STUDENTS' VIEWS ABOUT INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES OF TRADITIONAL, PPP, AND TASK ORIENTED TEACHERS

PERSPECTIVAS DE LOS ESTUDIANTES SOBRE LAS PRÁCTICAS DOCENTES DE INSTRUCCIÓN TRADICIONAL, DE PRESENTACIÓN–PRÁCTICA-PRODUCCIÓN Y DE MÉTODOS BASADOS EN EL APRENDIZAJE POR TAREAS

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*This study intends to explore student beliefs regarding the usefulness of
their teachers' instructional practices and compare them with a*

categorization of their teachers' profiles. A questionnaire with 4 close questions and 3 open questions including topics such as pair and group work, students' interest, usefulness of the material and content, the best and least useful aspects of the class and suggestions to improve it was administered to 481 high school students of a southern city of Ecuador; also 18 high school teachers were observed delivering one lesson. Using the information gathered from students' questionnaires, a 481 data matrix was constructed relating it to the 18 teachers' profiles. In addition, a descriptive analysis was carried out and a comparison between the observers' and the students' criteria for the first four closed questions was conducted. For the open questions, the answers were categorized according to the usefulness of three elements: grammar, content, and methodology. Results showed that students favored modern EFL pedagogy. Task Based Learning Teaching (TBLT) and Presentation-Practice-Production (PPP) methods were considered as the most accepted methodologies; notwithstanding, traditional methodology was considered as the least effective one. A model was constructed which allowed us to point out the relevance of pair work, content, and methodology, so if these factors occur in teacher practices, it can be inferred that a teacher is closer to a TBLT profile.

Key words: *students' perspectives, instructional practices, traditional teacher, PPP, TBLT*

Este estudio explora las creencias de los estudiantes con respecto a la utilidad de las prácticas docentes de sus profesores y las compara con una categorización de los perfiles de sus maestros. Un cuestionario con 4 preguntas cerradas y 3 abiertas incluyendo tópicos como trabajo en parejas y en grupos, el interés de los estudiantes, la utilidad del material y contenido, los más y menos útiles aspectos de la clase y sugerencias para mejorarla, fue administrado a 481 estudiantes de una ciudad del sur del Ecuador; de igual manera, 18 profesores de colegios públicos fueron observados enseñando una lección. Con la información de los cuestionarios, una matriz de 481 datos fue elaborada y relacionada con los perfiles de los 18 docentes. Además, se realizó un análisis descriptivo y una comparación entre los criterios de los observadores y de los estudiantes para las primeras 4 preguntas cerradas. Las respuestas de las preguntas abiertas fueron categorizadas según la utilidad de tres aspectos: gramática, contenido, y metodología. Los resultados muestran que los estudiantes

favorecen la pedagogía moderna del inglés como lengua extranjera. El aprendizaje basado en tareas (ABT) y el método de Presentación-Práctica-Producción (PPP) fueron las más aceptadas metodologías, mientras que la tradicional fue considerada como la menos efectiva. Un modelo construido en este estudio permitió destacar la relevancia del trabajo en parejas, el contenido y la metodología, determinando que, si estos aspectos ocurren en las prácticas docentes, se infiere que el profesor está cerca a circunscribirse en un perfil perteneciente al ABT.

Palabras clave: *perspectivas de los estudiantes, prácticas docentes, profesor tradicional, PPP, ABT*

1. Introduction

A study reported that English teachers of a southern Ecuadorian city used traditional strategies which, among other facts, did not provide students with opportunities for interaction in the target language (Calle, Calle, Argudo, Moscoso, Smith & Cabrera, 2012). When analyzing current language teaching practices, it is necessary to state the most common methodologies employed in foreign language contexts, such as Ecuador in order to analyze later in this document how students view these practices.

It is well-known that Audiolingualism is a language teaching approach based on linguistic aspects or structures (Richards & Rodgers, 2006). In fact, these authors, citing Fries, claim that this approach focuses on basic language patterns and the teaching of pronunciation is emphasized by means of mechanical oral drills. In addition, this is a teacher-dominant method having the teacher a central and active role. "The teacher models the target language, controls the direction and pace of learning and corrects the learner's performance" (Richards & Rodgers, 2006, p. 62).

The presentation, practice and production (PPP) approach follows an established procedure and goes beyond the emphasis on grammar promoted by Audiolingualism. First, the teacher presents the part or parts of the target language to the student. Then, students practice these parts using different techniques. In the end, students produce what they have learned using their own examples (Carless, 2009).

Herazo, Jérez, and Lorduy Arellano (2009) state that with the PPP approach "communication usually plays a display, evaluative function" (p. 120). In other words, the free production stage in PPP is not usually an authentic communicative event, "it is conceived as the moment when learners have to show the forms, vocabulary or functions they have learned in the previous two stages" (p. 120).

In spite of this limitation, the PPP approach has been popular among language teachers since 1960s (Harmer, 2007). However, authors such as Lewis (1996) and Willis (1996) criticized it. This approach considers "language learning [as] a developmental process enhancing communication and social interaction rather than a product internalized by practicing language items" (Hismanoglu & Hismanoglu, 2011, p. 47). Task-based language teaching, on the other hand, allows "learners [to] master the target language more powerfully when being exposed to meaningful task-based activities in a natural way" (Hismanoglu & Hismanoglu, 2011, p.47).

