




English language education in a rural school

Enseñanza del idioma inglés en una escuela rural

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Resumen

El inglés es uno de los idiomas más hablados alrededor del mundo, entonces es necesario la introducción de este idioma en todas las instituciones educativas. Este estudio se enfoca en identificar la realidad de la enseñanza del idioma inglés en una escuela rural de Latacunga. Esta investigación fue un estudio cualitativo descriptivo que utilizó la entrevista semi estructurada y observación como métodos de recolección de datos. Los resultados a partir de la entrevista hecha a siete miembros de la comunidad educativa revelaron que la falta de recursos de enseñanza, la escasez de docentes de inglés, la poca motivación en los estudiantes y un carente ambiente escolar son algunos de los problemas más comunes que enfrenta esta escuela. Además, los datos obtenidos por medio de la observación revelan que las instalaciones escolares deben mejorarse para promover mejores experiencias de aprendizaje. No obstante, es importante reconocer el esfuerzo por la comunidad escolar en mantener una institución estable.

Abstract

English is one of the most widely spoken languages around the world, so it is necessary to teach it in all institutions. This study focused on identifying realities of English language education in a rural school of Latacunga. This research was a qualitative descriptive study that used semi-structured interviews and observation as data collection methods. The results of interviews conducted to seven members of the educational community revealed that the lack of teaching resources, the scarcity of English teachers, the low students' motivation, and poor educational environment are some of the most common problems that this school faces. Moreover, data collected by means of observation reveals that the school facilities need to be improved to promote better learning experiences. Nevertheless, it is important to recognize the effort made by the school community in maintaining a stable institution.

Introduction

English is an international language. It “has become the most widespread language around the globe” (Romero & Camacho, 2018, p. 500). For most educational institutions in Latin America, learning this language has become a fundamental part of the curriculum. Several countries have created various national strategies or plans for English language teaching. These national strategies have made it possible to improve foreign language learning at the national level and have also established actions to improve English proficiency in the educational process (Cronquist & Fiszbein, 2017).

In Ecuador, English teaching is considered a necessary element within the curriculum for public and private institutions. However, in rural schools, foreign language education is a constant challenge since they are usually deprived of meaningful learning. Hossain (2016) states that most of the students at schools in rural areas do not reach the essential skills of the English language due to the different problems in the educational system. Some international research studies reveal that most rural schools receive an education below that of urban schools (Hossain, 2016). The lack of specialized or quality English teachers, educational resources, geographical location, availability of technology, and a limited number of teaching hours are factors that impede the development of language skills and affect the quality of language education (Hossain, 2016; Puma, 2017). Consequently, students lack motivation to study English (Shahnaz & Saleha, 2021), and they are frequently immersed in a lack of school alternatives (Izquierdo et al., 2021).

Nevertheless, there is little research about the current situation of English language education in Ecuadorian rural schools. That is why this research aims at describing the educational reality of the English language education in a rural school in Latacunga.

English Language Education in a Rural School

In certain counties, English is integrated into school programs as a second language and students begin to learn from an early age (Niyozova, 2020). "In Ecuador, the importance of learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) has been acknowledged in several education policy documents" (Orosz et al., 2021, p. 230). English language teaching in educational institutions has several benefits. It allows students to acquire skills that help socialization and interaction. When teaching English in schools, it is agreed that the benefits are many because students acquire new knowledge from an early age and become more immersed in understanding a new culture. Learning a second language from an early age, children can learn better because they are active and able to achieve high performance (Cahyati & Madya, 2019).

Problems in English Language Education in a Rural School

Around the world, the teaching and learning of English in public educational institutions faces certain challenges (Izquierdo et al., 2021). In addition, Torres & McCandles (2021) argues that "the implementation of (...) strategies have created challenges for English teachers not only in the international context but also in Latin America" (p. 89). Teachers' role is important in achieving good results in learning. In this context Hossain (2016), considers that if teachers are aware and become qualified to train students, students in rural areas will learn English better. In addition, Cárdenas et al. (2019), states that "teachers need to improve their knowledge, attending courses as they have the responsibility to teach English properly to help students to achieve their curriculum goals" (p. 93).

