

BENEMÉRITA UNIVERSIDAD AUTÓNOMA DE PUEBLA

FACULTAD DE LENGUAS

**AN APPRAISAL SYSTEM ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE
TEACHERS' BEHAVIORS: HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' VOICES**

Thesis Submitted to the School of Languages

For the Degree of

LICENCIATURA EN LA ENSEÑANZA DEL INGLÉS

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degree of**

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ABSTRACT

English language teaching is nowadays a compulsory subject in all public and private educational contexts from elementary school to post-secondary education. Many English teachers have become teachers only because they know English, however some of them do not have the appropriate methodological training. Sometimes, when teachers are not aware of the form their different methodological choices, behaviors and attitudes impact their students' learning, the learning-teaching process may not be successful. This investigation attempts to shed some light in this issue.

The purpose of this study is to explore junior high school students' perceptions about the form they believe their English teacher's behavior and attitudes may influence in their learning. We use a mixed method approach. The instrument is a questionnaire and the participants are 21 14-15 year-old students from a public sub-urban high school. Open questions are analyzed by utilizing the Appraisal System (Martin & Rose, 2003) categorizations in order to provide a more detailed illustration of the issue.

Findings reveal that teachers' behaviors and attitudes are easily and clearly perceived by participants and they strongly believe these attitudes and behaviors have a powerful influence in their learning. These findings suggest a deeper and more specific analysis and an awareness of the form educators are perceived as influential concerns in the educational contexts.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Nowadays English Language is not only relevant but also necessary and useful for students' general educational instruction. In general, language is an essential tool for communicating with other people; therefore, English becomes a vital means to communicate and understand other societies, traditions and cultures. Students start to interact with English Language (EL) at school since they are children, according to our new educational policies. Learning English is an obligatory subject, however, not all students have the same opportunities of learn this language. There could be different reasons or factors that affect students' learning and it is one of our purposes to illustrate some of these reasons.

Harmer (2007) argues that there is “a huge number of reasons why students learn English in classrooms around the world”. However, most of them have not chosen to do this themselves, but they do it because “English is on the curriculum” (*ibid.p.121*). Besides, it is fundamental to emphasize that since 1993 the implementation of EL in high school became obligatory in order to achieve a complete and successful education. Conversely; it is common to perceive that in secondary school EL is taught just three hours in the week and, in many cases teachers do not speak English. Although, some of them are specialized in this area, they do not always use the language into the classroom, consequently English is not taught in a competent system (Johnson and Morrow, 1981. p. 47).

Students may be affected in their language learning development by different aspects, but certainly teachers usually cause a great impact. Moreover, as we know, students of high school start a stage of adolescence which includes different developmental aspects such as psychological, physical and emotional. These factors may also influence in their learning, however, it is considerable and very essential to state that teachers play a fundamental role in students' education. Although, sometimes teenagers are described as difficult learners; they have also become successful in the English Language class (Harmer, 2007.p. 83).

Despite the fact that students are in a difficult period of adolescence, it is indispensable to admit that effective and competitive teachers influence in students' learning, especially teachers' attitudes and behaviors. "Behavior is a function of self-concept, an essential aspect of teaching and learning to teach. Teachers' self-perceptions influence their effectiveness in helping students develop self-esteem" (Lipka, 1999.p.27).

For this reason, this study attempts to examine students' perceptions toward English Language teachers' behavior and how they believe these behaviors interfere in their learning. An investigation toward the effect of teachers' behavior on learning becomes relevant in the sense it may help us understand better the impact our unconscious attitudes as teachers might influence our students' learning. In addition, the research may also raise awareness on some factors that can affect in the process of learning.

1.2 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Findings in this study may be used by English Language Teachers (ELT) to analyze the scope of their behavior toward the students' learning process. These students' responses may allow ELT to raise awareness on how their behavior might affect the students' learning as well as their perceptions toward the English class. These findings could help future ELT to comprehend better how to deal with students perceived expectations and how to interact with their learners; a vital issue in order to obtain successful results in the process of teaching-learning.

1.3PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The general purpose of this investigation is to explore students' answers to a written questionnaire about their English classes and their English teachers. Our objective is to illustrate students' perceptions about the form they believe their English teacher behavior may interfere and affect their learning of English. This study is enlightened with the Appraisal System (Martin & Rose, 2003) framework in order to categorize students' judgmental expressions taking into account the affect subsystem of the Attitude domain.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study aims at answer the following research questions,

- How do Secondary English Language Teachers' behaviors and attitudes affect students' learning (according to participants' responses)?

- How do participants describe teachers' behaviors and attitude in the classroom?
- What discourse markers (of the Appraisal System framework) do participants use to describe their perceptions toward teachers' behavior?

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This chapter summarizes the topics applicable and focused on our study. Furthermore, we also include different authors who have worked and contributed to similar studies with diverse points of view. Besides, the importance of this section is to identify and analyze the different authors' considerations and assumptions with reference to this research.

2.2 ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

“English is taught as a foreign language in very different contexts around the world—to schoolchildren in small and large groups. Obviously the goals of English courses vary according to the contexts in which they are taught” (Davies and Pearse, 2000. p .3). For these authors English language teaching is the procedure in which teacher and students play an important role in order to achieve a successful process of teaching-learning. On the other hand, what these authors claim becomes relevant to our study in the sense context play a paramount role. Despite the fact that teachers, students and the process may be influenced by different internal and external factors; it is clear that the situational context determines the main result in many situations. For this cause teachers have the necessity of finding strategies, techniques and possibly a convenient

environment where both teachers and students can obtain major results in the process without many impediments in the objective.

Although, language is possibly seen as another subject in the curriculum, teachers should be conscious that their perceived behavior may include diverse facets into the classroom such as their actions and expressions that could affect students' learning. These involved attitudes and features as a consequence could influence in the process of teaching and the intentions could result different (Williams & Burden, 1997. p. 115).

Some years ago, the context of learning and teaching has seen great advances in our understanding of how students learn; for example Lipka (1999) mentions that "at the elementary level where the self 'contained classroom environment is most common the individual teacher plays an especially significant role" (*ibid*.p.26).In other words, educators take part in having a respectable environment, relationship, interaction and values in the classroom, and the students comfort depends on it but, despite of these reasons it is necessary to mention that there are other factors that can interfere in the students' learning process.

Some other authors describe teachers as having a great influence in obtaining a successful students' learning because it also depends on them not only the students. Although, there are other causes that could be involved in this procedure it is indispensable that ELT becomes relevant and interested in actual professors and learners voices.

On the other hand, Palmer (1998) assumes that "teachers possess the power to create conditions that can help students learn a great deal or keep them from learning much at all"(*ibid*.p.6). It is true? That professors are involved in the action of generate a

confidential and comfortable atmosphere considering that this factor depends on how much students learn. However, it is significant to clarify that teachers have the responsibility to take part in this situation; hence it could be an effective responsibility regarding in this aspect the characteristics of the educator.

Actually, it is possible to find other features that play a vital role in teaching a language, for example the use of different terms such as, inspiration, perfect atmosphere, curiosity and interest (author...). These terms that teachers use may become influenced expressions and can have different meaning for each one. Moreover, they should be considered in order to identify what results they may obtain and when they must use these words in the teaching context (Gebhard and Oprandy, 1999. p. 10).