According to Richards and Rodgers (2006), "a task is an activity or a goal that is carried out using language" (p. 224). Ellis also points out the usefulness of pedagogical tasks which aim to achieve a goal by means of communicative and pragmatic language use (as cited in Van den Branden, 2006). Nevertheless, tasks invite the learner to act as a language user, and not as a language learner since "task-based language teaching does not exclude a focus on form" (Van den Branden, 2006, p.9). Narrowing down these principles to more specific language teaching techniques carried out in the classroom, Brown's taxonomy can be stated.

According to Brown's taxonomy of language teaching techniques (Brown, 2007), they move from a manipulative (controlled technique) to a communicative dimension (less controlled, free). When the technique is manipulative, it is controlled by the teacher with a predicted response from students. For instance, drilling, dictation, and reading aloud are typically controlled.

Talking about a communicative dimension, the teacher has less control and students interact in a freer and spontaneous form; therefore, learners' answers have an open-ended nature. Story-telling, brainstorming, role-plays, and information gaps, among others, are examples of such techniques (Brown, 2007).

Because the techniques occurred in a control continuum and since some of them overlap, it becomes difficult to classify them in a precise way. This taxonomy, says Brown (2007), helps us raise awareness of the different types of techniques and how they vary from controlled to free.

It is well known that pair work and group work are classroom management techniques used to carry out some of the aforementioned activities. For example, in information gap activities, pair work is employed, and in jigsaw activities, group work is used.

These techniques can be used within the different methodologies: Audiolingual, PPP, and TBLT. These have been explored by focusing on the different language practices in the world. In fact, in different contexts PPP and TBLT have been studied for different reasons, such as effectiveness and preferences over these two methods (Carless, 2009; Sato, 2010; Yen Phuong, Van den Branden, Van Steendam, & Sercu, 2015). Carless (2009) claims that even though PPP has been used for a long time, it has not been studied very much. In Cuenca, Ecuador, in fact, where traditional teaching is still employed (Calle, et al., 2012), research addressing teachers who use audiolingualism, PPP, and TBLT is necessary. Even more, students' ideas about these practices should be investigated, as is stated in the next section.

1.1. Students' Perceptions

Several studies regarding beliefs about language learning and teaching have been carried out (Barcelos, 2015; Hawkey, 2006). Undoubtedly, teachers and learners are main actors in the classroom. However, teacher beliefs or teacher cognition has been an area studied for a longer time than learner beliefs (Barcelos, 2015). Among several advantages, Barcelos states that focusing on learner beliefs aids in understanding conflicts that may arise between teachers and students regarding cognitive issues as well as "any possible resistance to [or acceptance of] new methodologies" (Shamin as cited in Barcelos, 2015, p.304). Thus, by knowing these factors language teaching and learning can be approached in a more effective way.

Within foreign language reforms of a country, many elements such as teacher and the students are involved in its implementation. Savignon and Wang (2003) claim that many studies deal with "teachers' perceptions

when implementing [Communicative Language Teaching] CLT" (p.1). However, very few researchers have focused on students' attitudes and perceptions towards their teachers' practices, especially towards communicative practices (Savignon & Wang, 2003). There have been, though many studies that look at learners' perceptions regarding learning in general, but few studies focus on students' beliefs regarding "instructional practices in particular" (Savignon & Wang, 2003, p.225). This study intends to explore instructional practices through learner lens in an Ecuadorian context.

2. Literature Review

Two aspects will be addressed in this section: important studies regarding effectiveness of modes of class organization and research on students' perceptions.

Among the studies reporting about small group work, Long, Adams and Castanos' research (as cited by Nunan, 1999) showed that small group tasks generated more quantity of talk than teacher-fronted classes. Therefore, acquisition is developed much more with small group tasks. In the same line, Porter (as cited by Nunan, 1999) found that English students spoke with their peers more than with native speakers. Also, students' errors were not learned as it was thought (Nunan 1999). Regardless of language acquisition, which is not addressed here, group work seems to be more effective than teacher-fronted activities.

Focusing on learners' perceptions, many authors (see Bailey, 2017; Barcelos, 2015; Horwitz, 1985; Leffa, 1991; Yang, 1992) point out the importance of studying learners' beliefs regarding learning a second language (L2). In fact, Bailey (2017) and Barcelos, (2000) classify these studies in three types: The normative, the contextual and metaphor analysis also called metacognitive approach (Abdi & Asadi, 2015).

Normative studies describe quantitatively traits and causal relationships (Bailey, 2017) by means of surveys and questionnaires (Barcelos, 2000). The most known instrument is the Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory (BALLI) developed by Horwitz (1985).

