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THE REDUCTION OF ACADEMIC HOURS AND ITS IMPACT ON ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING

LA REDUCCIÓN DE HORAS ACADÉMICAS Y SU IMPACTO EN EL APRENDIZAJE DEL IDIOMA INGLÉS

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The Reduction of Academic Hours and its Impact on English Language Learning

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ABSTRACT

The mastery of different languages allows the opening to new cultures, so it is necessary that students are able to communicate from an early age in at least one other language in addition to their mother tongue. The aim of this study is to evaluate the reduction of English language teaching hours and its impact on English language learning in an educational unit in the Canton of Jama, Province of Manabí, in the school year 2023-2024. The methodology used in this research is qualitative-quantitative, descriptive, using interview techniques with 8 English teachers and a structured survey with 54 students of eighth and ninth grade of higher basic education. The analysis of the qualitative data provided by the interview was transcribed verbally and the survey responses were tabulated and analyzed quantitatively using descriptive techniques, such as frequencies and percentages. Results: The reflection presented, analyzes three current situations and the perceived impact on the teaching of English, the impact of teaching related to the reduction of hours due to the change in the curriculum, the lack of official guidelines by the Ministry of Education, Conclusion: This study shows that the reduction of English language teaching hours has had a negative impact on English language learning, since students in secondary schools have not had English teachers from second to seventh grade and therefore need more class time to adapt to the knowledge of another language.

Keywords: english, basic education, learning, teaching-learning process

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La reducción de horas académicas y su impacto en el aprendizaje del idioma inglés

RESUMEN

El dominio de diferentes idiomas permite la apertura a nuevas culturas, por lo que es necesario desde temprana edad que los estudiantes sean capaces de comunicarse en al menos otro idioma además de dominar su lengua materna. El objetivo de este estudio es evaluar la reducción de horas de enseñanza del idioma inglés y su impacto en el aprendizaje del mismo en una Unidad Educativa del cantón Jama, provincia de Manabí, en el año lectivo 2023 – 2024. La metodología empleada en esta investigación es cualitativo-cuantitativo, descriptivo, empleando técnicas de entrevistas a 8 docentes de inglés y una encuesta estructurada a 54 estudiantes de octavo y noveno de educación básica superior. El análisis de los datos cualitativos proporcionados por la entrevista fueron transcritas verbalmente y las respuestas de las encuestas fueron tabuladas y analizadas cuantitativamente utilizando técnicas descriptivas, como frecuencias y porcentajes. Resultados: la reflexión presentada, analiza tres situaciones actuales el impacto percibido sobre la enseñanza del inglés, el impacto de la enseñanza relacionada con la reducción de horas por el cambio en la malla curricular, la falta de directrices oficiales por parte del Ministerio de Educación, Conclusión: este estudio demuestra que la reducción de horas de enseñanza del idioma inglés ha tenido un impacto negativo en el aprendizaje del mismo ya que los estudiantes que cursan la secundaria no han tenido docentes de inglés desde segundo hasta séptimo de básica y por lo tanto necesitan de más tiempo de clases para poder adaptarse al conocimiento de otro idioma.

Palabras clave: inglés, educación básica, aprendizaje, proceso enseñanza-aprendizaje

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INTRODUCTION

English began its expansion process several decades ago, in line with the worldwide phenomenon known as globalization. According to Ledesma, more and more people are learning to speak this language and relying on it to find work, and as one of the world's first languages, learning it is not a luxury but a necessity (Ledesma, 2019). The reduction in academic time devoted to English language learning for high school students is a cause for concern because of its potential impact on language proficiency.

This reduction is particularly significant in rural schools, where resources and educational opportunities may be limited. Previously, five hours per week were devoted to learning English, but with only three academic hours per week, students face an additional challenge in mastering this critical language.

This situation is aggravated when considering the possible lack of specialized teachers in the subject, which can further hinder the learning process. In this context, it is crucial to explore the implications of this reduction of hours and seek strategies to mitigate its effects on the linguistic development of students.

With the application of MINEDUC-2022-00010 of this ministerial agreement, a process of regression of the right to education is set in motion and we would be facing the violation of Art. 11 numeral 2 of the Constitution of the Republic numeral 8 that says "The content of the rights will be developed progressively through norms, jurisprudence and public policies". Cervantes (2024), affirms that the State will generate and guarantee the necessary conditions for their full recognition and exercise.