In rural areas, the poor quality of English education negatively alters the development of students and impairs the chances of achievement in a potentially competitive world (Singh, 2021). Other factors that prevent English language teaching from progressing in these areas are a lack of educational resources, inadequate facilities, and unmotivated students. These problems make rural schools look inferior to urban schools (Shahnaz & Saleha, 2021). Another problem that is common in rural areas is the lack of teachers. Hiring a teacher is difficult because it must be adjusted to the circumstances of rural education (Ramos & Aguirre, 2016).

Regarding English language teaching in rural communities, for the inhabitants, learning this language is not a priority (Izquierdo et al., 2021). For people who are from rural areas, English is not yet considered a foreign language that offers quick benefits to their lives (Shahnaz & Saleha, 2021). "Some families do not see the relevance of learning more than basic reading, writing and math" (Ramos & Aguirre, 2016, p. 213). As a result, rural students are at a disadvantage compared to urban students as they "tend to lack motivation in learning English because they rarely use the language in their everyday communication" (Shahnaz & Saleha, 2021, p. 335).

School Facilities in a Rural School

Within the rural context, the scarcity of school infrastructure does not allow classes to be taught successfully (Ramos & Aguirre, 2016). According to Arfan et al. (2019), "school infrastructure has a positive impact on the academic achievements and behavior modifications of the students" (p. 3). However, "The absence of a suitable environment makes it difficult for the learners of a foreign language to learn the language easily and comfortably" (Arfan et al., 2019, p. 2).

Methodology

Research Design and Participants

This descriptive qualitative research aimed at analyzing the current situation of teaching and learning English in a rural school in Latacunga -Ecuador. The study was conducted in an institution that has 168 students (79 boys and 89 girls between 4 and 12 years old), and 9 teachers (6 women and 3 men) during the teaching practices of two researchers. According to the authorities, the institution does not have students with disabilities. Data were collected from eight participants: the main authority who was a 55-year-old man with a third-level degree in Educational Sciences, a 27-year-old female English teacher with a third-level degree in Accounting and Auditing and B2 English proficiency certificate from a university in Latacunga, three students (2 male students of ten years old who belonged to sixth grade and 1 female student of 9 years old who belonged to fifth grade), 2 mothers of about 40 years. Snowball sampling was used to choose students and parents; the English teacher suggested to the researchers which children and parents could be interviewed.

Finally, three research questions guided this study: 1) What are the educational community's opinions about English language education in a rural school of Latacunga? 2) What are the educational community's opinions about problems in English language education in a rural school of Latacunga? 3) What is the condition of school facilities in a rural school of Latacunga?

Data Collection

Semi-structured interviews and non-experimental field observations were used to collect data. Participants were informed about the research scope, and they gave their consent to participate in the interview and get access to the school facilities. With respect to the children's participation, their parents agreed their participation through a written informed consent. To protect their identity, their names were coded as follows: Principal Authority (RVLA), English Teacher (FAAC), Student 1 (CHSSM), Student 2 (VVPA), Student 3 (VCHDA), Mother 1 (CHCHMG), and Mother 2 (SCHMS).

Data Analysis

To analyze data, the thematic analysis process was followed. The interviews were transcribed, and the notes from the observation files were examined. The most relevant extracts from the interviews and notes from the observation were organized into initial categories in an excel document. In order to obtain a new vision of categories and extracts, a second classification was made. Finally, with a third more exhaustive review, the researchers proceeded to a final categorization that has 11 categories from interviews: 1) importance of learning English, 2) motivation to learn English, 3) the teaching and

learning process, 4) English level according to the Curriculum, 5) English teaching at early ages, 6) lack of teaching resources, 7) lack of English teachers, 8) lack of trainings, 9) scant teaching hours, 10) socio economic problems, 11) limit budget, and 4 categories from observation: 1) classroom, 2) bathrooms, 3) recreation spaces, and 4) bar.

Results and Discussion

To answer the first research question about the educational community's opinions about English language education in a rural school of Latacunga, the following categories have been analyzed: 1) importance of learning English, 2) motivation to learn English, 3) the teaching and learning process, 4) English level according to the Curriculum, and 5) English teaching at early ages.