In fact, there are many studies (see Horwitz, 1985, 1987, 1999; Gómez Paniagua, 2017) which have used this inventory (Barcelos, 2000) in order to address different areas, such as "language aptitude, language hierarchy and repetition" (Bailey, 2017, p. 504) in the case of Horwitz' study of 1985. This first type of study is rather descriptive in nature. They deal with students' perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs in very general terms, but results are not embedded in students' context (Barcelos, 2000; Wesely, 2012). In addition, students' beliefs are considered static (Abdi & Asadi, 2015) within this approach. A study conducted by Sihong (2007) which could be part of normative studies focused on students' needs when learning EFL since it used a questionnaire, encompassed, among others, three categories (linguistic, affective, and cognitive). Although this study was used for curriculum planning, it also focused on students' viewpoints regarding their needs in language learning. Contextual studies examine students' beliefs through "ethnography, narratives and metaphors" (Barcelos, 2000, p. 44) as well as content analysis (Bailey, 2017). Therefore, data collection involves observations (Abdi & Asadi, 2015). Beliefs are not static, but rather dynamic, constructed in the interaction of a specific social environment (Abdi & Asadi, 2015). Authors employ an interpretative approach when analyzing its results (Abdi & Asadi, 2015). These studies involve research that aims to determine whether context influences learner's perceptions (Wesely, 2012). However, since usually small samples are used, results cannot be generalized (Abdi & Asadi, 2015; Bailey, 2017).

Bigger samples have been also used within the contextual studies (see Le Gal & I Chou, 2015). Based on Yorio`s study, which administered a "questionnaire survey" to 711 students, Christison and Krahnke (1986, p.63) interviewed 80 ESL international students. As known interviews provide richer information, especially in issues regarding "beliefs and opinion" (Christison & Krahnke, 1986, p. 71).

Finally, the metacognitive approach examines students' perceptions by "identifying words, expressions, and dialogic descriptions" (Bailey, 2017, p. 505) as well as "students' self-reports and interviews" (Barcelos, 2000, p. 44). As can be seen, the approach of these studies differs (nomothenic or emic) and also the data collection tools as well as the manner of analysis. The contextual and the metacognitive studies go

beyond a descriptive analysis which allows us to see a deeper picture of the phenomenon.

Several studies on perceptions immersed in the aforementioned categories have been conducted. They have been carried out in different contexts and have considered either perspectives of students, teachers or both (see Alimorad & Tajgozari, 2016; Babai Shishavan & Sadeghi, 2009; Hawkey, 2006; McBride, 2009; Moradi & Sabeti, 2014; Ortega & Madrid, 2009; Park & Lee, 2006). The issues addressed in these investigations deal with characteristics of good teachers, preferences for teaching strategies, and employment of different classroom activities.

A study conducted in Kuwait by Taqi, Al-Nouh, and Akbar (2014) applied a questionnaire to 150 students and their results matched the current literature regarding important characteristics of EFL teachers, such as "language proficiency, educational awareness, teaching and communicative skills, and social and emotional skills" (p. 130). Their findings also showed that more advanced students considered language proficiency as a significant trait, while lower students perceived social and emotional skills as important. In a Korean study, authors found that high school students thought that knowledge of pedagogy was the most important trait in English teachers. Their teachers, on the other hand, considered language proficiency as the main one (Park & Lee, 2006). In a different study in Iran, findings showed a combination of these results. Learners thought that teacher's personality as well as their behavior in class were the most important characteristics, whereas teachers considered language proficiency, knowledge of pedagogy, and a fine character as features of effective teachers (Babai Shishavan & Sadeghi, 2009).

The study of Alimorad and Tajgozari (2016) showed mismatches between learners' and teachers' preferences. They compared perspectives of Iranian high school teachers and students on effective characteristics of teachers. Students favored communicative language activities whereas "teachers preferred a more traditional approach" (Alimorad & Tajgozari, 2016, p. 8). A Spanish study by Ortega and Madrid (2009) found that students highly valued oral production, so they thought that practicing with their teachers and classmates was important in the English classroom. Also, students favored guided and controlled activities when practicing

speaking. Likewise, activities which involve role-plays were valued by students. This could mean that TBLT is preferred. Moreover, a Taiwanese study found that students favored Task based learning activities (Le Gal & I-Chou, 2015) whereas a Chilean one claimed that learners preferred an equal combination of form focused and meaning-focused activities (McBride, 2009). Studies from Colombia also follow the same line. Students preferred more dynamic activities and rejected traditional ones (Monroy & Bolívar, 2012; Villarreal Suarez, Muñoz Taborda, & Perdomo Santacruz, 2016). Finally, these traits are also presented in a rural area of Ecuador (Ortega-Auquilla & Minchala-Buri, 2019).

An Italian investigation found mismatches between teachers' and students' perceptions regarding the frequency of different types of activities used in the classroom. From 13 different activities employed, grammar for students was more prominent than teachers thought. Students rated it in the fifth place, while teachers placed it in the eleventh spot. This seems to happen because teachers working in a more communicative context thought that grammar should be taught less explicitly. Students, being used to have grammar as a main component of the class, still perceived its importance. Also, teachers ranked pair work in the second place, whereas students assigned it eight place. In spite of their lesson plans and video recorded observations, which showed 22 instances of pair work, it seemed that students perceived some of them as teacher fronted activities for different reasons (they were too brief, interruption occurred, students did not respond during pair work) (Hawkey, 2006).