In addition to this, Bertrand and Stice (2002) affirm that “Language is not only the basis of social interaction; it is also the foundation for almost all school learning”. It is important to recognize what is the implication in teaching and learning a language, it means how a person is able to learn a new language. Finally, according to all these authors now there is a major perception about what ELT means, what factors are involved and how it could result constructive in each circumstance. However, the teachers’ advantages in their own experiences about what are the convenient ways for teaching and how this can help them to improve each day also depends in the interaction and the relationship with their students; considering that in the classroom they could discover many interesting things and the knowledge will become most relevant.

2.2.1 ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS

We need to know what teachers are required to do when they teach English Teachers are required to take into account the significance of being successful **educators** and what issues this implies. For this reason Davies and Pearse (2000) describe that “successful teachers and the institutions where they teach may differ in many ways. For example, in the teachers’ experience, training, and level of English, or the size of classes, hours of class per week, and the methodology and material used.” It means that teachers have to be competent and conscious about what they want to teach as well as how. Therefore, as the author mentions teachers’ consciousness in the class becomes an effective teaching strategy.

Besides, “effective teachers create learning atmospheres which are cognitively and affectively expanding; learning atmospheres which enable the learner to become a more adequate and knowledgeable person” (Pine & Boy 1977.Cited in Williams & Burden. 1997.p.62). In other words, exceptional educators are able to construct knowledge environment where student become more qualified for obtaining their objectives.

Moreover, it is necessary to mention that competitive teachers have the ability for relating their own ways of teaching with their students’ and give them the possibility to learn and acquire significant learning. In this way the educator may help students to discover a world of knowledge for themselves (Palmer, 1998.p.11). Conversely, Dörnyei (2001) claims that “Language teachers frequently use the term “motivation” when they describe successful or unsuccessful learners. This reflects our intuitive belief

that during the lengthy and often tedious process of mastering a foreign/second language (L2), the learners' enthusiasm, commitment and persistence may be achieved"

In other words, English teachers use the term motivation to describe students who like or enjoy learning. It seems to be clear then that teachers need to encourage students to learn but also students have to be conscious that their learning also depends on themselves; Moreover, Richards (1990) implies that "every teacher aims to be an effective teacher". It is vital to recognize that each teacher makes an effort in order to be more proficient in the process of teaching. They should include in this procedure several qualities since a huge accomplishment requires of this crucial facet; teachers need to be aware about this point in favor of an exceptional communication with their students.

The different aspects mentioned before take an essential part in the process of learning. Furthermore, it is considerable to recognize that the interaction between teacher and students is vital in order to achieve goods results, great relationship, positive attitudes and actions. "A significant learning depends on the moral interaction" (Johnston 2003. p. 100).According to this author, communication and relations between teachers and students is fundamental because the quality of education could be more efficient without any difficulties. Teachers and students mutually participate in this facet, teachers also learn from students and students learn from teachers because they adopt the educators' qualities and knowledge and sometimes the desire to be like them (ibid).

As a matter of fact, Coleman (1996) claims that "Language teachers have the advantage of already being sensitive to the influences of culture on language and of language on culture" (ibid.p.167).Teachers could be impacted by the influence of the

culture into the classroom and it may vary the purposes that they have and also students' expectations of the class could change at the moment that those influences appear and interfere in this period of education. It is certain that people are influenced by culture; however, the decisions of how convenient cultural patterns shape the objectives usually depend on the teachers.

2.2.2 TEACHERS' BEHAVIOR

Another issue raised by this study is whether or to what extent teachers' behaviors can affect or interfere with the students' learning. As we know, there are many factors that can hinder students' learning and in this case these aspects should be considered by teachers. This section is focused on teachers' behavior because it is an important characteristic included in the process of teaching-learning. Moreover, this involvement allows educators to be conscious of what are the importance of this point and how their behavior can show security in students when they are into the classroom.

Possibly, there are teachers who may not consider this feature in a total mode but in this study we attempt to analyze what some authors believe and think about the issue and how it may contribute in explaining or facilitate the comprehension of the importance of behaviors, attitudes and relationships into the classroom (author).

All human beings have the necessity of being more sensitive for maintaining good relationships with people (Strike and Soltis 1998. p. 99). As human beings we are conscious that we need to be more aware and not indifferent with others because it is primordial for effective relationships. In this case, focusing on teachers, it is vital to

establish a good relationship with students for obtaining an efficient interaction into the classroom. A positive attitude and behavior is a fundamental part in the development of learning because it may conduct the perspectives that students have at the moment they are appreciating and learning new things.

In addition to this, Lipka (1999) assumes that “teachers are so labeled because the teaching behavior reflects a successful blend of the best qualities associated with “good” and “effective” teaching”(*ibid.p.190*). It means there is a huge influence of the comportment of teachers toward acquiring an effective learning. If teachers show a positive behavior when they teach, they may be categorized as competent educators and students will recognize their talents. Students appreciate when educators arrive to the class with an enormous quantity of optimism, constructive characteristics and qualities that help them feel more comfortable and certainly more secure in reflecting about their responsibility in their own learning.

Furthermore, “all our behavior is intentional, even if it is not entirely conscious. The intention of the behavior is to meet our individual need, as we perceive them” (Maslow, cited in Champagne, 1995.p.57). In other words, our comportment might be conscious or unconscious according to the different necessities that we present. Although the intention of the comportment is not totally observed there is a possibility to recognize what we are doing and what could be the consequences of the act.

Actually, behavior is the human beings’ essence; all people demonstrate distinct and individual comportment in diverse circumstances or different places and consequently it produces positive or negative effects that in relation to teachers and students mutually need to distinguish and manage the situation toward the perspective

of the class and the interaction involving all aspects that can attain a successful performance and purposes.

Most authors share the idea that behavior could interfere in how students learn and develop learning as it is seen in different contexts. Essentially, Champagne (1995) reveals “You will usually be judged by students on your behavior as teacher, clarity, self-image, expectations, demonstrated, content competence fairness, and consistency”. Finally, behavior is a crucial aspect to achieve objectives and the form it reflects the personality of each one. For this reasons, it is fundamental to mention that a respectable and positive behavior may produce enhanced consequence.

2.2.3 TEACHERS’ ATTITUDE

In the previous section the issue of teachers’ behavior was exposed in order to recognize its importance the students’ learning process and the form it plays a critical function in order to evaluate students’ significant knowledge. Now, in this section, attitude is discussed as a significant facet and with a powerful relation with behavior and principles provided in the classroom. Teachers’ attitudes in language learning must be taken into account as a central piece of the process of learning as well as values, principles and ethics.

The word “attitude “includes different characteristics, aspects and meaning; as it has been mentioned before, it also takes part in the process of teaching-learning. As well as behavior if there is a positive or negative mood it could cause several conditions into the classroom. It is clear that students can perceive their teacher’s temper when they are in the classroom and subsequently it could have an effect on their learning.

For this reason Williams and Burden (1997) describe that “teachers need to understand also the many different ways in which the words and actions can influence the learning that occurs in their classrooms”. They also mention the importance of what educators execute into the classroom and how it could involve students’ education. They argue that an exceptional professor should encourage students all the time and possibly this positive attitude may help them in acquiring a considerable knowledge adopting at the same time an optimistic attitude as their teachers show.