Category 1: Importance of Learning English

“El idioma inglés debe ser obligatorio (...) porque al ser esta una lengua universal es necesario para conseguir cualquier tipo de trabajo.” [The English language should be mandatory (...) because as it is a universal language it is necessary to get any kind of job] (RVLA)

“A nivel educativo el inglés es muy importante ya que (...) es el idioma que está dominando el mundo.” [On an educational level, English is very important since (...) it is the language that is dominating the world.] (FAAC)

“Es importante el aprendizaje del idioma inglés ya que para viajar al exterior es necesario y también para nuestra profesionalización.” [English language learning is important since it is necessary to travel abroad and for our professionalization.] (CHSSM)

“(...) para los estudiantes (...) el idioma resulta ser necesario durante su formación educativa, tanto en la escuela, colegio y en un futuro próximo en su vida laboral. [For students (...) the language results to be necessary during their educational training, at school, high school, and in their near working life future.] (CHCHMG)

“El gobierno debe hacer los esfuerzos posibles para que la enseñanza del idioma inglés se establezca con vigor en cada una de las instituciones educativas.” [The government must make every possible effort so that English language teaching is vigorously established in each of the educational institutions.] (RVLA)

Participants agree that English is considered a universal and dominant language, and it has to be mandatory because it is useful for traveling, professionalization, and getting jobs. For this reason, they suggest that the government must make efforts to teach English in Ecuadorian institutions. They also mention that it is necessary to study from the first

school years until higher levels of education. These results suggest that the educational community is aware about the importance of learning English in school. Torres & McCandless (2021), determine that "Learning languages has great significance worldwide since they are a means of communication and create opportunities for learners" (p. 90). Also, Niyozova (2020) asserts that in most countries in the world, English is applied in school programs from early ages. Thus, the English teaching and learning process must be improved in all education systems so that the students can be prepared for the demands of a changing society.

Category 2: Motivation to Learn English

Un factor que influye en el aprendizaje del idioma es la motivación por parte de los profesores al igual que los padres de familia. [A factor that influences language learning is motivation from teachers as well as parents.] (RVLA)

“Por parte de nuestros compañeros existe motivación por aprender el idioma inglés y buscamos la ayuda pertinente, pero hay algunos niños que no tienen ninguna motivación por aprender el idioma.” [On the part of our classmates there is motivation to learn the English language and we look for the relevant help, but there are some children who do not have any motivation to learn the language.] (CHSSM)

“Es notorio la falta de interés del estudiante al momento de impartir gramática pues este es algo complejo y es ahí cuando toca enseñarles paso a paso como a niños de primer grado.” [It is notorious the lack of interest of the student when teaching grammar because this is something complex and that is when it is time to teach them step by step like first graders.] (FAAC)

For the principal authority, the motivation received from parents and the teacher is an influential factor to learn a foreign language. Also, the students state that some students are motivated to study English, but others are not. However, from the teacher's perspective there is a lack of interest in students to learn the language, especially grammar. In EFL classrooms, motivation in the teaching-learning process is essential to achieve adequate behavior. The study by Alyousif & Alsuhaibani (2021), shows that demotivation in learning a second language can be linked to many factors, but this does not show that the student loses total interest in learning the language, which is why they conclude that the demotivation can be closely linked to the teacher's attitude, the learning context and even the student himself. Moreover, supports that motivation in students can be influenced by intrinsic or extrinsic factors. This means that if students receive positive stimuli (motivation) from teachers and parents, even themselves, they could improve their behavior, competences, and attitude to learn (Brown, 2013; Castillo et al., 2019). With these statements, it is important to emphasize that motivation can become an important

factor in those students who need to overcome difficulties during the acquisition of the language.

Category 3: The Teaching and Learning Process

“En todas las áreas se trabaja con el modelo constructivista (...) ya que es una orden establecida directamente del ministerio de educación.” [In all areas, we work with the constructivist model since it is an order established directly from the Ministry of Education.] (RVLA)

“Con respecto a que, si las metodologías propuestas en el currículo son aplicables en el aula de clase, pienso que no, pues cada sector es totalmente diferente y la realidad es otra.” [As for whether the methodologies proposed in the curriculum are applicable in the classroom, I do not think so, because each sector is totally different, and the reality is different.] (FAAC)

“No se sigue el texto tal cual, sino que primeramente se ve las necesidades de los alumnos.” [The book is not followed as it is, but first the needs of the students are seen.] (FAAC)

... la docente de inglés (...) ofrece las tutorías establecidas en los planes curriculares para cada nivel [the English teacher is in charge of all the administrative parts and is the same one that offers the tutorials established in the curricular plans for each level] (RVLA)