The current study complements the one about teacher's perceptions on TBLT by Calle Calle, Calle Calle, Heras Urgilés, and León Vélez (2017). It includes students' perceptions regarding types of activities used in the observed classes as well as their preferences. In the previous study of 2017, researchers, based on classroom observations, lesson plans, and interviews, classified English teachers within three different teaching approaches (traditional, PPP and Task-based LT). Therefore, a deeper picture of the teaching phenomenon can be drawn with the present research which considers students' perceptions.

It was noticed that most of the teachers used communicative techniques such as controlled dialogue, matching, problem solving, onion ring, and mind map. Also, from the observed sample of teachers, one third

of them employed TBLT principles; the same amount used a Presentation-Practice-Production sequence, and since the rest did not fulfill any of the aforementioned principles, we could categorize them as traditional teachers. Some of the teachers who employed a PPP approach perceived that they used a TBLT methodology (Calle Calle et al., 2017).

As Savignon and Wang (2003) stated, few studies have focused on learners' perceptions about their teachers' specific practices in Communicative Language Teaching. Focusing on a specific context such as the Ecuadorian one, English as a Foreign Language in secondary level is under a new reform that follows this approach. In order to have sound information of how the implementation is being perceived by students, it is necessary to look at what learners think regarding their language teachers' instructional practices. Also, a mixture of normative and contextual study is needed since no other Ecuadorian investigation has addressed these issues. It is important, first, to have a general idea of what students think using closed questions and also, without any type of restrictions based on choice questions, open questions can provide us with richer information.

3. Method

For this study, it was important to take advantage of the predictive potential of qualitative research results in the statistic investigation (Lilford & Braunholtz, 2003) on students' perceptions. The current study adopted the method proposed by Srnka and Koeszegi (2007) in order to analyze systematically qualitative material. This procedure starts collecting interview material, then transcribes the material; after that, it classifies patterns using codes, integrates relevant theory into categories, and, finally, builds data with nominal variables. This data allowed us to answer the following research questions:

- What are students' perceptions and preferences regarding teachers' instructional practices in terms of usefulness?

- How are students' perceptions and preferences related to the traditional, PPP, and TBLT teachers' profile?

3.1. Participants

The present study was carried out in 18 public schools of a southern city in Ecuador. It has two information units: 18 teachers and 481 students, which add up to a total of 499 participants. Both groups will be considered units of analysis in the present research.

After fulfilling the administrative permission and having the acceptance of voluntary participation of eighteen English teachers, they were observed to see the impact of an in-service course these instructors had taken few years ago (Calle Calle et al., 2017).They were also interviewed after their classes to clarify any necessary practice implemented in the classroom. Immediately after the class observations; that is, when the classes were over, an anonymous questionnaire was administered to the students in order to gather information regarding their perceptions towards their teachers' practices.

Most of the teachers (77.78%) have a bachelor's degree in education in the English Language Major. Others have studied English as a second language. Three teachers have a master's degree in pedagogy (16.68%); whereas one teacher is qualified in the commercial area (5.56%). With the exception of 3 male teachers, all others are women (83.33%). The average age of teachers is 46.59 years old (S.D. 6.89), with a minimum age of 31 and a maximum age of 54 years old.

Four hundred eighty-one high school students between 12 and 18 years old (M 15.31 SD 2.19) answered a questionnaire. Most of the students are studying in the morning shift (57.2%), followed by the afternoon shift pupils (37.2%), with few students studying in the evening (5.6%). Most students (72.3%) come from the urban area and the difference from the rural area.

3.2. Materials and Procedure

Open-ended questions were employed to see a wide range of students' opinions regarding usefulness of different aspects of their English classes. Also, observations helped us to establish instructors' teaching styles. These ideas were grouped in different categories that were transformed into

variables. Next, the procedure used to obtain information from students and teachers is described.

In order to get to know student's opinions, high school pupils (n=481) filled out a questionnaire encompassing seven points: 1) pair work interaction, group work interaction, and teacher fronted classroom; 2) students' interest in the class; 3) usefulness of the material; 4) usefulness of the content; 5) the best useful aspect of the class, 6) the least useful aspect of the class; and 7) suggestions to improve the class. The first four questions were closed (0 as not useful or nothing, 1 as useful or little, and 2 as very useful or a lot) and the three last ones were open-ended questions. The purpose of these three qualitative questions was to verify possible omitted information from the closed questions.

All of the teachers (n=18) took an in-service course in Task Based Learning and Teaching (TBLT) during the year 2010. After four years of this in-service course, they were observed teaching a one hour class. Each class was registered in two observation forms by two observers. These instruments included: 1) a checklist with a list of communicative strategies, and 2) an open observation to register in detail instructional activities within the stages of a TBLT lesson (pre-task, task, post-task and an outcome) as well as columns to register type of tasks, type of interaction, skills developed, and time. Teachers were also interviewed after their class to clarify any confusing part of the lesson in order to know the procedure implemented in a clear way, especially the sections that dealt with the use of communicative strategies as well as the TBLT procedure class. Finally, the observers analyzed the data recorded in the observation forms considering the following principles stated by Skehan (as cited in Van den Branden, 2006) regarding TBLT: a) The task was meaningful; b) There was "a communication problem to solve; c) There [was] some […] relationship to comparable real-world activities; d) Task completion ha[d] some priority; e) The assessment of the task [was] in terms of outcome" (p.8.). Each principle was rated according to the following Likert scale: Five=excellent, four= very good, three=good, two=fair, and one=poor. The purpose of this process was to identify the type of teachers after 4 years of concluding the in-service course. Teachers were categorized in three groups according to the mode they obtained in the Likert scale: traditional teacher, was located in 1 and/or 2 points; a teacher who used the process of presentation, practice and production routine, was placed in 3 points; and

the teacher who used Task- Based Language Teaching style, was located in 4 and/or 5 points.