Likewise, Teaching English in the 21st Century is relevant because it creates a deep awareness that classrooms are multidimensional and dynamic arenas, with effective research-based approaches to teaching English that take into account human complexity and the many influences that shape student learning. Recognize the differences between urban and rural populations, schools, and communities. At the level of the cantons that make up the province of Manabí, the teaching of English in public educational institutions, especially in rural areas, has been affected by numerous factors. This process implies, among other difficulties to be overcome, an inadequate distribution of students, failures in the transportation system and a low level of socialization in terms of the fact itself.

According to the scholar David Crystal in his book *English as a global Language*, cited by (Cazorla, 2018), English is considered a global language because it is used internationally not only by a large



number of native speakers, but also by a large number of people who learn this language as a second or foreign language. It points out that a quarter of the world's population, about 1.5 billion people, can speak English fluently, i.e. they have a satisfactory level of linguistic competence. In addition, powerful countries such as the United States and Great Britain have English as their official language, and in a globalized world where powerful countries dominate the commercial and cultural market, it has become vital to learn this language and be able to use it in everyday circumstances. Therein lies the importance of learning English as a second or foreign language.

For Gómez, Monroy and Bonilla (2019), this process of effective learning of English should not be interrupted or minimized in time, since they see it as circular, that is, it starts at a certain point where it continues to progress over time. However, for authors such as Alvarado et al. (2021), as progress is made, the knowledge acquired also gradually dissipates, so it is necessary to return to the starting point from time to time and review what has been learned, thus achieving long-term stimulation. Likewise, Olivares (2019) states in his study that one of the factors that have a negative influence is the reduction of class hours, the lack of teachers who teach the language and the continuity of the same every school year.

Research questions

1. How does the reduction of class hours affect the eighth and ninth grade students?
2. To what extent does the reduction of class hours affect the development of English language skills in eighth and ninth grade students?
3. What strategies have the teachers implemented to minimize the impact of the reduction of English classes on the eighth and ninth grade students ?

Literature Review

The present research aims to discover through the study variables, exploring the reduction of academic hours and its impact on English language learning in high school students.

The teaching-learning process for those students who choose to use programmed learning texts, whether in printed form or on a computer screen, follows closely the plan devised by the author. This plan is based on objectives that are described in a sequence of learning steps that lead to the achievement of a specific performance standard, defined in advance by the author. According to Salgado (2015), in linear

teaching-learning programs there is only one learning path, while in branched programs there are several alternative learning paths, which means that each step taken in the process has different consequences. Therefore, the development of quality teaching-learning programs requires careful monitoring to ensure their effectiveness and efficiency.

Authors such as Herrera and Cochancela (2020) mention in their study that in April 2023, almost before the beginning of the school year in the Coastal Region, a change was made in the curriculum of all subjects, in which the subject of English suffered a reduction in its time load from 5 to 3 hours per week. This led to a change in the application of the curriculum, because although the standard curriculum for basic education already existed from previous years, the reduction of the hourly load of the subject limits or prevents the development of the skills indicated in the curriculum, not to mention rural areas where schools do not have English teachers. Authors such as Estrada (2018) affirm that the Ministry of Education used to designate a person in each province to guide and support the English teachers in charge, both methodologically, didactically, and administratively.

Krashen (2013) argues in his theory that there are differences between “acquiring” and “learning” a second language. A language is “acquired” naturally and unconsciously through its use in actual communication. Thus, children are not aware that they are “acquiring” their native language, but only that they are communicating in it in their daily lives. Having developed their linguistic competence in this sense, the child will use the language correctly even if he or she cannot explain its rules. In contrast, Smith (2019) states that with this process of “acquisition”, the “learning” of a second language occurs by making its linguistic rules explicit, in this way the learner develops a formal knowledge of the language, since many learn languages quickly and easily, simply by listening or reading. The following table summarizes the characteristics of these two independent processes.

Table 1 Características de Adquisición y aprendizaje

Acquisition	Learning
Natural	Formal
Unconscious	Conscience
Implicit	Explicit

Source. Tomado de Bilbao (2017).