“Las tutorías nos ayudan mucho cuando tenemos bajo rendimiento o si no comprendemos algún tema en general.” [The tutorials help us a lot when we have low performance or if we do not understand a topic in general.] (VVPA)

“La profesora nos da el material didáctico, también hace juegos y dinámicas para aprender la materia.” [The teacher gives us the didactic material; she also makes games and dynamics to learn the subject] (CHSSM)

According to the authority, the constructivist model is applied, and tutoring is offered as established by the Ministry of Education. The teacher pointed out that the methodologies established in the English curriculum are not applicable because students have different realities. Consequently, it is not possible to follow the book in its respective order because it is necessary to know students' needs first. On the other hand, students mention that didactic materials, games, dynamics, and tutoring help them to improve their low performance. The use of a good teaching method can be a factor that contributes to meeting the learning needs in English language students. Ramos & Aguirre (2016), emphasize that "English teachers must have a proper introduction to the teaching techniques in rural areas and also to the pedagogical models that have been proven to be most effective in that zone" (p. 215). Communicative language teaching (CLT) is a method that Brown (2013), suggests for teaching a foreign language because it can help

to connect the language with real life, a real context, and the authenticity with language use. However, teachers also need to use specific strategies for teaching young learners.

Category 4: English Level According to the Curriculum

“El currículo en mi opinión está totalmente improvisado.” [In my opinion, curriculum is totally improvised.] (FAAC)

“Anteriormente el inglés no estaba en el currículo, por ende, la mayor dificultad que tenían los estudiantes era éste, pues no tenían conocimientos previos y tropezaban.” [Previously, English was not in the curriculum, therefore the greatest difficulty that the students had was this because they did not have previous knowledge and they stumbled.] (FAAC)

“Recibí inglés desde primer grado, pero esta materia se perdió y la volví a recibir en cuarto grado.” [I received English from first grade, but this subject was lost, and I received it again in fourth grade] (VCHDA)

“En relación si es que se alcanza el nivel propuesto por el currículo en cada curso pues, se cumple con lo planificado, sin embargo, a nivel de capacidad de cada niño, es diferente, no todos comprenden de la misma manera.” [In relation to whether the proposed level by the curriculum is reached in each course, is fulfilled with what was planned, however it is different at the level of each child's capacity, not everyone understands in the same way.] (FAAC)

The English teacher claimed that the curriculum is improvised. She also asserts that students have problems due to the lack of previous knowledge; some students did not learn English in their previous school years. From the teacher's words, it can be inferred that the students do not achieve the levels proposed in the curriculum; she said that each student learns differently. The teacher's opinion is like what the teachers in a study conducted by Orosz et al. (2021) mentioned; the implementation of the English curriculum of the 2016 in Ecuadorian schools has been a complete failure because the goals proposed within this plan are unrealistic.

Category 5: English Teaching at Early Ages

“El niño necesita conocimientos básicos para desenvolverse en el colegio.” [The child needs basic knowledge to function in school.] (FAAC)

“Es importante que los niños desde pequeños tengan relación con este idioma para que así sea más fácil hablar y aprender inglés en los próximos niveles que están por alcanzar (el colegio y el nivel universitario).” [It is important that children from a young age have a relationship with this language so that it is easier to speak and learn English in the next levels that they are about to reach (school and university level)] (FAAC)

“La asignatura no debe ser obligatoria en los niños de inicial por motivo que es una lengua extranjera y ellos no podrían comprender hasta incluso podrían llegar a confusiones.” [The subject should not be compulsory for children in initial because it is a foreign language, and they could not understand it and could even get confused.] (SCHMS)

“Los niños también presentan dificultades en el aprendizaje del idioma inglés (...) ya que, al ser una lengua extranjera, es desconocida por cierto número de personas además de ello, la enseñanza del idioma desde el hogar es nula y el estudiante no recibe información sobre la lengua más que en la institución educativa.” [Children also have difficulties in English language learning (...) since, being a foreign language, it is unknown by a certain number of people, in addition to that, the teaching of the language from home is null and the student does not receive information about the language more than in the educational institution.] (CHCHMG)

“En inicial, creo que no debe ser obligatoria porque son muy pequeños para entender; recién están aprendiendo.” [At the initial level, I think it should not be mandatory because they are too young to understand, they are just learning] (CHSSM)