3.3. Analysis

The following are the results of the described tools. A 481 data matrix was constructed with information of students' questionnaires and teacher's profile classification. The purpose was to confirm the observers' findings in classes through the opinion of the students in the questionnaire. So, the results were obtained using the software SPSS 24 (Field, 2017). The three types of teachers categorized by the observers were compared with the students' perceptions. Descriptive values were generated as the mean, the standard deviation (S.D.) and the standard error (S.E.) of the ordinal scale 0 to 2; but in addition, a comparison was conducted using the one-way ANOVA (F) test for the bivariate relationships between the observers' criteria and the students' criteria for the first four closed questions. For the open questions, the answers were categorized according to the usefulness of three elements: grammar, content, and methodology; these results were considered as dummy variables (0 and 1) and were organized as least useful (0) and as useful (1); in analysis of these variables, the one-way ANOVA (F) test was also used. In both cases of one-way ANOVA (F), eta squared was used to show the effect size of the significant differences. In addition, the Pearson Correlation test was employed, as well as a multiple linear regression model to establish the explanatory level of the students' criteria in comparison to the researchers' criteria regarding the teacher profile classification (traditional, PPP, and TBLT types).

4. Results

Table 1 shows a significant difference between Traditional, PPP, and Task based teacher about the frequency of pair work use ($F(2, 478)=78.984$, $p=0.000$, eta squared$= 0.248$, large effect size). Findings showed that teachers who employed TBLT made use of pair work in a higher frequency. PPP teachers followed this tendency in a lesser degree. A Pos Hoc test revealed that these two teachers were the same regarding the use of pair work. They used it in a much higher frequency than the traditional teachers, who only utilized it "sometimes".

With regards to the use of group work, it was used more frequently by PPP teachers, followed by TBLT teachers, and traditional teachers in that order (F(2, 478)=8.024, p=0.000, eta squared= 0.032, small effect size). However, it is important to mention that group work was employed less than pair work since, in general terms, the data showed that teachers used group work 'sometimes'. TBLT style teachers did not differ from the other two, but the PPP teacher and the traditional one showed significant differences between them.

There were no significant differences regarding teacher-fronted activities among these three types of teachers (F(2, 478)=0.956, p=0.385).

Students rated similarly the interest raised by teachers in their English class. Ordering the data, though, it was found that TBLT teachers apparently generated more interest (F(2, 478)=1.910, p=0.149).

Almost no material resources were employed in the classroom. In fact, the average was 0.30 for each type of teacher. However, there are differences among these teachers (F(2, 478)=3.167, p=0.043, eta squared= 0.013, small effect size). For the students, the PPP instructor employed the most useful resources, whereas the TBLT teacher used the least useful ones. In other words, these two teachers were placed in opposite sides regarding the use of material. The traditional teacher was placed in the middle of the two previous teachers. The students considered that the contents addressed by these three types of teachers were useful in a similar manner (F(2, 478)=1.360, p=0.258).

From the three open questions about the usefulness of the class, the answers were classified into three groups according to patterns which allowed us to codify them as follows: grammar, contents, and best methodology (See Table 2). Grammar involved mainly the structural patterns of sentences and tenses. Content, on the other hand, referred to the topics discussed in class, such as different types of texts, listening passages, and verbal interaction. Finally, methodology dealt with aspects related to classroom management (routines, procedures, instructions, types of interaction, and teaching techniques and activities).

Focusing on the teaching of grammar, the traditional teacher is more useful according to the students (F(2, 478)=13.539, p=0.000, eta squared= 0.013, small effect size).

		N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error	F
Student perceptions regarding employment of pair work	Traditional	134	0.74	0.78	0.07	78.984***
	P.P.P.	183	1.53	0.62	0.05	
	Task based	164	1.62	0.58	0.05	
	Total	481	1.34	0.76	0.03	
Student perceptions regarding employment of group work	Traditional	134	1.02	0.74	0.06	8.024***
	P.P.P.	183	1.36	0.72	0.05	
	Task based	164	1.18	0.79	0.06	
	Total	481	1.20	0.76	0.03	
Student perceptions regarding teacher-fronted activities.	Traditional	134	1.85	0.45	0.04	0.956
	P.P.P.	183	1.77	0.59	0.04	
	Task based	164	1.79	0.48	0.04	
	Total	481	1.80	0.52	0.02	
Teacher's encouragement regarding student's interest in the subject	Traditional	134	1.88	0.33	0.03	1.910
	P.P.P.	183	1.81	0.47	0.03	
	Task based	164	1.89	0.35	0.03	
	Total	481	1.86	0.39	0.02	
Students' ranking on the usefulness of materials	Traditional	134	0.28	0.45	0.04	3.167*
	P.P.P.	183	0.36	0.48	0.04	
	Task based	164	0.24	0.44	0.03	
	Total	481	0.30	0.46	0.02	
Students' ranking on the usefulness of contents	Traditional	134	0.34	0.47	0.04	1.374
	P.P.P.	182	0.31	0.47	0.04	
	Task based	164	0.25	0.43	0.03	
	Total	480	0.30	0.46	0.02	

