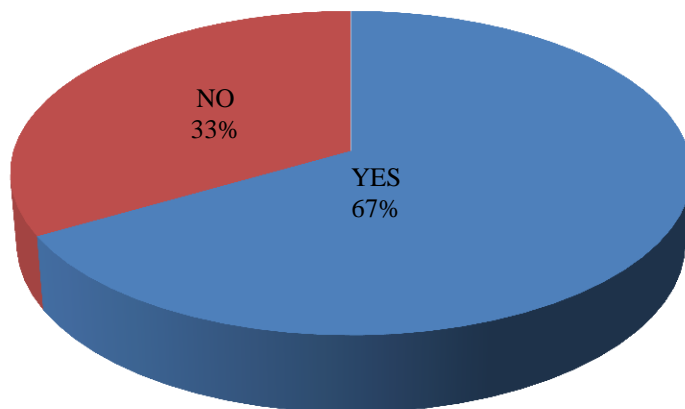
Graph No. 18 shows that 67% of the teachers said they feel that the teaching resources they have in class are appropriate and, 33% of the teachers think that the teaching resources they have in class are not appropriate.

Most of the teachers mentioned that, they would like to have smart boards and projectors for their lessons, because these resources are really interactive, and young students work in a better way with technology. Also, teachers said they would prefer to have the material only for their class, but in many cases, teachers have to share with other classes the projector, TV, computers, CD recorder, etc.; organizing a schedule to use the resources makes difficult to use them when they are needed.

Some high schools do not provide teachers with resources in good conditions. The CD recorders or the tape recorders, and also the tapes and CDs are damaged, so teachers cannot use them with students.

In a general way, all the additional resources that teachers can have in a class in order to develop the lesson are useful. There are teachers who do not know how to take advantage of the materials they have. Also, there are institutions that do not provide teachers with the resources and material they need, these institutions do not give a real importance to the resources that teachers need to perform a good work.

As a matter of fact, students, who participated in the lessons where teachers used additional resources to carry out their activities, were more interested and motivated during the class.

It is important to mention that, technological resources are not necessarily the best options when a teacher is looking for additional materials, teachers have the responsibility to look for resources that students can access, and specially options that help students to improve their academic level.

Factors Concerning Institutions

Does the institution review teachers' lesson plans?
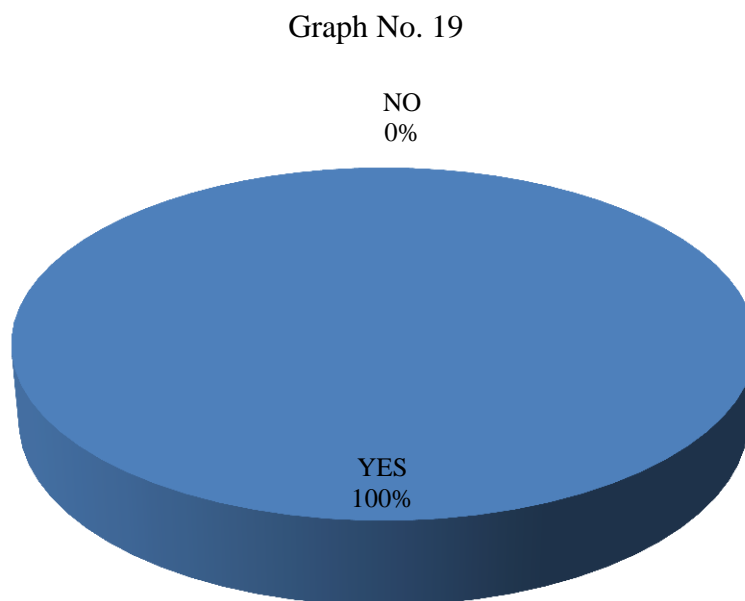
Graph No. 19

NO
0%

YES
100%

Author: Andrea Chávez & Tania Cumbal
Source: Teacher's Questionnaire

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The results gotten from the questionnaire applied to teachers show that 100% of the institution review teachers' lesson plans, once a week, or once a month.