In addition to this as Jersild (1995. cited in Lipka, 1999) mentions “The teachers’ understanding and acceptance of [him or her] self is the most important requirement in any effort [he or she] makes to help students know themselves and gain healthy attitudes of self-acceptance” (p.3). In other words if educators show a positive attitude, students may adopt the same model and the recognition of themselves might help them obtain better results and a more significant knowledge. Hence, teachers need to take into account this essential aspect in order to appreciate the importance of their attitudes in relation to attaining more effective interactions between professors and with students. According to Hedge (2000) “Social attitudes towards English language learning will partly determine how much effort teachers have to put into motivating children”(ibid.p.125).We can see how all the internal and external issues play a central role in the learning and how these aspects conduct teachers to encourage learners.

Furthermore, teachers’ actions may cause a significant change in a flourishing teaching because in this way they could be more conscious about their manner of teaching and what could be the result, depend on these procedures, of the main objective; obtaining a successful learning process (Legutke and Thomas, 1991.p.63).

Also, it is necessary to mention that there is another substantial aspect that teachers must consider and take into account, this is society, and it also takes part in the process of teaching-learning. Certainly all people are exposed in a different form to culture, different forms of thinking, ideas, feelings and ways of life. These features are also involved in the process of education and may modify or impact the attitude of each person. It is indispensable to realize what could be the consequences of the positive and negative actions or in this case their relation with teachers' attitude (...).

A final point but not less important issue is how personality affects attitude. As teachers, sometimes we face personal obstacles or difficulties but encouraging learners all the time is essential and then most convenient for them because students need to be motivated day by day (Dornyei, 2001).

2.3 ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING

The process of language learning is the process in which teachers and students take part in order to obtain an effective result and significant knowledge. An important feature of this process is to recognize the characteristics included and how these are involved and affect the process. Learning sometimes depends on internal or external issues and as it has been explained, learning also depends on the type of disposition teachers and students have.

In relation with this point, it may be inopportune but true to mention that in many situations there are professors who do not have the capacity of identifying how students learn. They make diverse activities but not necessarily the most appropriate for

teaching a specific group of students and do not realize what really happens with learners. Moreover, learning is not just a particular subject, it also implies a certain number of features such as ethics, values, techniques, approaches, dreams, ideas, methods, skills and behaviors appropriated to specific situations (Ketteridge and Marshall, 2009. p . 9).

On the other hand, Heaton (1990) affirms that “Learning English is not like learning a subject as geography or general science”. Learning English implies many effects, it is not just learning a new topic, for this reason we should take into account that learning a new language involves several distinctiveness, such as; effort, motivation, dedication, positive attitudes, concentration and knowledge about cultures.

Actually, the significance of learning English also depends on how students learn, their skills and capacities, and how educators facilitate them in acquiring knowledge in this language. All reasons are indispensable and all factors are vital when we talk about learning English. We also need to recognize that sometimes students are not truly interested in learning this language and it may result difficult for them and consequently it could produce an alteration in relation to the expectations into the classroom.

Richards (1990) reveals that “effective learning is viewed as dependent upon the teacher’s control and management of what takes place in the classroom”. Despite the fact that successful learning basically depends on students’ interest of acquiring a high level of English, it must also be considered that English teacher are more than just language teachers. They are educators and a guide who facilitates students’ realizations of goals and dreams. Possibly, learners could find the way to learn more if they consider that their teacher does possess enough capacity of managing all issues related to the

teaching process or in this case about the way that pupils learn; if there are constructive actions the results may be more significant.

Ketteridge and Marshall (2009) affirm that “despite many years of research into learning, it is not easy to translate this knowledge into practical implications for teaching. There are not simple answers to the questions: ‘how do we learn?’ and ‘how as teachers can we bring about learning?’ This is partly because education deals with specific purposes and contexts that differ from each other and with students as people, who are diverse in all respects and ever changing” (*ibid.p.8*). It means that it is not easy to understand how people learn; learning undergoes diverse modifications during the process.

As a conclusion, we may say that authors’ contributions have offered us an extensive panorama about the implications of the teaching-learning process. Another significant point is that teachers and students must be aware and conversant with this central procedures reflecting according to their very own experiences in their specific situational contexts.

2.3.1 STUDENTS’ LEARNING

As it has been seen, the learning process include various features; and there are many considerations in order to identify what is the way that students learn and how this influences their education. It is clear that in this procedure teachers and students play a paramount role. We now focus on students’ knowledge and learning.

Ketteridge and Marshall (2009) state that “Not everyone learns in the same way, or equally readily about types of material. The discipline and level of material to be

learnt have an influence. Students bring different backgrounds and expectations to learning” (*ibid.*p.8). In the case of students’ learning it is crucial to know what are the distinct manners with reference to how they learn. Professors “must” find the most effective method in teaching and still preserve their techniques considering and identifying learners’ skills, aptitudes, interests, styles and knowledge adapting them to the specific interior of the classroom.

Besides, most research shows that students need lots of positive feedback in their work and as a result they could recognize when their learning has been successful and they will be motivated to learn more. Considering that each student has different necessities, the role of the teacher is to be aware of this and encourage them all the time to be the best student everyday (Lowes and Target, 1998. p .28).

On the other hand, Rubin and Thompson (1932) allege that “the language learner is the most important factor in the language learning process. Success or failure will, at the end, be determined by what you yourself contribute. Many learners tend to blame teachers, circumstances, and teaching materials for their lack of success, when the most important reason for the lack of success can ultimately be found in themselves”. It is true that if everyone does an effort in something, the results will be considerable, then, if students achieve an effective learning is because it may certainly depend on them, even if they regard to the teachers as the principal cause of their significant or insignificant learning. It is attractive to consider these aspects because it is fundamental to recognize how all participants play a different but still crucial role in the success of learning. Students are required to play their part but only when provided a person who orients and motivates them in every moment sharing knowledge and experiences for helping them to achieve an effective understanding.

While, Scrivener (1994) suggests that “Students learn a lot of their language from what they hear their teacher say-the instructions, the discussions, the asides, the jokes, the comments, etc.” (*ibid.p.14*); some other researchers have argued that students may even be considered autonomous learners. As a result, we may say that most students acquire everything that they perceive into the classroom; and it may produce an effect in their learning. However, when students are into the classroom they are in a world of knowledge, they can also discover many things by themselves and also contribute with their opinions, ideas, feelings and emotions. It is right then to say that learners learn everything that has a relation with their existence and around them.

2.3.2 STUDENTS’ MOTIVATION FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING

It is common to hear the word motivation in educational aspects; however, sometimes it is not easy to describe the meaning of this term, hence, it is necessary to make an emphasis in this feature in order to understand its importance and how it could impact in the process of teaching-learning. This phase presents some authors who focus in this aspect and explain with more detail.

Harmer (2007) assumes that “motivation is some kind of internal drive which pushes someone to do things in order to achieve something” (*ibid.p.98*). For Harmer, motivation becomes a power inside of each one and it could help people to obtain their objectives. However, it may also depend on other issues, such as; enthusiasm or interest in the purpose.