Note: 0= not useful or nothing, 1= useful or little, and 2= very useful or a lot.
*=p<0.05; **=p<0.01, ***=p<0.001

Table 1. Types of language teaching techniques according to students' perceptions in closed questions

Regarding the contents, students felt that the TBLT teacher as well as the PPP one offered the most useful contents ($F_{(2, 478)}=18.009$, $p=0.000$, eta squared= 0.070, medium effect size); in consequence, they rated the contents delivered by the traditional teacher as the least useful (Notice that in Table 1 there were no meaningful differences in the closed questions). In fact, answering the open questions, students mentioned their preferences for more entertaining content, provoking more active responses.

Finally, pupils deemed TBLT as the most useful methodology; this did not involve significant differences with the PPP methodology ($F_{(2, 478)}=7.235$, $p=0.001$, eta squared= 0.029, small effect size). In fact, the PPP teacher was between the TBLT and the traditional one; indeed, students suggested that the traditional teachers improve their methodology.

		N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error	F
Grammar	Traditional	134	0.40	0.49	0.04	13.539***
	P.P.P.	183	0.19	0.39	0.03	
	Task based	164	0.18	0.38	0.03	
	Total	481	0.24	0.43	0.02	
Content	Traditional	134	0.47	0.22	0.02	18.009***
	P.P.P.	183	0.61	0.23	0.02	
	Task based	164	0.60	0.22	0.02	
	Total	481	0.57	0.23	0.01	
Methodology	Traditional	134	0.46	0.30	0.03	7.235**
	P.P.P.	183	0.52	0.30	0.02	
	Task based	164	0.60	0.32	0.02	
	Total	481	0.53	0.31	0.01	
Note: 0 as not useful and 1 as useful (dummy variable). *=$p<0.05$; **=$p<.01$, ***=$p<.001$						

Table 2. *Types of language teaching techniques according to students' preferences in open-ended questions*

Table 3 shows the level of correlation between the variables that presented the greatest differences with respect to the type of teacher in the Tables 1 and 2 (**=p<0.01 and ***=p<0.001). In this way, there is an average correlation of the type of teacher with pair work of .445; a very low inverse correlation with grammar of -.199; a low correlation with the content taught by the teacher of .210; as well as a very low correlation with the methodology used by the teacher of .171. However, no significant correlation of the type of teacher with group work was found.

	Teacher type a	Pair Work	Group Work	Grammar	Content	Method-ology
Teacher type [a]	1	0.445***	0.069	-0.199***	0.210***	0.171***
Pair Work		1	0.277***	-0.237***	0.157**	0.119**
Group Work			1	-0.101*	0.077	0.039
Grammar				1	-0.221***	-0.252***
Content					1	-0.157***
Method-ology						1
a Understand the type of teacher according to the following scale of values: traditional = 1, PPP = 2 and TBLT = 3. *=p<0.05; **=p<0.01, ***=p<0.001						

Table 3. Pearson correlation among variables with greater differences regarding perceptions obtained in closed questions and preferences in open-ended questions

Considering the correlations of the Teacher type in Table 3 (excluding only the variable of group work), a multiple linear regression model was formulated. It indicated the explanatory power of the type of teacher based on the students' opinions. The adjusted R-squared obtained a .228 (Standard error of estimate .69), which is considered an acceptable model ($F_{(4, 476)}= 37.77$, p=0.000).

Table 4 shows that the variable *grammar* does not help explain the type of teacher, but the other variables do. Pair work, content, and

methodology help to explain the type of teacher. This indicates that the type of teacher who uses Task-Based Learning, usually employs pair work. Also, this type of teacher uses content that related to students' interest. The TBLT teacher employs a methodology which is attractive to students as well.

	Non-standardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	**Beta**	**Beta**		
(Constant)	1.028	0.129		7.984	0.000
Pair work	0.410	0.043	0.395	9.502	0.000
Grammar	-0.063	0.080	-0.034	-0.788	0.431
Content	0.549	0.143	0.163	3.853	0.000
Methodology	0.356	0.107	0.141	3.320	0.001

Table 4. Multiple Linear Regression to explain student's perceptions and preferences in the variable Teacher type

Based on table 4, it can be determined that each time that pair work is used, the type of teacher uses the task-based learning by 0.41 points. When teachers use content interesting to students, they get closer to a TBLT teacher by 0.55 points; and, when methodology pleasant to the student is used, they approach a TBLT profile by 0.36. In other words, we can infer that our TBLT teachers' profile is useful for students in terms of content, methodology, and pair work interaction.