Nevertheless, error correction may affect the conscious “learning” of a language, but not its unconscious “acquisition”. The order in which the grammatical structures of a language tend to be “acquired” (not

“learned”) is innately predetermined; in this sense, the influence of the native language does not alter the natural order in which a second language is “acquired.

Specific English Language Learning Skills

Listening Skills

Listening is a receptive skill and its characteristics are the silence maintained by the listener and the selective attention he/she pays according to his/her objectives. Therefore, for Roncancio (2019), in his study, he states that to apply this principle in the classroom, the student needs a reason to listen and the teacher must create this need by setting tasks according to the type of text to be processed. These tasks should be carried out while the student is listening.

Reading Skills

Reading is also a receptive activity, since it is through reading that we receive information. Its characteristics are similar to those of listening, that is, the person who reads does so in silence. Polo Molinares (2019), mentions that in the development of listening skills, the teacher must set the appropriate tasks by specifying the reasons for the student to read.

Speaking skills

Speaking is a productive activity used to transmit information, and its main characteristic is the use of a system of sounds with meaning. Montoya, Ospina and Santana (2020) argue that for the development of this skill, the teacher must provide a receptive experience that can serve as a model to offer ample opportunities for oral practice, initially guided and later becoming free.

Writing Skills

Writing is a productive activity used to transmit information, characterized as a graphological system with meaning. Authors such as Osorio and Finol (2021) mention that, as in the development of the ability to speak, the teacher must provide models of written language in the form of texts and offer adequate guided practice at the beginning, which becomes freer later.

In Ecuador, the teaching of English has been standardized to a certain extent since 2016, following the implementation of the curricular reform resulting from a new educational agreement in which certain texts were published for the teaching of the English subject to be used in public schools and universities. Authors such as Cazañas et al. (2023) emphasize that at that time the English subject had a weekly load

of 5 hours and the textbooks were an authorized publication of publishers with regional and worldwide recognition.

Given the changes that have occurred this school year in terms of the difference in class load and the lack of clear guidelines from the Ministry on how teachers should work or adapt the textbook (and therefore the curriculum) to the new reality of weekly class hours, Torres (2022) argues in this context that teachers have had to make adaptations according to their own interpretation or with their own resources, which does not allow for a homogeneous implementation of the curriculum of the subject at this time. This reduction in English language teaching hours is a situation that has raised concerns, and as we move forward in the era of globalization and interconnectedness, the mastery of English has become a fundamental skill for personal and professional success.

Thus, in a world where cross-cultural communication is essential, the reduction in English language instruction limits the opportunities for the children of Veinte de Marzo School, since English is not only a tool for accessing information and online resources, but also a skill. While it is understandable that educational authorities face challenges in allocating resources and designing balanced curricula, it is essential to recognize the importance of a strong English language background.

Thus, the absence of a specialist in charge of guiding teachers in the articulation between the use of the textbook and the methodology to be used creates a sense of uncertainty among teachers and how to apply a specific curriculum in the classroom in the face of the various changes that occur over time, teachers are faced with the task of adapting the materials and designing their own teaching strategies, which can lead to inconsistencies in student learning and lose a homogeneity in the objectives to be achieved in a cross-cutting manner all institutions.

In addition, Arroyo et al. (2019) argue that the reduction of teaching time for the same text and the same number of units exacerbates this problem, as teachers are pressured by the limited time to cover the required material, which often results in rushed and superficial teaching, or on the contrary, certain units are left unaddressed, This creates a curriculum gap with respect to the next school year and the content that students will see then, based on the assumption that they have completed the previous curriculum, which is a prerequisite for the next one, resulting in a negative impact on students' understanding and mastery of English, as they do not have the opportunity to delve deeper into the necessary concepts and

skills.

Another characteristic is based on the lack of continuous and specific training in English language teaching, a problem that also contributes to the negative impact on the quality of education that students receive. Language teaching is constantly evolving because, in this new century, language learning is a dynamic field and continuous training is essential to keep up to date and ensure that students are prepared for new challenges and that teachers are aware of the latest trends in methodology and didactics. For authors such as Arroyo, Navarro and Castro (2020), promoting a culture of continuous learning among educators is essential to maintaining high quality standards in teaching.