There are different opinions regarding the teaching of English at early ages. The English teacher emphasizes that it is important that children from a very young age are familiar with the language so that they can fully develop at higher levels. For a mother and a student, the language should not be compulsory at the initial school level because it could cause confusion in the children; they have truly little to understand. In addition, the mother argues that the language is only taught at school and not at home. The latter opinions about learning English at early ages can be due to their low level of Education because they contradict what existing literature suggests. The absence of English teaching at an early age could negatively affect language acquisition. The study by Djumabaeva et al. (2022), supports that for children it is essential to domain a second language because it helps to develop and stimulate memory, imagination, speech, and their thinking. Djumabaeva et al. (2022), Pedagogical and psychological areas support the learning of a foreign language at an early age, and it is considered as the best time to learn. Therefore, the teaching of English at an early age is essential because it can contribute to improving academic performance and understanding of the language in future levels of education.

To answer the second research question about problems in Language Education in a rural school in Latacunga, these categories have been analyzed: 6) lack of teaching resources, 7) lack of English teachers, 8) lack of trainings, 9) scant teaching hours, 10) socio economic problems, and 11) limit budge.

Category 6: Lack of Teaching Resources

“Casi ninguno de los materiales tecnológicos que existe en la escuela funcionan de manera eficiente pues estas herramientas tecnológicas están en un estado de deterioro y sin mantenimiento.” [Almost none of the technological materials that exist in the schoolwork efficiently because these technological tools are in a state of deterioration and without maintenance.] (RVLA)

“La institución no cuenta con medios tecnológicos para la enseñanza del idioma inglés por lo tanto no se utiliza ningún tipo de dispositivo inteligente.” [The institution does not have technological tools for English language teaching; therefore, no type of intelligent device is used.] (FAAC)

“... Se trabaja con los mismos libros, (...) y la pizarra.” [... We work with the same books, (...) and the blackboard.] (FAAC)

“... teníamos dos libros los cuales debían abastecerse a toda la escuela.” [...we had two books that needed to be supplied to the entire school.] (FAAC)

“Los libros no tienen concordancia puesto que son improvisados y son repetitivos.” [The books do not have concordance since they are improvised and are repetitive.] (FAAC)

The authority mentioned that the institution does not have good, adequate, and conditioned technological resources. Moreover, there are just blackboards and books, but they are repetitive and improvised. Undoubtedly, the lack of good teaching resources including technology is a factor that can negatively affect the development of the teaching-learning process. In this context Cronquist & Fiszbein (2017), mention that to guarantee good learning, it is necessary that textbooks and technology are available and adequate for the practice of the language in the classroom. Kormos & Wisdom (2021), state that according to several studies "teachers who implemented technology-enhanced innovations achieved better results than physical textbooks" (p. 26). Furthermore, claim that technology can improve critical thinking and help to overcome challenges to learn the English Language (Kormos & Wisdom, 2021).

Category 7: Lack of English Teachers

“Hoy en día la institución no cuenta con un personal docente que posea certificación de niveles de inglés a excepción de la docente de lengua extranjera.” [Nowadays the institution does not have a teaching staff that has certified levels of English, except for the foreign language teacher.] (RVLA)

“La escasez de un buen número de docentes limita el aprendizaje de una lengua extranjera.” [The shortage of a good number of teachers limits foreign language learning.] (RVLA)

“Todos los docentes deben poseer un título afín a su materia, pues el docente debe enseñar de forma adecuada el idioma Inglés.” [All teachers must have a

degree related to their subject, since the teacher must adequately teach the English language.] (CHCHMG)

As it was mentioned before, the teacher in charge of teaching English does not have a degree in language education, but she is the only teacher who has an B2 English proficiency certificate from a university in Latacunga. The authority mentioned that the lack of specialized teachers does not allow language learning. In addition, a mother suggests that teachers must have a degree according to the subject they teach to improve the learning effectively. Regarding this, Alqahtani (2021) concludes that the lack of certified teachers in the English language affects the learning, thinking, and educational development of students. Having a certified teacher in the educational institution could improve the levels of English language. In fact, “the policy framework for many countries requires teachers to demonstrate proficiency of the English language and to be certified in teaching English” (Cronquist & Fiszbein, 2017, p. 49).