According to Dörnyei (2001) “Language teachers frequently use the term “motivation” when they define effective or ineffective learners. This reflects our instinctive belief that during the lengthy and often tedious process of mastering a

foreign/second language (L2), the learner's enthusiasm, commitment and persistence" prevail. Dörnyei illustrates some motivational condition for learning a second language; these conditions are stated below:

Creating the basic motivational conditions:

- Appropriate teacher behaviors
- A pleasant and supportive atmosphere in the classroom
- A cohesive learner group with appropriate group norms

Generating initial motivation:

- Enhancing the learners' L2 related values and attitudes
- Increasing the learners' expectancy of success
- Increasing the learners' goal-orientation
- Making the teaching materials relevant for the learners

Maintaining and protecting motivation:

- Making learning stimulating and enjoyable
- Presenting tasks in a motivating way
- Setting specific learner goals
- Protecting the learners' self-esteem and increasing their self confidence

- Allowing learners to maintain a positive social image
- Creating learner autonomy
- Promoting self-motivating strategies
- Promoting cooperation among the learners (*ibid.p.29*)

As the author mentions, motivation has a huge effect in learning and it includes diverse and varied issues. Teacher and students need to reflect about these issues in order to obtain effective results. Although motivation is a complex term, teachers would have to face and overcome some obstacles in order to obtain a successful learning (Dörnyei, 2001. p .1).

Edge (2002) “The most useful perspective for the teacher to take is to consider what aspects of motivation can be changed and to focus on creating successful experiences which will enhance motivation”. It is important then to consider how involved students are and how comfortable and significant the environment where they are may affect their achievement and their objectives.

Furthermore, according to Hall (2011) “Learners bring a wide range of “personality variables” to language learning and the L2 classroom” (*ibid.p.130*). It means that students can have different traits, characteristics and feelings that also take part in the process of learning and these aspects could change the process of learning because sometimes they arrive to the classroom with different experiences, ideas, thinking and feelings. Hence, teachers play a significant and vital role in the maintenance of an essential atmosphere valuable for learning.

2.3.3 ASPECTS THAT AFFECT LEARNING

According to Vale and Feunteun (1995) “There are many factors that can affect teenagers’ performance, such as problems at home, health, and inspiration”. Learners’ knowledge can also be affected and influenced by: family problems, violence at home, psychological issues and even the food students have access to. Some of these factors may also be responsible for how and what students learn.

In addition to this Edge (1993) claims that “All learners are the same. Outside the classroom they have a family, friends, work, study or play, responsibilities, a place to live, and all the joys and worries that come with those things. Into class, they bring with them their names, their knowledge, experience, intelligence, skills, feelings, imagination, awareness, creativity, sense of humor, problems, purposes, dreams, hopes, aspirations, fears, memories, interests, prejudices, habits, expectations, likes, dislikes, preferences, and everything else that goes with being a human being, including the ability to speak at least one language. “According to this author, it is clear to see that there are many internal and external factors that can interfere in students’ learning. And as he mentions, ironically; “All learners are the same”, every student arrives to school with diverse aspects and reasons that have a huge influence in the learning and that impacts how much they learn. It is also vital to observe that students’ motivation takes part in this process of learning and that all these factors could change the students’ performance and result in a considerable learning.

On the other hand, Legutke and Thomas (1991) claim that “the learner does not come into the project classroom knowing nothing. Rather, he brings with a range of previous learning experiences, of values, views and expectations” (*ibid*.p.267). All

students possess capabilities, knowledge and other features that may influence their education because when they arrive to school; everyone presents several situations, manners of life, social status, beliefs and ideas. However, these issues take part in their learning because these implications are exposed around the learners and consciously or unconsciously they seem to be influenced and the proficiency and performance could be not enough for them.

As Celce- Murcia and McIntosh (1979) discuss“ESL students have extensively needs, differences cultural background, age, and previous education”. In other words, aspects such as necessities, environment and previous knowledge take a paramount part and play a central role in the process of learning. For this reason teachers must consider these features in order to understand how students could obtain a significant learning and how they could feel themselves competent students.

Finally, another feature that must be considered as a factor that strongly affects students’ learning is the issue of teacher’s beliefs. Beliefs take part in the process of learning; these beliefs guide the decisions, knowledge and values that interfere in students’ education. Sometimes teachers think that they have the last decision into the classroom, hence, factors such as the interest, the necessities, the wish and the influence of different persons also may interfere and affect the learning process (Williams and Burden, 1997. p.56).

As a conclusion, as it has been discussed the quantity of factors that can affect learning is immense. Although, in occasions it seems insignificant to consider, these issues become crucial information to help teachers take part in an informed manner about the issue and find the techniques, strategies and methods that seem to be the most effective to improve and achieve a highest goals education. Teachers consciousness

about their responsibility in this process becomes critical, especially in the sense of the manner students perceive their attitudes and behaviors and the form they believe these features may impact their learning

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

3.1 CHAPTER OVERVIEW

In this chapter we discuss the methodology used in this investigation. This section includes vital topics to illustrate the essential characteristics of the research. This

chapter presents in detail the descriptions of the method, the participants, the context and the instruments used to carry out this investigation. There is also a description of the data collection procedure.

3.2 METHOD/APPROACH

There are two methods we used in this investigation; the qualitative and the quantitative method. According to Creswell (2009) qualitative research “is a resource for discovering and understanding the meaning individuals of groups assign to a social or human problem”. In this sense, we attempt to explore the form students perceive their English teachers’ attitudes. On the other hand, quantitative research “is a means for testing purpose schemes by examining the relationship among variables”. We used quantitative information to illustrate students’ responses toward the instrument to collect the data (a questionnaire) and combine the methods in this study for analyzing specific and detailed data.

Furthermore, it is essential to mention that at using these two methods our research became a “Mixed Method” investigation. A mixed method employs the combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches; this type of research has gained popularity. This popularity relies on the fact that methodology continues to involve and develop and mixed methods provide another step toward utilizing the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative research (Creswell, 2009. p. 203).

We should consider that currently this research method is new in the social and human sciences and that it is regarded as another type of research approach. Moreover with this new method we as can obtain advantages used for obtain more precise results and conclusions.

3.3 CONTEXT OF THE RESEARCH

This investigation was carried out in a public secondary school; the school is situated in a suburban area in Puebla. This community is called Atoyatempan which means “a orilla del río Atoyac” [aside the Atoyac river] and it is located in the south of the state. The school is big. It has 9 classrooms and 3 laboratories. There are approximately 300 students. In the school there are 12 teachers of the different subjects and only two of them are English Teachers for all the grades and groups. Each classroom has about 30 students. One classroom has Technological Equipment (a computer and an overhead projector).

3.4 PARTICIPANTS

The participants in this study were students of a Public Secondary School. They were in the third grade of the school and their age ranged from 14 to 15 years old. There were 21 participants; 7 male and 14 female. The students' social status was low-medium. Even when there were about 30 students in the classroom only 21 participated in the study; the reason was because at the moment of collecting the data some of them were outside the classroom in other activities.

During the procedure we observed that most of the participants were in a good mood and comfortable with their class, they were working. The whole group were sat and entertained with the activity of answering the questionnaire. Therefore, they answered in a fast and positive way.

