A Comparative Analysis of English Teachers' Perceptions of English Teaching and Learning in Guanajuato's Private and Public Secondary Schools

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Abstract

This paper presents a case study about the perceptions that English teachers have about language learning in both public and private secondary schools in the state of Guanajuato, Mexico. The purpose of this research is to understand how and why the different social contexts involved in the public and private sectors influence English language learning and what English teachers perceive in their workplace. It also aims to analyze and compare the potential differences in English teaching in both educational sectors. This study provides an overview of the perceptions of different teachers regarding their challenges, students' motivation, and the influence of social factors in English teaching and learning. The results of the analysis of the data show that teachers face similar issues regarding their work environment. Students' motivation to learn the language is influenced by the social context in which they develop, and the economic problems affect their interest in the language.

Keywords: private sector, public sector, perceptions, English teachers, Mexico.

1. Introduction

English language teaching and learning have become important aspects of the educational system in Mexico. English is a compulsory subject in secondary schools in the public sector. However, according to Davies (2009), after English became a mandatory subject in secondary school fifty years ago, it was noticeable that the ELT curriculum in upper secondary education was a repetition of what was taught in lower secondary school. The English programs in basic public education sometimes do not cover the level proposed by the SEP (Secretaria de Educación Pública) [Ministry of Public Education]. In contrast, private secondary schools seem to have an advantage in the English teaching programs as students seem to achieve better levels of competence. Several private schools in Mexico offer a bilingual model of education. In the curricula of these schools, English appears as an essential feature of their programs. It is notorious that the social context influences the teaching and learning of English in this sector. Furthermore, in this paper, the perceptions of English Teachers from secondary schools will be discussed to compare their experiences with students and the educational environment of the public and private educational sectors in the State of Guanajuato, México.

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- Teachers believe English teaching and learning in the public sector could benefit from various factors such as directives' support, student interest, and socio-economic conditions.
- Teachers from the private sector face challenges concerning administrative roles.
- A noticeable distinction between both educational sectors concerns socioeconomic support and student motivation. These tend to be greater in the private sector.

2. Literature review

This section presents a review of the different aspects that are significant to understanding the findings and the importance of this research.

2.1 *ELT in secondary schools in Mexico*

According to Zorrilla (2004), in the Mexican education system, the level known as *escuela secundaria* (secondary school from now on) is the last step of basic education for students between 12 and 15 years old. Completing this level became mandatory in Mexico in the 1990s, even though these schools have existed since 1921. There are two educational sectors in Mexico. According to *La ley de educación para el estado de Guanajuato* (The educational law for the state of Guanajuato), public education is offered and funded by the state's government; meanwhile, private education is subsidized by particular individuals and has recognition and validation by the Ministry of Education of Guanajuato (SEG). Nevertheless, both sectors follow the official curricula known as *Plan de estudio para la educación preescolar, primaria y secundaria* provided by the Federal Ministry of Education (SEP). According to the educational curriculum in Mexico, English must be taught across all levels of secondary school, and EFL should be delivered by a language specialist (Hernández Hernández & Izquierdo, 2023). However, with new reforms to the curricula and the implementation of *La Nueva Escuela Mexicana* [The New Mexican School], ELT classes are part of one of the formative fields called 'languages', which comprises subjects such as Spanish and Arts through the elaboration of projects.

An important distinction between the public and private sectors remains in the number of English classes that students receive in primary schools, as it varies significantly with some private schools offering bilingual programs and public schools not offering English classes at all. According to Basurto (2010), English is not part of the curricula in primary schools in Mexico. It has been in recent years that a pilot English program has been implemented in some public schools. However, as this program has recently developed, many students in public secondary schools sometimes have a lower level or no knowledge of English. In contrast, Basurto (2010) also points out that English is mandatory at all levels of private primary education, which involves better language development mainly because the private sector provides more teaching and learning resources and dedicates more time to English teaching. Therefore, students in the private sector are more likely to have a deeper knowledge of the language when they get to the secondary school level.