Category 8: Lack of Trainings

“Las capacitaciones son muy escasas pues al acudir a ellas el Ministerio solo informa sobre directrices y no métodos de enseñanza.” [The trainings are very scarce because when attending them the Ministry only informs about guidelines and not teaching methods.] (RVLA)

“Para el tiempo en el que estoy, sí he recibido capacitación una vez al año a lo que compete inglés.” [For the time I am in, I have received training once a year in English.] (FAAC)

“A nivel del ministerio no se cuenta con el apoyo y las facilidades para ir a cursos, se dice, se supone, porque la mayoría de cursos son en la jornada laborable y no hay permisos, al contar con una autoridad que es comprensiva no hay problema, pues cuando se pide permiso para poder seguir capacitando, el permiso es otorgado.” [At the level of the ministry there is no support and facilities to go to courses, it is said, it is assumed, because most courses are during the working day and there are no permits, by having an authority that is comprehensive there is no problem, because when permission is requested to continue training, permission is granted.] (FAAC)

For the authority, the English teacher does not receive adequate training in teaching methods from the Ministry of Education; they only receive guidelines. Moreover, the English teacher pointed out that she received training just once a year, and there is no support for training in the English area. Low interest given to training by the authorities can harm teachers' knowledge and performance. In fact, this could be one of the main reasons why there is a low deficit in learning the English language. Karim et al. (2018), in their study maintain that the training of English teachers is an essential instrument to reinforce teaching skills, but these trainings fail to generate differential changes in the

teaching practice in the classroom. Moreover, Cronquist & Fiszbein (2017) support that in some cases "Teachers demonstrate poor proficiency levels and often lack certification or training" (p. 6). Therefore, teacher training needs to be taken into account with greater force, as this would help generate new ways of teaching the English language.

Category 9: Scant Teaching Hours

"En primero de básica, tenía entendido que se enseña el inglés, sin embargo, no lo hago, ya que la carga horaria no me abastece." [In the first basic year, I had understood that English is taught, however, I do not do it, since the teaching hours does not supply me.] (FAAC)

"Por disposición del distrito, el nivel inicial y preparatorio no recibe el idioma inglés. Solo reciben inglés los niveles de educación Básica elemental y Básica Media." [By disposition of the district, the initial and preparatory levels do not receive the English language. Only the basic elementary and basic middle education levels receive English.] (RVLA)

"Son suficientes y adecuadas las dos horas de inglés que reciben los estudiantes en la semana, además, la carga horaria es la misma que establece el Ministerio de Educación." [The two hours of English that students receive per week are sufficient and appropriate, and the teaching hours are the same as that established by the Ministry of Education.] (RVLA)

"El número de horas de inglés que los estudiantes reciben a la semana tal vez para los más pequeños sí sean adecuadas, sin embargo, para el resto de estudiantes, si es necesario implementar más horas, para así seguir reforzando conocimientos." [The number of English hours that students receive per week may be adequate for the youngest, however for the rest of the students, if it is necessary to implement more hours, in order to continue reinforcing knowledge.] (FAAC)

There are different opinions regarding the teaching hours. For the authority, English hours are enough and appropriate for all levels while for the teacher those hours are sufficient just for first levels, but not for the higher one. Castro-García (2020), supports that "Having more hours of English class a week allows for a greater variety of activities to be implemented in the classroom, and thus results in greater opportunities for language use during class" (p. 91). In addition, Barre-Parrales & Villafuerte-Holguín (2021), argue that 3 and 5 hours per week can be appropriate for the teaching and learning processes of the English language in public institutions. Therefore, this would significantly increase language acquisition.

Category 10: Socio Economic Problems

“La crisis económica ha generado que los padres de familia busquen recursos económicos por todos los medios, esto genera que los niños queden solos en casa y no reciben todo el afecto, cariño y comprensión que necesitan.” [The economic crisis has caused parents to seek financial resources by all means, this cause that children are left alone at home and do not receive all the affection, affection and understanding they need.] (RVLA)

“Los padres de familia dejan a sus hijos solos la mayoría del día, además otro factor que afecta el aprendizaje de los estudiantes es el alto índice de analfabetismo entre los padres de familia.” [Parents leave their children alone most of the day, and another factor that affects student learning is the high rate of illiteracy among parents.] (RVLA)