3.5 INSTRUMENT

The instrument used in this study was a questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed in Spanish. It contained two sections. The first section was a checklist with 5 specific points according to teacher's behavior and the second part contained 7 open questions in which general aspects were considered about the teacher. In the case of the first part, the five questions were created according to our own experience because we considered that these aspects were relevant in the process of teaching-learning. In the second stage, there were open questions in order to acquire more details about how students think and describe their teacher's behavior and attitudes in the classroom (You may see the questionnaire in the Appendix?).

3.6 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

The data were obtained in the secondary school on October 31th, 2013 at 11:40 in one of the classrooms of the third grade and during the English class. When we arrived first we introduced ourselves with the director of the school and he accompanied us to the classroom. It was a cold day and there were not all the students because some of them were in a physical practice outside the classroom. For this reason, in the classroom there were only 21 students. The students were in a good humor and disposition in accepting to respond the questionnaire.

The application of the questionnaire was undemanding. First, we introduced ourselves to the students and after we explained the instructions to students. We gave them the questionnaire and they started answering it. It took for them about 20 minutes. Finally, the questionnaires were collected and we thanked them for their participation. Then we thanked the teacher and director.

3.7 DATA ANALYSIS

The data analysis in this study was first an exploration by looking at patterns in order to elaborate statistical representations to observe how many participants shared similar or the same answers respect to the first stage that included a checklist with 5 particular points. All questions and answers have been translated into English for the purpose of this thesis. The checklist in the first part included information about their teacher's behavior identification. Then, a qualitative analysis of the responses in the open question was achieved in order to provide illustrations of the interpretations. In this way we obtained the participants' responses with more details and identified what were the similar and contradictory answers in each stage of the questionnaire.

Finally, the analysis of these open questions was enlightened with the Appraisal System (Martin & Rose, 2003) framework. This framework analyzes discourse as a social activity and how contexts are related (Ibid. p. 4). The focus in the analysis of the discourse used in the students' responses is on Attitude; "the feelings and values that are negotiated. The lexical resources here have to do with evaluating things, people's character and their feelings" (ibid. p.17). In general our analysis presents evaluations participants' express toward their teachers' attitudes and behaviors.

According to the analysis we could obtain findings and conclusions respect to our purpose about how teachers' behavior influence in students' learning, according to students.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

4.1 CHAPTER OVERVIEW

In this chapter we present the answer to the three research questions we posed in the first chapter, each question will be answered by providing illustrative information. The evidence shown has been taken from the participants responses to a questionnaire and then interpreted in terms of the actual issues raised by the participants.

4.2 ANSWER TO THE FIRST RESEARCH QUESTION

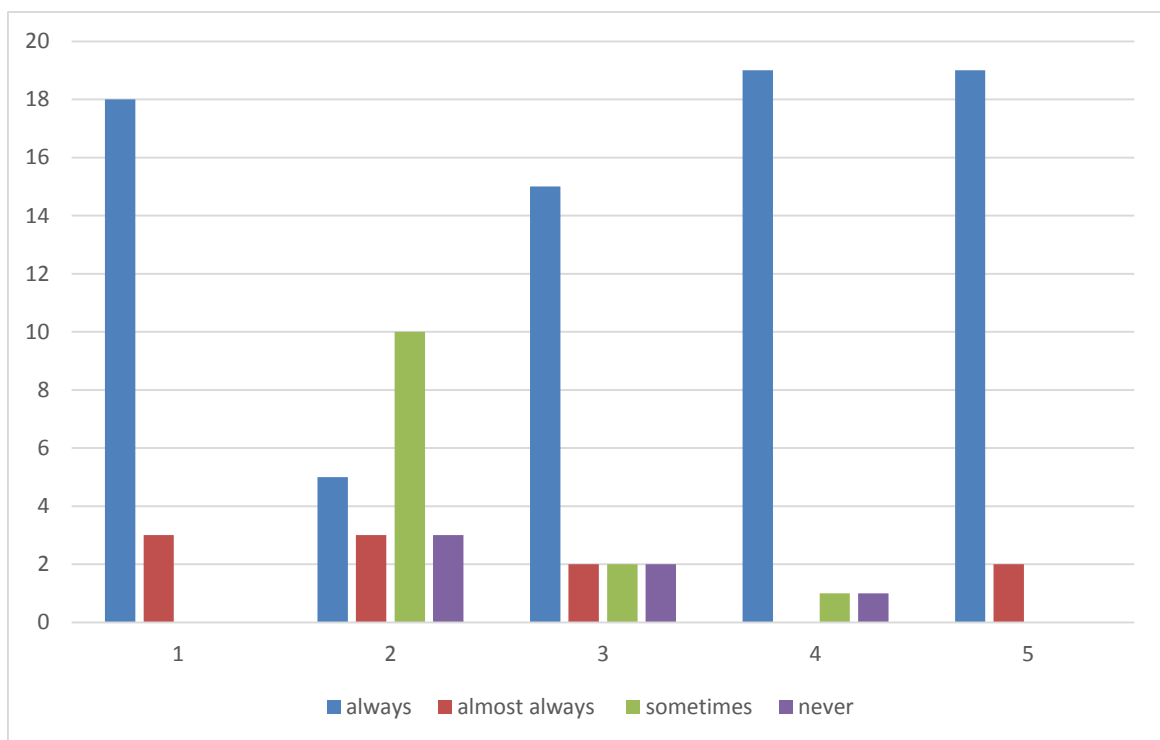
The first research question in this investigation was how English Language Teachers' behaviors and attitudes affect students' learning according to participants' responses (students'). In order to answer this question, participants were asked to complete the following statements with adverbs of frequency:

1. My English teacher is kind in the classroom
2. I know when my English teacher is angry
3. The teacher solves all my doubts
4. My teacher offers a confident environment in the classroom
5. The teacher motivates me to learn

According to participants' responses, teachers' kindness is perceived **always**. Almost all participants believe that teachers are kind **always**; only one participant reported that teachers are kind **almost always**. As for the second item participants do not share a homogeneous opinion. We can see these answers in the graph below. Five participants reported always, three answered almost always, ten reported sometimes and only three answered never. This may mean that there is not a general consensus about when participants know if their teacher is angry.

In the following item, if teacher solved all their doubts; it can be seen that fifteen participants chose always, two answered almost always, two reported sometimes and