5. Discussion

The teachers' traits stated by learners in this study were in accordance with the classification claimed by Calle et al (2017) (traditional, PPP, TBLT). For instance, students found classes that did not incorporate pair work to be the least useful. This first characteristic matches the traditional style, which was also the least favored methodology. Another factor was the employment of grammar. It was mainly carried out by this type of teacher as well. On the other hand, *grammar*, was not useful for students who had

PPP and TBLT instructors. It seems that this type of teacher did not consider grammar as important as the traditional ones did. Students' ideas with respect to content also showed that the contents delivered by the traditional teachers were not as well favored as the ones of the PPP and TBLT instructors. Students' preferences in general matched the updated pedagogical principles of English language methodology. They preferred TBLT profile teachers. It is important to compare these findings with other studies.

The findings of this study are similar to those of Le Gal and I-Chou (2015). For instance, these Taiwanese researchers claimed that their students favored the use of pair and work group activities. Likewise, in the current study, it was found that students preferred teachers who used TBLT methodology. In these classes, students were able to be part of several activities which involved pair work and, in a lesser extent, group work. Even though students did not explicitly state that they liked pair and group work, it can be inferred that they did so because TBLT uses this type of classroom activities very often. Pair work, one of the factors presented in the previous model, is a common trait of these two studies. A difference, regarding methodology, with Le Gal and I-Chou's study and the current one is that the former used a 5 point-Likert questionnaire complemented with 12 interviews from first year university students. The survey was administered to students of two high schools and one university.

In the same vein, Taqi, Al-Nouh and Akbar (2014) reported that their surveyed university students preferred teachers who used "progressive methods" (p.125) rather than traditional ones. Comparing these findings with another Taiwanese study (Savignon & Wang, 2003) similar results can be drawn. These first year university learners expressed that their high school teachers mainly focused on grammar-based methodology, which they did not favor. In fact, they showed "positive attitudes toward a more communicative approach" (Savignon & Wang, 2003, p.239). These students preferred their teachers to create opportunities for them to use English in class and interact with their peers. In other words, there was a clear preference for pair work and group work, somewhat similar to the Ecuadorian students. This research resembles to some extent Ortega and Madrid's (2009) study because their students valued guided and controlled activities which are commonly used by PPP and TBLT teachers. Once again, comparing

these traits with the model presented in the results, pair work is the most common factor and the highest scoring in the aforementioned model. These results do not match Brown's (2009). According to this author, learners preferred more grammar-focused lessons whereas the instructors favored communicative activities. Age group probably makes a difference. High school students are willing to learn in a more active way whereas young adults, being more mature and analytical, want to comprehend the 'whys' of language.

Analyzing findings from Latin-American studies, many similarities can be seen with the current research. McBride in Chile (2009) conducted a questionnaire with university students about activities that their high school teachers used. This author found that students disliked traditional activities, especially rote-memorization. This last result is somewhat similar to ours since students thought that traditional methodology should be improved. Along similar lines, a qualitative study carried out in Colombia showed how high school students were resistant to traditional methodologies. They reported that students neither favored teacher-centered classes nor the use of predictable activities that cause monotony and disciplinary behavior in learners. Students asked for more appealing activities in terms of oral tasks and new materials (Villarreal Suarez, Muñoz Taborda, & Perdomo Santacruz, 2016). As in the current study, there is a preference for pair work and, to a lesser extent, group work on the part of the students when they stated in the open questions this preference and rejected teacher-centered classes. Another Colombian study, which surveyed 1185 students from 26 public high schools, dealt with students' perceptions towards different aspects of learning English. The authors claimed that students liked teachers who used dynamic and fun activities (Monroy & Bolívar, 2012). These Colombian learners had a positive attitude towards the activities employed by their teachers which they considered dynamic and interactive. In fact, students demonstrated high motivation when teachers used this type of activity, and when they utilized others, focused on grammar within a traditional methodology, their motivation decreased (Monroy & Bolívar, 2012). We can say that these results are somewhat similar to the ones of the current study because interactive activities are mainly used in TBLT and PPP, and they usually involve pair and group work. Learners in our study preferred them and considered that the traditional ones should be improved. This is probably a common trait among high school students who, because of their age,

enjoy dynamic activities which likely require more interaction. In fact, a study which compared foreign language students' attitudes towards language learning in high school in three different countries showed similar common problems and requests (García Laborda, Bejarano, & Simons, 2012).

In southern rural Ecuador, a study which used observations, interviews and focus groups, conducted in eight parishes, found that even though students agreed that grammar and translation were important in the English classroom, they required more practical activities that involved interaction (Ortega-Auquilla & Minchala-Buri, 2019). Pair-work again is a relevant modality in a language class. Furthermore, these researchers revealed that the instructors belonged to a traditional centered approach as teachers used translation and grammar explanations often. English instructors did not provide input and opportunities for communicative activities, only small instances of a restrictive verbal interaction by means of yes/no questions was evidenced (Ortega-Auquilla & Minchala-Buri, 2019). This teaching practice seems to be a recurrent teaching style in Ecuador. These authors recommend, among others, the use of modern communicative methods such as TBLT to overcome the aforementioned weaknesses in order to develop new curriculum methodological trends. The teachers in this study acknowledged the difficulty of implementing these new methodological trends due to the challenges posed by their particular schools (work load, lack of training in new education reform). As can be seen, the current research is somewhat similar to Ortega-Auquilla and Minchala-Buri's study regarding teaching styles and preferred instructional learners' practices. The difference lies in the methodological instruments utilized: focus groups and interviews which complemented the observed data.