“Los problemas familiares (...) no permiten a los niños estar concentrados en sus estudios.” [Family problems are the cause that does not allow children to be focused on their studies.] (FAAC)

“Hay muchos padres que no tienen trabajo, esta zona es alta en consumo de alcohol, entonces los padres al no poseer un trabajo estable la mayoría de los niños sufre maltrato intrafamiliar, pero todo se deriva a la consecuencia de no tener empleo.” [There are many parents who do not have a job, this area is high in alcohol consumption, so parents do not have a stable job, most of the children suffer domestic abuse but everything derives from the consequence of not having a job.] (FAAC)

“La crisis socioeconómica sí ha afectado a mi hogar gravemente porque debido a ello no puedo atender todas las necesidades de mis pequeños.” [The socioeconomic crisis has seriously affected my home because of it I cannot attend to all the needs of my little ones.] (SCHMS)

Another factor that affects a good English learning process is socio economic problems. The authority affirms that parents seek economic stability in any way, so kids do not receive the necessary attention. The same is stated by a parent who assures that she cannot attend to their children's needs due to the economic crisis. The professor's opinion emphasizes that not having a job can generate domestic abuse and alcohol consumption. High illiteracy in parents also affects students' learning. In addition, the English teacher emphasizes that family problems prevent students from concentrating on their studies. Nimmala et al. (2016), in their study support that English learning can be affected by the economical factor, the student performance depends on family economic condition and consequently, "students of rural area lack competency in English language" (Singh, 2021, p. 211).

Category 11: Limit Budget

“Lamentablemente los recursos económicos que otorga el estado son escasos entonces para contribuir en el mantenimiento de la escuela, patios y juegos; los padres de familia tienen que hacer aportes económicos en beneficio de la institución.” [Unfortunately, the economic resources granted by the state are scarce, so to contribute to the maintenance of the school, playgrounds, and games, parents have to make financial contributions, all of this for the benefit of the institution.] (RVLA)

“En la institución se realiza mingas cada vez que se requiere para el mantenimiento de las aulas ya sea dentro y fuera de la infraestructura de la institución” [In the institution, community work are carried out whenever it is required for the maintenance of the classrooms, either inside and outside the institution infrastructure.] (SCHMS)

The authority and a parent mention that the government does not supply for the maintenance of the educational institution, so parents must contribute economically. They perform maintenance work in the institution. Regarding this, Arfan et al. (2019) emphasizes that "Environment of schools play an important role not only in the academic development of the students but influence their personality as well" (p. 3). In the same way, Mogire (2019) states that the academic performance of the students is influenced by the infrastructure since it has both a positive and negative link. The correct implementation of the infrastructure allows students to feel comfortable and acquire good grades, promoting good performance.

To answer the third research question about the state of school facilities, we analyzed extracts from the observation file and categorized the information as follows: 1) classroom, 2) bathrooms, 3) recreation spaces, and 4) bar.

Category 1: Classroom

Las sillas y mesas están en buen estado, pero no son las adecuadas para los estudiantes porque el tamaño de los pupitres es pequeño para el grado en el que están. El espacio de las aulas es adecuadas y cómodas para los estudiantes, sin embargo, no cuentan con equipos tecnológicos. Los pizarrones son tradicionales (de tiza) y casi modernos (de marcador). [Chairs and tables are in good condition but not suitable for students because the size of the desks are small for the grade in which they are. The classroom space is adequate and comfortable for students; however, they do not have technological equipment. The blackboards are traditional (chalk) and almost modern (marker)]

Con lo que respecta al exterior de las aulas, el estado del techo, puertas, ventanas y paredes se encontraban en buen estado y funcionales. Además, se apreciaron

materiales de aseo necesarios para los estudiantes, se pudo observar algunos desperdicios. [With regard to the exterior of the classrooms, the state of the roof, doors, windows, and walls were found to be in good condition and functional. In addition, the necessary cleaning materials for the students were appreciated, although some waste could be observed.]

The classrooms are in good condition and there is enough space; however, they are not very adequate for the English language learning. It needs more resources to meet the students' needs and to improve the classroom environment. Mogire (2019), states that the classroom environment plays an essential role in the educational process. If it is not in good condition, it can affect the performance of both students and teachers. The study by Arfan et al. (2019), states that the school environment must be favorable since having good facilities allows students to feel comfortable when learning, and in turn, they can concentrate effectively and get enough incentive for learning the English language. A well-designed classroom significantly impacts student performance.