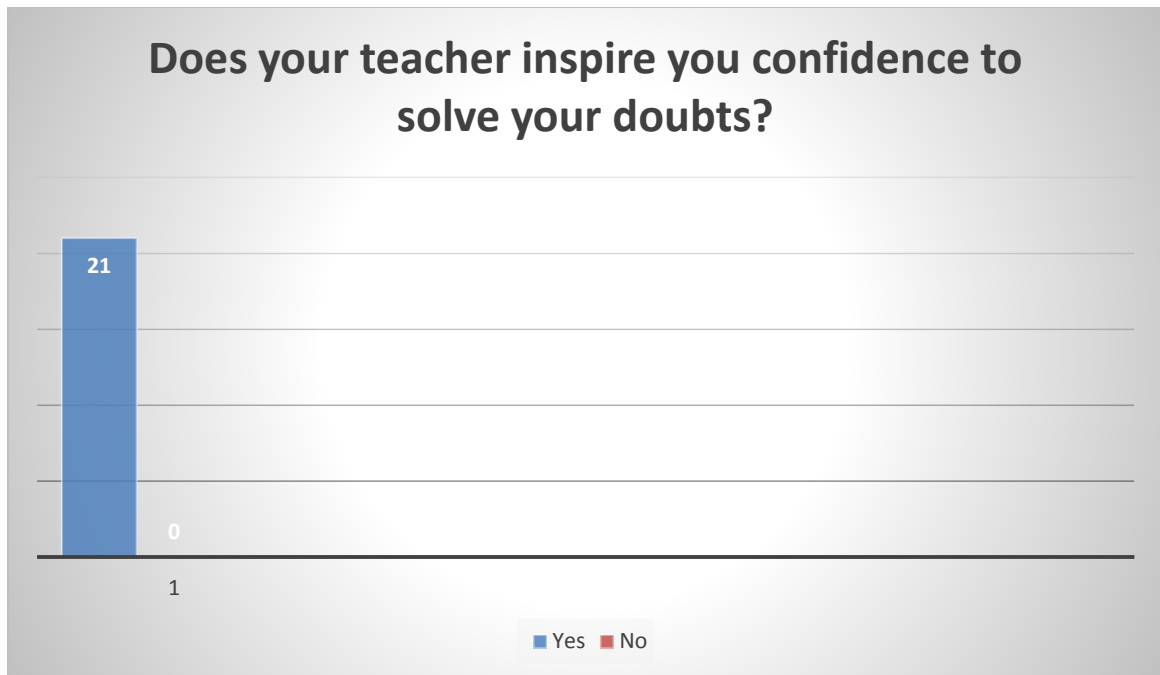
only two participants answered never. In this item we can mention that the majority of the participants considered that teacher always solved their doubts. In the next item, as we see 19 out of 21 participants considered that teacher always offered a confident environment in the classroom, only one participant answered that sometimes and one more answered never. In the last item of this graph we can see that 19 participants believed that their teacher always motivated them to learn and only 2 participants reported almost always.



Graphic 4.2.1 Teacher's behavior.

As we can see, participants' answers about the five issues mentioned above are mostly positive, this means that participants report that they can easily identify teachers' attitudes and behaviors. On the other hand, the graph above does not completely answer the question if participants believe their teachers' attitudes and behaviors affect their

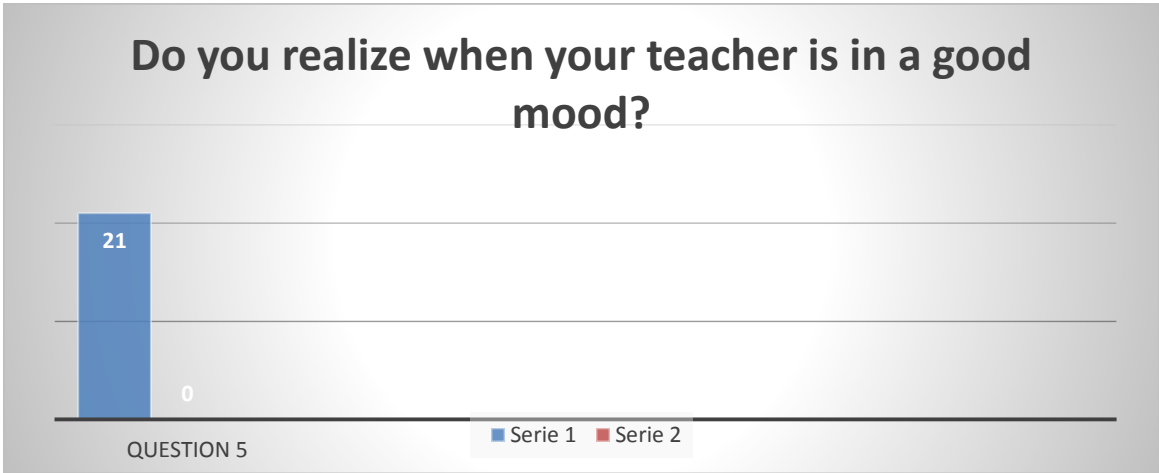
learning. In order to fully complete this research question the following questions were also asked in the questionnaire:



Graphic 4.2.2

In this question students were asked if their teacher inspired them confidence to solve their doubts. In the graph above participants' opinions can be seen. All 21 participants considered that their teacher always inspired confidence to solve doubts. As we can see, surprisingly, no one answer negatively this question.

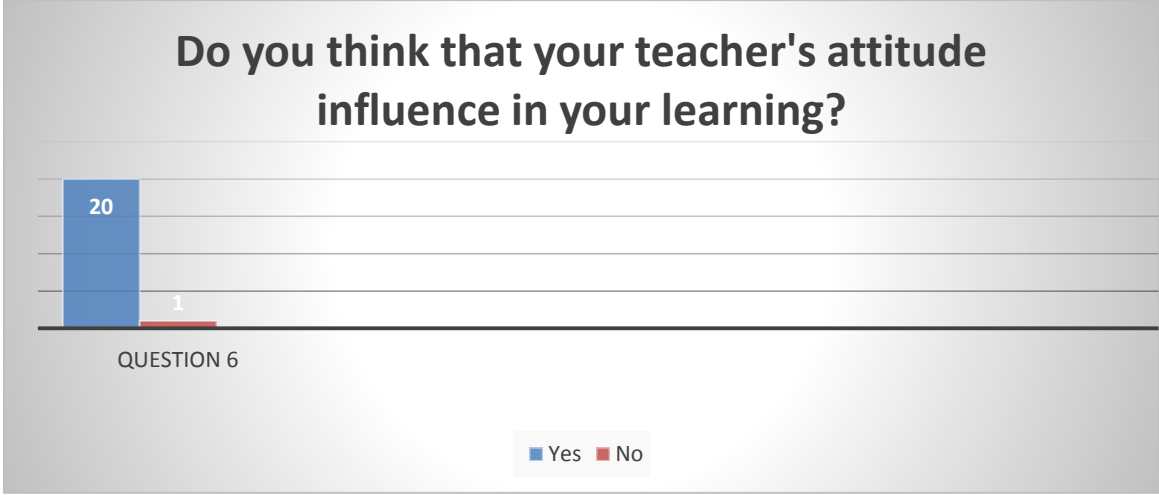
Concerning the form participants perceive or not their teacher's mood and changes of behavior, students were asked if they could perceive when their teacher was in a good mood.



Graphic 4.2.3

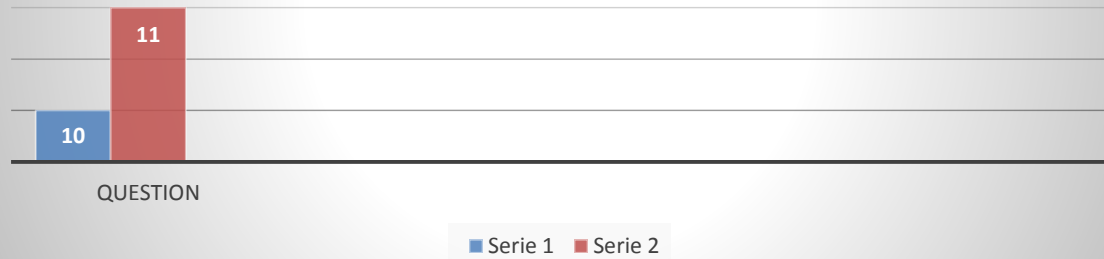
As it can be seen in graphic 4.2.3, 100% of the participants agreed that they knew when their teacher was in a good mood. This means that according to participants' responses they can clearly and easily perceive teachers' behaviors and attitudes.