2.2 *Problems with ELT in the Mexican educational system*

Throughout history, Mexico has had several educational reforms that have affected the country's educational system and ELT. According to *Propuesta de una agenda Nacional* (IMCO, 2015), 85% of students attend a public school. Since 1926, ELT has been mandatory in secondary schools, but after 1992, the educational ministers started to design and implement English programs for basic education. In 2009, the SEP started a new program called *Programa Nacional*

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de Ingles en Educación Básica (PNIEB) [National English Program for Basic Education], where students ending their third year of the secondary level were expected to have an English level of B1 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Language (CEFR). However, for Davies (2009), it was noticeable that the ELT curriculum in the last years of secondary level repeated what was taught in the first years of secondary school, resulting in most students entering higher education not having appropriate English skills. Another obstacle to ELT in Mexico, as mentioned by Davies (2007), is the condition in which English is taught in public schools. Some of them are the number of students in secondary schools, which is around 40 to 55. Equally, there is a lack of interest in the language in some schools where only the English teacher is concerned with teaching the language and directives, and parents show no support for English learning.

2.3 *Teachers' perceptions of ELT*

Knowing and understanding the perceptions of English teachers is significant to developing better views about the context of ELT in different sectors and levels of the education system, specifically in Mexico. Research in this area provides more information about teachers' struggles and how they improve their teaching practices. Padilla González and Espinoza Calderón (2015) studied the practices of four different English professors of public secondary schools in Aguascalientes, Mexico. In this research, they offered insights into their teaching strategies inside the classroom, analyzing their pedagogic components and also how their teaching formation influences their practices. Borjian (2015) studied the perspective of Mexican teachers concerning their views on the issue of studying English in Mexico and their recommendations for improving English instruction in Mexico. In this research, the main focus was on how their previous experiences and contexts of learning the language affected their teaching practices and making a comparison with them. These experiences helped them provide some recommendations for improving English learning in Mexican schools.

3. Methodology

This research follows a social constructionism paradigm. Kivunja and Bawa Kuyini (2017) explain that this theory aims to explore people's perspectives under study and comprehend and interpret their thoughts or meaning in a given context. Following a qualitative research approach, described by Dörnyei (2007) as a vehicle to generate detailed descriptions, uncover patterns, and explore new concepts, helpful in areas with limited knowledge and allows for exploring contextual and social factors influencing the phenomena under study. This study will present the different perceptions of a small group of English teachers to understand their views on how the social context influences teaching and learning in two educational sectors.

Creswell (2014) defines case studies as a qualitative investigation where the researcher deeply explores a program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals. These cases are confined by time and activity, and researchers gather detailed information using diverse data collection methods over an extended period. This research employs various data collection techniques to examine the topic. Following an inductive approach, as described by Thomas (2006), is an approach that allows a detailed view of the data to provide concepts, themes, or models throughout the interpretation made by the researcher. This approach will enhance the development of themes to explain the data recollected.

3.1 *Context*

This study was carried out in six different secondary schools in Guanajuato. The aim was to analyze the potential similarities and differences between English teaching and learning in

private and public secondary schools in the cities of Guanajuato, León, and Irapuato. This research aimed to understand what makes private schools more successful in English teaching and learning and what aspects influence public schools' failure to have the same success. I also wanted to know how teachers perceive these influences on the opportunities to learn and teach English.

3.2 *Participants*

Six participants were recruited to conduct this study. The criteria for selecting these participants were that they must be English teachers working in private and secondary schools in the state of Guanajuato and have at least six months of experience teaching English in the public, private, or both sectors. Table 1. summarizes the participants' profiles and shows the participants' important details in conducting this research.