Category 2: Bathrooms

La institución cuenta con dos niveles de educación; nivel preparatoria y básica. Para ello cuenta con baños para ambos géneros (femenino y masculino), sin embargo, algunos inodoros están deteriorados y los niños tienen que transportar el agua en un recipiente para vaciarlos, los grifos de los lavabos estaban averiados. [The institution has two levels of education: elementary and high school level. For this, it has bathrooms for both genders (female and male), however some toilets are deteriorated, and children's have to collect the water in a container to empty them, the sink taps were broken.]

Se observó que no había una limpieza adecuada de los baños, en ocasiones quedaban con mal olor y no estaban completamente limpias. [It was observed that there was not adequate cleaning of the bathrooms, sometimes they remained with a foul smell and were not completely clean.]

The educational institution has bathrooms for male and female students. Some toilets are not working properly, so students must take water in a bucket to empty them. There was a foul smell. This may affect the students' well-being. The good implementation of sanitary facilities is essential to provide a healthy school environment and quality education. Proper sanitary facilities help keep students from getting sick by increasing participation in school. On the other hand, the educational community will feel comfortable using bathrooms, having a lower risk of contracting infections (World Health Organization & UNECE, 2019). Adjibolosoo et al. (2019), state that in schools, clean and adequate bathrooms are essential for the well-being and good health of students since it guarantees that children feel safe in their use. The good maintenance of bathrooms in

educational institutions allows students not to acquire any infection or minimize the risk. It is important that the toilets are in a convenient and safe place providing security.

Category 3: Recreation Spaces

Los espacios de recreación con que cuenta la institución estaban un poco deteriorados, pero se podía utilizar sin riesgo alguno el área de juegos infantiles. Para la recreación de los estudiantes, estos se encontraban separados, es decir hay un espacio tanto para inicial como para los demás grados. [The recreation spaces available to the institution were a bit deteriorated, but the children's play area could be used without any risk. For the recreation of the students, they were separated, that is, there is a space for both pre-school children and for the other grades.]

The educational institution has recreation spaces for little and older children. The green spaces were a bit deteriorated, but the children's play area could be used without any risk. Recreation spaces in educational institutions are of vital importance as they allow students to relax. In this context, Browning & Rigolon (2019), state that green spaces in schools have a great impact on student performance. Observing green areas improves concentration and reduces children's stress levels. So, it is recommended that educational institutions do not overlook the importance of recreational spaces.

Category 4: Bar

La institución cuenta con un bar, en el cual se podía elegir entre comida nutritiva y rápida, pero había más cantidad de productos empacados. Las instalaciones donde está ubicado el bar son improvisadas y no cumplen con las condiciones de higiene adecuadas, por ende, no son aptas para la manipulación y venta de los alimentos. [The institution has a bar, where you could choose between nutritious, fast food and many packaged products. The facilities where the bar is located are improvised and do not meet adequate hygiene conditions, so they are not suitable for handling and selling food.]

The student bar of the educational institution has a small space. Its facilities are improvised and do not meet adequate hygiene conditions. There was more junk food than nutritive food. The implementation of an adequate establishment and a program of eating habits would help students not to have health problems affecting their development in the educational process. “The primary school stage constitutes a stable period of growth and of physical and intellectual development. A healthy diet is fundamental to a correct nutritional education because habits established at this early stage are difficult to change in adulthood” (Menor-Rodriguez et al., 2022). The study by Beinert et al. (2022), states

that children spend most of their time at school, so a good diet is essential for their school development. Thus, bars must offer good food.

Conclusion

- The educational community considers that English language education needs to be obligatory since it is a necessary tool for students' academic development. Participants reveal that motivation is a significant element that helps students to learn language; however, the English teacher alludes that many students lack motivation, which affects their learning. The lack of a specialized trained English teacher and teaching resources, the poor application of teaching methodologies, and a decontextualized and inapplicable curriculum have caused the low level of learning in this rural school. In addition, the lack of a good infrastructure and other teaching resources, the limited budget, and the family's socio-economic problems affect the teaching learning process. The school facilities such as the classrooms, green spaces, and the cafeteria need to be improved.

Conflicto de intereses

Los autores deben declarar si existe o no conflicto de intereses en relación con el artículo presentado.

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