Shimazu (2013) reported students' ideas in Japan about, among other factors, their experiences in the EFL classroom. One of them dealt with contents. They stated that, in high school, students viewed contents as uninteresting, which decreased their motivation. They felt contents from textbooks should be complemented by other materials. Students' main point was that any content should address their interests. In the same vein, Villarreal Suarez et al. (2016) reported similar findings which resemble the ones of the current research. Students preferred contents delivered by TBLT and PPP teachers in contrast to the ones given by traditional teachers.

Among the preferences, the students mentioned more interesting, dynamic, and interactive activities which overlap with types of activities claimed similarly by Monroy and Bolívar (2012) and Shimazu (2013). The latter author pointed out students' ideas on textbooks since textbook contents influence the pedagogical choices in classroom activities, which take us back to methodological decisions. As we can see, the factors discussed (content, pair work, and methodology) are closely related to teachers' classroom management decisions.

In short, the previous studies have confirmed many of the current findings. First, students do not favor the contents employed by the traditional teachers as compared to the PPP and the TBLT instructors. In addition, TBLT is the most accepted methodology as it includes the most favored activities where paramount pair work interaction takes place. These results may have implications at different levels, such as the body of research on learner attitudes, Second Language Acquisition (SLA), foreign language policy makers, and English teachers.

This research contributes to the scarce information related with students' perspectives on specific instructional practices (Savignon & Wang, 2003) which, in this case, were experienced firsthand by Ecuadorian students, right after the class finished. This condition has not been presented in other studies where learners were inquired by means of different instruments but not after observing a specific class. As Wesely (2012) mentioned, studies that deal with "learner's attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs without necessarily connecting it to outcomes can be an important contribution to the discourse in the field" (p. 102). Certainly, the current study belongs to this body of research. In addition, as Brown (2009) stated, teacher awareness about their students' preferences might play a positive role in Second Language Acquisition studies. SLA researchers can compare their findings with the perspectives of learners regarding effective classroom practices.

Furthermore, in times of the foreign language reform in Ecuador, these results can shed light to help authorities of the Ministry of Education take sound decisions regarding professional development of English teachers, since public legal reform involves part of the solution but more active support might be needed to execute such reform in accordance with students' preferences.

Finally, teachers can consider, at the beginning of their school year, students' views on good language practices in order to use them in concrete pedagogical activities. Motivation may increase if students' ideas are taken into account. At least, in line with Brown (2009) and McBride (2009), a dialogue which allows to bridge the gap between different teachers' and students' views should be carried out. Following Brown (2009) further research could address the impact of considering learners' views in language achievement when teachers make use of this information. Indeed, more qualitative research is needed to gain a deeper understanding of this phenomenon.

Moreover, in line with Wesley (2012) other contexts should be explored. The current research showed mainly public high school students' views. Private institutions should also be considered, as well as rural areas of our country. Ortega-Auquilla and Minchala-Buri's study and the present research is a first step. In fact, this study has contributed in general terms to the educational field and, in particular, to the area of foreign language policy in Ecuador, which scarcely has looked at students' beliefs and teachers' styles. This information may help implement the new reform in a more effective way, considering, as McBride (2009) mentions, a balanced combination of activities according to the conditions of our context.

6. Limitations

It is worth noting some limitations of this study which are related to the number of observations carried out per teacher. As mentioned, every teacher was observed for one lesson and after this particular lesson, students stated their opinions by answering a questionnaire. Researchers, on the other hand, based their findings on information obtained from different sources: an observation, an interview, and written lesson plans. However, it can be difficult to determine all TBLT stages by considering only one lesson. In fact, for further research more observations need to be conducted. The whole teaching-learning cycle can also be registered by students in the same questionnaire, and improved one, or through interviews. Also, this study focused only on researchers' and learners' perspectives about teachers' practices. With no doubt it is necessary to conduct further research taking into account another main actor of the language classroom: the English teacher.

7. Conclusions

Ecuadorian students' preferences matched modern EFL pedagogy. In fact, students considered Task Based Learning Teaching as the most accepted methodology, followed by the Presentation-Practice-Production method without finding a significant difference between these two methods. Certainly, they considered traditional methodology as the least effective one.

Our model allowed us to point out the relevance of three elements: pair work, content, and methodology. That is to say, if these factors occur in teacher practices, it can be inferred that a teacher is closer to a TBLT profile. Students indeed identified pair work as the most useful feature of the English classroom. It is the most significant trait of the TBLT methodology as well as the contents presented within this didactic framework. Furthermore, the open-ended questions used in this study are certainly a contribution to methodological issues since most studies on the discussed topics use large scale survey data (Wesely, 2012).

It could be interesting to develop a questionnaire to predict how TBLT or traditional a teacher is based on many items according to these three dimensions: pair work, content, and methodology. This instrument might include the teachers' and the students' answers. However, before developing this questionnaire, an ethnographic approach could be taken into account which could shed light on how teacher's lessons are carried out and perceived by instructors and pupils.

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