This is a positive aspect because it makes teachers to organize their lessons, and, also to organize an annual academic plan.

Most of the teachers mentioned that, they do not like working on their lessons' plan, but they know that, this is a very important aspect of the teaching learning process. Planning the lesson is the only way to have a guide in order to manage the students and the learning environment.

Although, institutions ask teachers to prepare highly structured and detailed plans in order to fulfill the curricular requirements; these plans can rarely be carried out; a lot of unpredictable events occur during a class and teachers need to have a plan to deal with these troubles. Also the curricular plan is different from the lesson plan; the second one is less complex, it involves the activities that the teacher plans to carry out during a lesson and the time assigned to each activity.

It is important for teachers to keep in mind that, a strong rigidity in the plan will impair the teaching-learning process rather than helping it, the interaction between teachers and students needs to be flexible and funny.

On the other hand, some institutions provide teachers with an annual academic plan, but teachers, without a strong academic background, do not have the teaching tools to carry out the plan, and introduce new activities, etc.

The main goal of reviewing teachers' plans should be helping teachers to find their deficiencies and improve their classes. However, according to teachers in many cases, institutions ask for planning as a requirement to accomplish with the requirement of external institutions. English is not considered as an important subject, also people, who check on the

planning and evaluate teachers, do not have the knowledge of the language in order to get real

and important information.

Does the institution monitor teachers teaching?

Graph No. 20
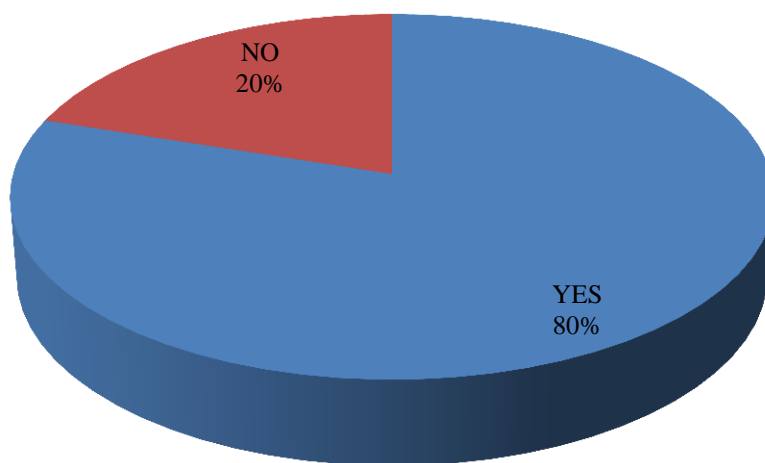
Author: Andrea Chávez & Tania Cumbal
Source: Teacher's Questionnaire

Graph No. 20 shows that 80% of the teachers said that their institution monitor their

teaching, and the 20% said that institution do not monitor their teaching.

According to the information provided by teachers, the authorities of the institutions

believe that, they have the responsibility to guarantee the efficiency of the education; and

monitoring the lessons is a way to assure the quality of education.

Also monitoring is a way to find problems that need to be solved, as it is known one of

the most important aspects to guarantee an excellent academic level in students is the

excellence of teachers (Tingley, 2011).

Monitoring and evaluating teachers' performance should not be used as a way to judge

teachers, but as a way to help them to improve their weaknesses.

Many aspects need to be considered when measuring the effectiveness of the teachers in the class, for example the planning development, the use of teaching resources, activities management, time management, monitoring and assessment of students, and discipline management.

However during the observation it was not possible to evaluate if all these aspects were taken into account during the monitoring process.

Conclusions

- Although there are many educators with excellent academic background to perform a great role as English teachers, there are a lot of people without any academic training working as teachers.

- Lesson plans developed by teachers without a solid academic background as educators, are bad structured and limited the teaching learning process.