Learning English as a foreign language

English is considered the lingua franca of science and technology, according to Valera et al. (2023). Consequently, if a person is able to communicate in English, it brings with it many advantages: it gives access not only to current and relevant information from primary sources, but also to communication with people from all over the world. For Lonvon (2023), oral communication, reading and writing are curricular discussions that include specific skills related to the use of TIC, to support and enhance oral and written expression, autonomy and independence. Consequently, today's students must be equipped with the learning strategies that will enable them to become effective lifelong learners.

According to Cordero (2020), it is evident that in Ecuador, through the Ministry of Education, in accordance with the needs of a linguistically and culturally diverse population, the learning of the English language is mandatory. For this reason, new curricula have been implemented in which students, regardless of their mother tongue, learn English at the primary, secondary and higher education levels in order to meet the needs of today's world.

The main objectives of the English as a Foreign Language Curriculum proposed by the Ministry of Education of Ecuador (2016) are: to develop students' understanding of the world, other cultures and their own, and their ability to communicate their points of view through the foreign language, as well as to develop the personal, social and intellectual skills necessary to achieve their potential and participate productively in an increasingly globalized world that operates in other languages. Therefore, it is necessary to create a love for language learning from an early age, through interesting and positive



learning experiences, in order to encourage students' motivation to continue learning and ultimately achieve the final profile proposed in the national curriculum for EGB and BGU.

In other words, learning is a process in which new knowledge, skills or attitudes are acquired through life experiences, so the student must be an active participant in his own learning process, he must perceive himself as such, and not expect the teacher to pour "his knowledge" on him, he must be aware that he has it too, that the teacher is only pointing him in the right direction, and in the same way the teacher must think about his students, if necessary. achieve meaningful learning.

A very important aspect to consider is that, as mentioned above, students have their own individual characteristics and it is the teacher's job to accommodate this diversity. Individual characteristics refer to the way each person learns, there are several modalities of knowledge acquisition, as well as several styles, so it is necessary to adapt learning strategies to them, first of all, to understand the way each person learns.

Modalities of learning: For Rodriguez (2008), learning is based on observation and reflection, it starts from the immediate and concrete experience, from this four different skills are brought into play when learning, resulting in four types of learning:

Concrete experimentation: The ability to participate fully, openly, and without prejudice in new experiences. When activities are designed so that students can experience things in a concrete and tangible way, it is easier for them to retain the information. Javaloyes (2016) provides an example from personal experience: "When we discuss the topic of an interview, instead of filling it with theory, it is studied in practice by conducting an interview."

Reflective observation: according to Escobar (2017), the opportunity to reflect on the experience and observe it from different perspectives. When performing an activity, in the aforementioned case of an interview, the student develops skills, after reflecting he realizes that there are different ways to perform it, and also that it depends on the personality of the interviewee, since each case is individual, different, but to reach this conclusion, you must actively participate in this activity.

Abstract conceptualization: This allows students to create new concepts and integrate their observations into logically sound theories (Fernandez, 2022). Returning to the previous example, as previously stated, each individual is different. It is necessary to understand how to generalize because

the guidelines offered are just that guidelines, but they are not rigidly applied due to the need to consider diversity.

Active experimentation: You can use these theories to make decisions and solve problems. If the learner internalizes well, returns to the same example of the interview and its guidelines, and understands that each person is different and how he/she receives information, it will be easier for him/her to apply it in real situations.

Learning styles: Learning modalities contribute to the cognitive construction of a subject and determine the skills and ability to learn certain types of knowledge through specific activities. Authors such as Domínguez et al. (2023) suggest that when these modalities come into play, four learning styles emerge.

Divergent: Villamizar and Jaimes (2021) mention that people are characterized by concrete thinking and by processing information in a reflective way, considering different points of view. To achieve the exit profile proposed in the national curriculum for EGB and BGU.

Assimilative: People combine abstract thinking and reflective processing of information. In addition, Vaca (2022) states that students prefer to learn sequentially.

Convergent: Garcia (2019) states that people possess abstract thinking and actively process information. In addition, they need to find practical applications for the ideas and theories they learn.

Adaptive: People combine concrete thinking and active processing. They also need to be involved in the learning activity. They especially like to take risks and put ideas into action.