In order to fully answer the first research question the two following graphs illustrate participants' responses toward their beliefs on teacher's attitudes and behaviors and how they affect their learning:



Graphic 4

When your teacher is in a bad mood, do you think that his/her attitude influence in your learning?



Graphic 5

As we see in the previous graphs almost all the participants express that their teacher's attitude influence in their learning. 20 participants answered yes and only one answered no. In other words we could say that the majority of the participants accept as a fact that teacher's attitude has a huge influence in their learning.

Conversely, the question about teacher's bad mood, participants' answers suggest that there is no clear agreement. As we can see in the previous graph, participants do not share the same opinion. Their responses were 10 yes and 11 no. In other words, we can comment that participants are divided because almost half of them think that their teacher's attitude influence in their learning and the other half of the participants think that it does not influence.

4.3 ANSWER TO THE SECOND RESEARCH QUESTION

The second question in this investigation was how participants described their teacher's behavior and attitude in the classroom. In order to answer this question, participants were asked to answer three questions; the first question was about how they described their teacher. In this case participants' responses were classified according to three aspects regarding their teacher's behavior and attitude (positive descriptions, negative descriptions and neutral descriptions). It can be seen in the first chart illustrated below.

The other two questions that participants answered were if their teacher inspired them to solve their doubts and if they thought that their teacher's attitude influenced in their learning. In this second case, participants' responses were classified according to two aspects respecting their teacher's **confidence** and **influence** in their learning (See chart 2).

Participants' responses of these two questions are illustrated below.

CHART 1.

IN GENERAL, HOW WILL YOU DESCRIBE YOUR TEACHER?

POSITIVE	MEDIUM	NEGATIVE
Una Buena persona y se interesa en el aprendizaje de sus alumnos. (<i>A good person and interested in students' learning</i>).	Exigente pero explica cuando no entendemos. (<i>Demanding but explains when we do not understand</i>).	
Una persona amable. (<i>A kind person</i>).	Amable aunque a veces viene a clases de mal humor. (<i>Kind although sometimes she comes to the class in a bad mood</i>).*	*
Paciente cuando no comprendemos algo. (<i>Patient when we do not understand something</i>)	Comprensiva pero a veces muy estricta. (<i>Comprehensible but sometimes very strict</i>).	
Inteligente, amable y confiable. (<i>Intelligent, kind and self-confident</i>).	Parece una mala persona pero realmente ella es buena. (<i>She looks like a bad person* but actually she is good</i>)	*

As it can be seen the majority of the participants' answers are on the positive side. They described their English teacher using generally positive adjectives. Only four participants answered in the neutral aspect and surprisingly within this neutral side there appears to be an implied negative aspect. This may imply that practically although most participants refer to their professor using positive evaluations, they can still perceive some negative issues regarding their attitude deficiencies.

CHART 2.

1. Does your teacher inspire you confidence to solve your doubts?

2. Do you think your teacher's attitude influence in your learning?

CONFIDENCE	INFLUENCE
Explica de Buena manera si tenemos dudas (<i>He explains in a good way if I have doubts</i>)	No tener miedo (<i>not to be afraid</i>)
Amable al resolver mis dudas (<i>He's Kind to solve my doubts</i>)	Nos obliga a hacer bien las cosas (<i>He Forces us to do good things</i>)
Me motiva a aprender mas (<i>He motivates me to learn more</i>)	Me corrige todo el tiempo (<i>He corrects me all the time</i>)
Nos anima a seguir nuestros estudios (<i>He encourage us to follow our studies</i>)	Mi aprendizaje depende de la actitud y estado de animo (<i>My learning depends on his attitude and mood</i>)
Explica si no comprendo, es una persona paciente (<i>He explains if I do not understand, he is a patient person</i>)	Tenemos que hacer todas las cosas bien (<i>We have to do everything in a good way</i>)
Comprensible con todos (<i>Comprehensible with everybody</i>)	Si la actitud es positive aprendo mas (<i>If his attitude is positive, I learn more</i>)
Nos sentimos cómodos con la maestra (<i>We feel comfortable with the teacher</i>)	No puedo explicar cómo es mi maestro (<i>I cannot explain how my teacher is</i>)
Tiene Buenos sentimientos (<i>He has good feelings</i>)	A veces la clase es aburrida (<i>Sometimes the class is boring</i>)
Me anima todo el tiempo a aprender mas (<i>She encourages me to learn more</i>)	La voz de la maestra (<i>The teachers' voice</i>)
Nos ayuda a tomar una buena decisión (<i>She helps us to make a good choice</i>)	
Todo el tiempo esta de buenas (<i>All the time she is in a good mood</i>)	

As it can be seen participants' answers toward their teacher's confidence were all positive. We can also notice in this chart that participants mentioned some interesting features which may suggest the form they believe their teacher's attitudes influence in their learning. These aspects may be seen in expressions such as;

Si la actitud es positive aprendo mas (*If his attitude is positive, I learn more*);

and

Mi aprendizaje depende de la actitud y estado de animo (*My learning depends on his attitude and mood*);

We believe that some of these responses may be evidence that teachers must consider their attitude as partly influential in the success of learning apart from other issues as methodology, techniques and knowledge.

4.4 ANSWER TO THE THIRD RESEARCH QUESTION

The last research question in this study was what discourse markers (of the Appraisal System) participants used to describe their perceptions toward their teacher's behavior. In order to answer this question, participants were asked to respond four open questions.

The first question was how their teacher corrected them when they made a mistake. The second question was how they would describe their relationship with their English teacher. The third question was if they could realize when their teacher was in a good mood. And the last question was if they believed their teacher's bad mood could influence their learning.

All participants' answers were classified using the Appraisal System (Martin and Rose, 2003) framework. This system explains that "appraisal is a system of interpersonal meanings; we use the resources of Appraisal for negotiating our social relationships, by telling our listeners how we feel about things and people". This system helped us classifying the form students evaluated their teacher's behavior and attitude in class. Participants' responses are categorized as positive and negative; and then in each case, evaluations are classified as explicit or implied (See the table below).

- **Chart 3.** What discourse markers do participants use to describe their perceptions toward teachers' behavior?