- Students from big groups have a limited direct contact with the language, because there is not enough time for one to one interaction. This fact did not allow teachers to help students with their individual weaknesses.

- Students sharing the same classroom do not have the same English level, this fact complicates the teaching-learning process because students, who have advance levels, feel bored with some of the activities; and there is lack of attention or disciplinary problems.

- Most of the classrooms are organized taking into considerations aspects such as physical space and seating arrangement; however there are institutions that do not have the physical conditions to carry out classes with big groups, but they do it.

- Although all the institutions were private high schools, there were deep differences on the provision of teaching resources such as TVs, computers labs, projectors, etc.

Recommendations

- Authorities at high schools have to consider that, a person who speaks English is not necessarily a good English teacher. Teachers, who are hired to work in this area, must have an academic training that backs them up to perform this activity.

- Teachers need to constantly update their knowledge about the methods and approaches they can use during the teaching-learning process; in this way, they can carry out different activities to motivate students.

- Considering that the educational models, teaching methods, and new researches about education are constantly developed, educational institutions should promote programs for continuous training for their teachers.

- Aspects related to the physical space should be taken into consideration in order to determine the number of students in a classroom; it will contribute to guarantee the academic level of their service.

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ANEXXES

Anexo N° 6

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

OBSERVATION SHEET

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION:

DATE:

YEAR(desde 8vo básica a 3ro bachillerato)**:**

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

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

YES   ( )   NO   ( )

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

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

*Students' Level

Basic   ( )   Intermediate   ( )   High Intermediate ( )   Advanced   ( )

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

3. Which of the following methods are used?

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

4.   Which of the following activities are used?

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

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

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

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

Discipline	( )
Feedback	( )
Activities management	( )
Time management	( )

7.   How many students are there in the classroom?

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

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

YES   ( )   NO   ( )

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

YES   ( )   NO   ( )

NOTES: _____

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

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

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

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

65

TEACHER'S INTERVIEW

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

TEACHER'S LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY:

C2   ( )   C1   ( )   B2   ( )   B1   ( )   A2   ( )   A1   ( )

Anexo 7

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

STUDENT'S QUESTIONNAIRE

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION:

DATE:

YEAR:

1. ¿Te gusta aprender Inglés?

   YES   ( )   NO   ( )

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

   YES   ( )   NO   ( )

3. Consideras que las actividades realizadas en clase son:

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

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

   YES   ( )   NO   ( )
   ¿Por qué? _____
   _____
   _____

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

   YES   ( )   NO   ( )

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

   YES   ( )   NO   ( )

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

YES   ( )   NO   ( )

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

YES   ( )   NO   ( )

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

YES   ( )   NO   ( )

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

YES   ( )   NO   ( )

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

YES   ( )   NO   ( )

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

YES   ( )   NO   ( )

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

YES   ( )   NO   ( )

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

YES   ( )   NO   ( )

GRACIAS!!!!!

Anexo 8

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

TEACHER'S QUESTIONNAIRE

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION:

DATE:

YEAR:

1. Which level of education do you have?

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

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

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

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

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

4. Which is the level of your students?

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

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

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

Task-Based Language Teaching	( )
Cognitive Academic Language Learning	( )
Total Physical Response	( )
Whole Language Approach	( )
Grammar Translation Method	( )
Others _____	( )

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

YES   ( )   NO   ( )

Why? _____

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

YES   ( )   NO   ( )

Why? _____

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

YES   ( )   NO   ( )

Why? _____

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

YES   ( )   NO   ( )

10.   Do you plan your lessons?

YES   ( )   NO   ( )

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

YES   ( )   NO   ( )

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

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

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

YES ( )   NO ( )

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

YES ( )   NO ( )

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

YES ( )   NO ( )

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

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

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

YES ( )   NO ( )
Which ones? _____

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

YES ( )   NO ( )
Why? _____

19. Does the institution review your lesson plans?

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

20. Does the institution monitor your teaching?

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

Thanks for your cooperation!!!!!!