METHODOLOGY

It is a qualitative quantitative study, with a descriptive cross-sectional design, the sample consisted of 8 teachers and 54 eighth and ninth grade students of an educational unit of Jama Canton, Manabi Province, in the school year 2023-2024. Data collection was conducted through semi-structured interviews with teachers to explore their experiences and perceptions of English language teaching. A structured survey was also used to obtain information on student satisfaction, interest, and participation, as well as their perceptions of the effectiveness of the teaching methods. Qualitative data from the interviews were analyzed using thematic content analysis, while quantitative data from the survey were analyzed using descriptive techniques and statistical analysis to identify trends and patterns. Informed consent was

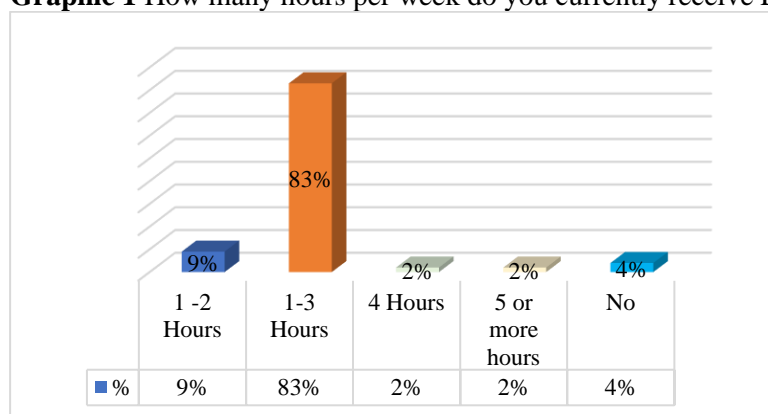
obtained from the participants, and confidentiality and anonymity of the data were ensured by assigning numerical identifiers.

RESULTS

In this context, the results obtained provide a comprehensive view of students' perceptions and teachers' views of this reduction in class time. Through these data, we seek to understand how this measure has affected students' levels of language proficiency, as well as their motivation and confidence in learning English. The results of the survey and the main findings of the interview are presented below to shed light on the effectiveness of the reduction of academic hours and its impact on English language learning.

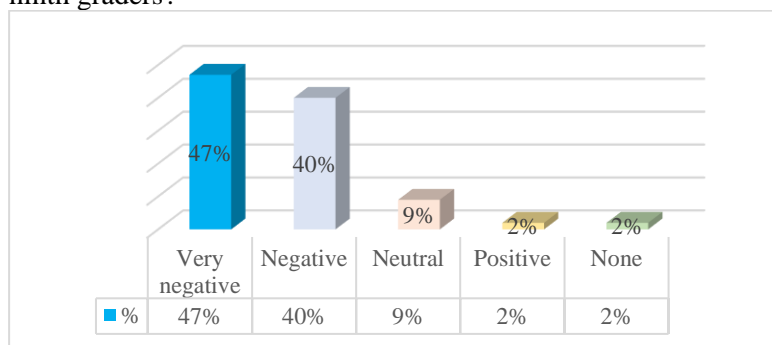
Analysis of the survey

Graphic 1 How many hours per week do you currently receive English classes?