	Positive	Negative
Explicit	Q 2/4 Hay buenacomunicación. (<i>There is a good communication</i>)	Q 2/4 Corregir el error. (<i>Correct the mistake</i>)
	Buen humor. (<i>Good mood</i>)	Me encierra donde está el error y me corrige. (<i>Circle the mistake and correct me</i>)
	Si hay alguna duda, lo explica. (<i>If there is some doubt she explains it</i>)	
	Nos ayuda a resolver algún error. (<i>She helps us solve mistakes</i>)(5)	
	Muy amable. (<i>Very kind</i>)	
	Nos anima a aprender y a participar (<i>She encourages us to participate and to learn</i>)	
	Nos enseña cosas nuevas y nos explica. (<i>She teaches us new things and explains to us</i>)	
	Es puntual cuando le toca clase. (<i>She arrives on time. To be punctual</i>)	
	Buena relación (x2) (<i>Good relationship</i>)	
	Q 5/7 Siempre está de buen humor. (<i>She always is in a good mood</i>)	Q 5/7 No nos explica. (<i>She does not explain to us</i>)
	Tolerante. (<i>Tolerant</i>)	Porque esta de mal humor, siento que no explica la clase. (<i>Because if she is in a bad mood, she does not explain the class.</i>)
	Andafeliz y amable. (<i>She is happy and kind</i>)	
	Enseñabien. (<i>She teaches us very well</i>)	No explicabien. (<i>She does not explain very well</i>)
		Cuando esta de mal humor, tenemos miedo y no participamos. (<i>When she is in a bad mood, we are afraid to participate</i>)
	Cuando nos enseña esta de mal humor. (<i>When she teaches us, she is in a bad mood</i>)	
	Gritarnos y estar molesta, entonces perdemos el querer aprender. (<i>Shouting at us and to be in a bad mood then, we lose the interest to learn</i>)	
Implied	Q 2/4 Bien porque enseña bien. (<i>Good relationship because she teaches very well</i>)	Q 2/4 Dándome a entender que hay que tener más cuidado al realizar cualquier trabajo. (<i>Making me understand that we have to be careful at work</i>)
	Que lo vuelva a intentar hacer de Nuevo. (<i>To try to do it again</i>)	Hay un error y no es la palabra correcta. (<i>There is a mistake and it is not the right word.</i>)
	Me dice el error y me corrige. <i>She tells me the mistake and corrects me.</i>	Me explica cómo debo hacerlo para poder corregir el error. (<i>She explains me how I must do it and I can correct the mistake</i>)
	Nos corrige. (<i>She corrects us</i>)	Corrige las palabras que están mal. (<i>She corrects the words that are wrong</i>)
	Me dice que no es la palabra correcta pero que está	

	bien que participe. <i>(She tells me when that is not the right answer but that it is ok to participate)</i>	Diciendo que está mal y me dice como es lo correcto. <i>(Saying that it is wrong and she tells me how it is correct).</i>
	Explica todo. <i>(She explains everything)</i>	Debemos comportarnos. <i>(We must behave)</i>
	Primero me dice cuál es el error y después me explica. <i>(First, telling me which is the mistake and after, she explains to me)</i>	Me dice que está mal y me lo vuelve a explicar. <i>(She tells me that it is wrong and she explains to me again)</i>
	Q 5/7 Nunca la he visto molesta. <i>(I have never seen her in a bad mood)</i>	Q 5/7 No me puedo concentrar en la clase. <i>(I cannot concentrate in class)</i>
	La clase es divertida. <i>(The class is fun)</i>	Por su mirada. <i>(Her look)</i>
	Se enfoca en nosotros. <i>(She focuses on us)</i>	Cuando esta de mal humor la actitud del maestro hacia nosotros es mala. <i>(Teacher's attitude is bad when she is in a bad mood)</i>
	Puedo ver cuando la maestra está de buen humor porque tiene buena actitud. <i>(I can see when the teacher is in a good mood because she has a good attitude)</i>	Me da flojera para preguntar algo. <i>(I cannot be bothered to ask anything)</i>
	Amable con nosotros. <i>(Kind with us)</i>	Se enoja. <i>(She gets angry)</i>
	No grita. <i>(she does not shout)</i>	No repite el tema. <i>(she does not repeat the topic)</i>
	Nos da la clase con mucho entusiasmo. <i>(She gives us the class with enthusiasm)</i>	No podemos aprender cuando esta de mal humor. <i>(We cannot learn when she is in a bad mood)</i>

As we can see, participants' responses show generally a negative evaluation. Participants' responses suggest that they truly believe that their teachers' attitude influence in their learning. The majority of the participants' answers were negative such as "me encierra donde esta el error y me corrige" (*She circles the mistake and corrects me*), "she does not explain well" or "Teacher's attitude to us is bad when she is in a bad mood". However most participants' responses utilize implied evaluations as a manner to describe their teacher's negative attitude (e.g. "She tells me that it is not the right answer but it is good to participate). Also, it can be perceived that a few answers were positive but participants used an implied manner to describe their teacher's attitude.

Something that is clear in this analysis is that participants' negative evaluations are generally implied judgments. This may suggest that even when they do perceive negative issues they do not want to expose themselves and their answers as negatively evaluating their teachers' attitude and behavior.

4.5 SOME CONCLUSIONS

We can conclude that participants agree with the importance of the teacher's behavior and comportment in their learning. Although, in some occasions their responses were contradictory in the different sections of questions finally they expressed the similar responses that could answer to the research questions.

Currently we can maintain that behavior and attitude are significant influences in the process of teaching- learning, hence it depends how students can achieve excellent effects in this procedure. The importance of these aspects is to be conscious that if teachers show a positive comportment into the classroom they and the students could maintain an excellent relationship and interaction, and as a result successful objectives.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

5.1 IMPLICATIONS

The aim of this research was to explore the form high school students perceive their English teacher's behaviors and attitudes. The fact that all people involved in educational contexts accept and recognize the manner our behaviors and attitudes can impact others will certainly promote a more respectful and responsible educational environment. This research, specifically, might be a helpful tool for English teachers and also for students at informing actual findings. Teachers and students, their actions, behaviors and attitudes play a vital role in the process of teaching-learning. Very especially, in this research we focused on the teachers' aspects, therefore, it may help educators distinguish the importance of expressing a good attitude, a positive behavior and a comfortable atmosphere in order to achieve successful effects; according to participants' responses.

Moreover, findings in this research might also be beneficial for students and help them self-explore their own attitudes and behaviors and guide them in their understanding of their effects in the learning process. Findings may also help understanding the nature of educational contexts, its aspects and consciousness about how they may interfere in the process of learning. Finally the results presented here may also serve at identifying what could be the principal factors that take part in the process and how this may be involved in the accomplishment of objectives.

5.2 LIMITATIONS

In the realization of this study we encountered some limitations. First of all, the number of participants was only 21. Secondly, we only applied one instrument (a questionnaire) which included two parts a multiple choice one and an open questions part. We believe that the answers in the multiple choice part may have limited participants' freedom to answer. Finally, the analysis of the open questions was based only on the Positive/negative categorizations of the Appraisal System framework. This may have cause a limitation in the exploration of other discourse markers and/or discursive patterns.

Besides, another central aspect which needs be mentioned is that the application of the questionnaire was in one day which may not have allowed all the participants attend to class. Consequently, we did not obtain information from the whole group and these issues may assure variations. Despite the fact of this, we believe the data were enough; useful and constructive in order to provide a general panorama of the issue under study.

5.3 DIRECTION FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study presents only the results obtained by using a questionnaire. However, there are more details that researchers must consider in order to obtain more specify information. We suggest that if anyone is interested in conducting or continuing a similar study, it may be useful and convenient to apply some other instruments, such as interviews, observations, and video-recordings. These instruments may allow researchers to find more actual information about people involved in educational contexts.

On the other hand, a piece of advice for future investigators is to include more participants and /or take into account both sides of the coin; teachers as well as students in order to obtain additional evidence and possibly to apply the instrument in two different contexts to compare participants' diverse answers.

We have only provided a straightforward view of how students feel and learn into the classroom and the form they perceive their English teachers' behavior and attitudes may affect their learning process.

APPENDIX

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