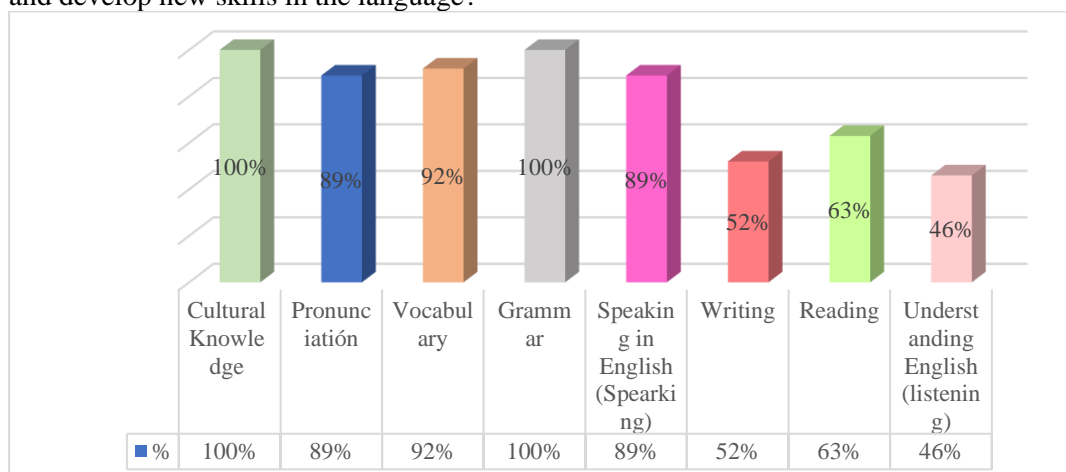
83% of students receive three hours of English classes per week, and it is evident that they have an average exposure to the language, leading to negative implications in the short and long term on their progress, linguistic development and development of their skills, compared to the 5 hours provided before the curricular reform; 4% of students do not receive any hours of English language class per week, a worrying figure, as it implies that a small group of students completely lack formal opportunities to learn the language; 9% receive 1 to 2 hours, so it should be considered that English is an increasingly demanded skill in the workplace and academics, and depriving these students of this training can put them at a considerable disadvantage.

Graphic 2 How has the reduction in English class hours affected language learning among eighth and ninth graders?



Regarding the reduction of class hours, 44% of the students responded “Very negative”, this high proportion of responses indicates, that the reduction of English class hours has had a very negative impact on English language learning, followed by 40% that it is negative, approximately 9% consider that its impact has been neutral, although the group is small, neutrality may indicate that some students have not noticed a significant change in their learning or that they do not have a clear opinion on the subject, while 2% do not consider that the reduction of English class hours has had a positive impact on their learning and finally, the category “None” is represented by 2%.

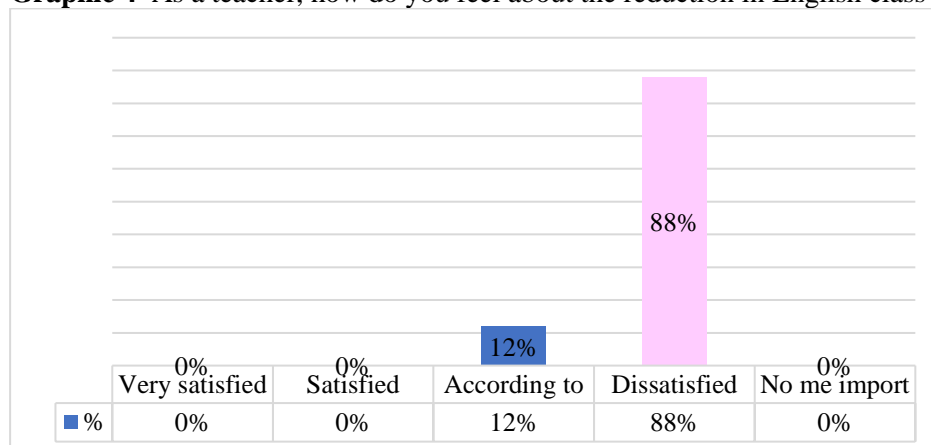
Graphic 3 Do you think that the reduction in English class hours has affected their ability to acquire and develop new skills in the language?



The reduction has a 100% impact on the ability to acquire a solid knowledge of the culture, since the reduction in language classes also reduces the time for practice, affecting pronunciation by 89%, vocabulary by 92% and grammar by 100%. As for speaking (89%) and writing (52%), the impact is more noticeable, since correct pronunciation allows clear and effective communication, while a broad vocabulary and adequate grammar are fundamental to construct sentences and express ideas accurately; reading (63%) and listening (46%), concluding that the reduction of English classes negatively affects

our ability to acquire and develop new skills in the language in several aspects.

Graphic 4 As a teacher, how do you feel about the reduction in English class hours?



12% report feeling satisfied with the reduction of class hours, arguing that there are other ways to learn and develop language skills outside the classroom, such as self-study, the use of online resources or immersion in an English-speaking environment, while 88% say they feel dissatisfied, since the reduction of these hours, They limit your exposure to the language, guided practice, and personalized feedback for language skill development.

Interview

Teacher interview analysis

Teachers implement different strategies such as tutoring or online resources to mitigate the impact of the reduction in English class hours. They agree that the lack of support and resources for students who are experiencing a reduction in English class hours, are affecting their teaching and learning process in the development of language skills; 25% agree that only resources have been offered, although personalized tutoring was not provided where teaching materials, interactive exercises, educational videos, among others, could be included that help students expand their vocabulary, improve their grammar and practice their listening comprehension skills, receive individualized support, direct feedback and clarify specific.

Regarding whether the parents of eighth and ninth grade students have expressed concern about the reduction of English class hours and its effect on language learning, they confirm that there is a non-active concern of 25%, although may have some concern about the reduction in class hours, they have not taken concrete steps to address this concern, there are various reasons for this lack of action, such as

lack of knowledge about how to address the problem, confidence that the school will take appropriate action, or prioritization of other areas of their children's educational development, however, parents may still be aware of the potential negative impact of reduced language class hours; 50% are concerned, but trust that the school and teachers are making the right decisions regarding on this issue. 25% are not aware, which clearly shows it clear that the communication or information provided by the school to parents is not assertive.

In terms of the impact on their academic performance due to the reduction in English language class hours, 88% agree that they are very much affected, since the reduction in these hours implies a smaller amount of time dedicated to learning and developing skills in this language, therefore, any reduction in the amount of time dedicated to this subject has a negative impact on academic performance, although, the impact may vary as some may have a solid foundation in learning the English language and Being able to compensate for the reduction in class hours with independent studies or additional resources, it is essential to consider measures that mitigate this impact, such as the implementation of additional resources, extracurricular programs or a review of the curriculum to ensure adequate learning of English. Finally, 100% of the teachers reported that they had not received any training, which indicates a worrying situation. If teachers have not received training in managing the curriculum based on the reduction of class time, it is likely that they will face significant challenges in organizing and adapting curriculum content in a reduced time, leading to less effective teaching and difficulties in adequately covering the required content. In addition, the feelings of frustration and disorientation due to the lack of support and preparation to face this new situation, so that quality education must be guaranteed, teachers prepared to adapt teaching materials and optimize the time available in the classroom. However, it is necessary to take corrective measures to face this new educational reality.

Academic Coordinator interview analysis

According to the question: How does the reduction of class hours affect students in the area of English? Answer that, this may have an impact on the achievement of the proposed objectives in the development of basic English language skills, such as reading, writing, speaking and listening skills also the lack of class hours may limit the opportunities for students to practice the English language, which is essential for their mastery, in addition, It also means less time to cover the content of the curriculum effectively,



which could result in superficial learning due to the omission of important topics that can complement the learning of another language.

Regarding the question: How does the reduction in class hour affect the development of English language skills? The Academic Coordinator answers that this reduction of hours significantly affects the development of English language skills in students, since it means less time for speaking, listening, reading and writing in English, knowing that these skills are focused on constant practice to achieve the desired learning, in addition to limiting the opportunities to develop skills in a balanced way, This means that less hours of exposure and teaching of the English language slows down the learning process, it is also good to emphasize that the more complex content of English may not be adequately covered, resulting in gaps in the development of the acquisition of a new language and this can disrupt the continuity of learning.

Regarding the question: What strategies have teachers implemented to minimize the impact of the reduction in English classes? The coordinator believes that teacher to minimize this impact, teachers can implement various strategies such as: effective planning by the teacher prioritizing relevant topics and content, intensive lessons that encourage active student participation, tasks that encourage autonomous student learning, use of technology such as applications and platforms where students can prepare themselves outside the classroom and through which they can improve their skills, conducting formative assessments to monitor progress and thus adjust instruction according to individual needs.

DISCUSSION

Based on the literature review and the results obtained in the empirical part of this work, the authors express their agreement with the position of Valverde (2020), when he determines the contribution of regular and prolonged exposure to a second language to achieving adequate proficiency. Likewise, the authors confirm the position of Abad et al. (2019), when they determine that the amount of time devoted to language learning is directly related to the level of proficiency achieved by students.

Furthermore, the authors express agreement with other research that has shown that knowledge of the English language can provide individuals with a competitive advantage in the labor market, as expressed by Hernández (2021), Pérez and Torres (2020). The results are in contrast with other research, since 83% of the respondents claim to receive 3 hours of English classes per week, and it is clear that, in the

academic field, English is widely used in research and scientific communication, implying that the students who do not have adequate access to English training.

For his part, Jiménez (2019), through a study, he was able to verify that the amount of time devoted to direct instruction of a language was positively correlated with the acquisition of linguistic skills, which implies that greater exposure and practice time in the classroom are key factors for the development of solid skills in a language. In fact, 40% of the students in this study consider the reduction of hours of English classes as “negative” which also supports the idea that this measure has had a detrimental impact on language learning. Likewise, Lojano (2019), in his study, highlights the importance of considering the perceptions and opinions of students in order to improve the educational quality of academic performance.

Lastre et al. (2020) argue that the lack of adequate support and resources can have a negative impact on the teaching and learning process of students. In a study conducted by Rodríguez and Guzmán (2019), access to quality resources and additional support was found to have a positive impact on students’ academic performance. Teachers’ opinions are consistent with those of other authors, since they implement different strategies, such as tutoring or online resources, to mitigate the impact of the reduction in English class hours. However, they also agree that the lack of adequate support and resources affects the teaching and learning process of students in developing of language skills.

Suggestion, careful Curriculum Planning is recommended, given the limited time available, it is essential to plan the curriculum thoroughly and prioritize fundamental concepts and skills; Focus on practical skills which focuses on teaching on practical English language skills that are relevant and useful to students in their daily lives; Integration of interactive activities, which incorporates interactive and dynamic activities in the classroom to encourage active student participation; Resources and Technology -making the best use of available resources and technology to complement classroom learning; Promoting of autonomous learning by motivating students to take responsibility for their own learning and to seek additional opportunities to practice English outside of school hours; Open Communication and Individualized Support by maintaining open and constant communication with students to understand their specific needs and challenges; Collaborating with colleagues: Sharing ideas



and strategies with other English teachers in the school and participating in professional development activities.

CONCLUSIONS

The problem addressed in this research is the reduction of English class hours and its impact on the learning of this language among high school students in an educational unit of the Jama canton, province of Manabí. The reduction of class hours has a negative impact because it significantly affects the amount of time students dedicate to learning a foreign language, which affects their ability to achieve the necessary skills to speak another language. Therefore, through the results obtained and the review of the theories allow the research team to declare the fulfillment of 100% of the objectives proposed for this study.

In addition, the proposed focus of future research should be to investigate the effect of increasing the number of hours of English language instruction on students' academic performance. It is hoped that this paper will help improve the quality of English language education, as it has been shown that the number of hours of instruction must be increased if students are to learn to speak and write correctly.

According to the research, the increase in instructional hours will provide access to additional opportunities for practice and exposure to English outside the classroom, such as after-school programs, online resources, and language immersion activities, through the implementation of effective teaching strategies that maximize available instructional time and encourage active student participation to ensure a quality education in the mastery of English as a foreign language.

As argued by Arroyo et al. (2020), in their study on the effect of the number of hours dedicated to teaching English on results in scientific competence, this reduction in hours limits the time available for practice and immersion in the .English language, making it difficult to develop solid language skills and communicative fluency.

Although studies have been conducted, such as Abad et al. (2019) on the level of English proficiency and individual characteristics of English Education students, and Alvarado Andino et al. (2021) on the use of virtual resources in the teaching-learning process of English in higher education, it is important to recognize that the weakness of many of these studies lies in the limited size of the samples.



As Torres (2022) points out in his reflections on the limitations and suggestions proposals for the teaching and learning of English, future research is required that expands the scope and diversity of the samples is needed to address these limitations and deepen the understanding of the impact of the reduction of academic hours on the learning of English among secondary school students. There is a need to further investigate pedagogical methods and teaching techniques that can reduce the negative effects of reduced academic hours.

It is hoped that this analysis will contribute to the understanding of the importance of maintaining a strong focus on the teaching of English in the secondary school curriculum, as suggested by Cazañas et al. (2023) in their study on the teaching-learning of English, and motivate future research and educational policies aimed at improving the quality of language teaching at this level of education, as suggested by Herrera and Cochancela (2020) in their analysis of curricular reforms in compulsory education in Ecuador.

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