Table 1. Participants

No. participant	Educational sector	Sex	Experience	Place of work (city)	Experience in both sectors
Participant 1	Public	Male	7 months	León	No
Participant 2	Public	Female	1 year	Irapuato	No
Participant 3	Private	Female	4 years	Guanajuato	No
Participant 4	Private	Male	5 years	Guanajuato	Yes
Participant 5	Public	Female	3 years	Guanajuato	Yes
Participant 6	Public	Female	17 years	Guanajuato	No

3.3 *Ethics*

Following ethical procedures is imperative in research. For this study, participants were given a consent form informing them about the research's purpose. They were also aware of data protection and told that their participation in this study was voluntary and anonymous.

3.4 *Data collection instruments*

As this is a case study, the main feature of this method is the use of multiple data sources. Therefore, three instruments were used to conduct this research: (1) Questionnaires, (2) Semi-structured interviews, and (3) Archival analyses.

Questionnaires serve as a tool to gather unstructured insights into what people think about a particular subject (Brown, 2009). Hence, the participants answered a short online questionnaire comprising five questions regarding their general experience teaching in private and public sectors. Semi-structured interviews were conducted individually with each participant. According to Longhurst (2009), semi-structured interviews serve as valuable tools to explore complex behaviors, viewpoints, and emotions and gather information about various experiences. Interviews were used to acquire additional information and collect data to enhance and broaden their perspectives on the subject matter. A small archival analysis was made to understand and familiarize with the participants' context. Document analysis requires the careful examination and interpretation of data to extract significance, foster comprehension, and construct empirical knowledge (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Rapley, 2007, as cited in Bowen, 2009). Participants provided pictures of their classroom and school settings. These were used to obtain a personal perspective and to understand the work the teachers mentioned in the interviews. Also, the teachers share photos of the materials that help them enhance their students' language learning, as it is essential to review the information to compare and support the information stated in the questionnaires and interviews.

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3.5 *Data analysis procedures*

The data collected was analyzed by following a triangulation analysis used to compare and complement information. Data triangulation aims to establish "a confluence of evidence that breeds credibility" (Eisner, 1991, as cited in Bowen, 2009: 110). Bowen (2009) explains that examining information obtained through different research methods allows the researcher to validate findings across various data instruments, reducing the potential biases in a singular study. The data analysis process consisted of different steps. First, the data was coded to identify the important and similar topics mentioned by the participants. Then, thematic analysis was used to discuss the findings and analyze and understand the data collected. This consists of responding to the main research question and constructing a profound understanding of the central phenomenon across a description and thematic development (Creswell, 2012). Finally, a thematic analysis was used to obtain information on the data collected. This analysis will provide the study's main findings and a deeper understanding of the perception of teachers regarding their contexts.

4. Findings and discussion

Following the data analysis, four themes were identified: (1) Teachers' experiences teaching English in secondary schools, (2) Teachers' difficulties with teaching English, (3) Students' motivation and engagement in learning English, and (4) The impact of socio-economical factors in the English teaching and learning. Overall, the themes offered different perspectives about what teachers encounter while teaching English in the public and private basic education sectors, particularly in secondary schools, where English becomes a mandatory subject for students at this educational level.

4.1 *Teaches' experiences teaching English in secondary schools*

Teachers were asked about their experience teaching in their current place of work. All participants talked about how dealing with different aspects of their school has reflected in their practice, resulting in some general setbacks. Participant 3 from a private school expressed:

> *"The experience has been good, with some ups and downs. I have been given the opportunity to teach at different levels. At the student level, there aren't as many children with behavioral problems as I've heard in public schools. The demands of parenting make it challenging. Administrative problems that result from friction between colleagues are the worst." Q/P3*

From the quote above, we see that teachers face different situations in their daily practice. Dealing with administrators and directives can be complicated, making developing a good teaching environment difficult due to the pressure they have.

Another teacher for a public school mentioned that her experience teaching in the school has been evolving:

> *"It has been a roller coaster. I have to adapt my teaching style according to the requirements of the school, closer to traditional teaching. But in the last months, my deputy head has shown more openness to the theme of interculturality at school." Q/P5*

Difficulties can be found in both educational sectors. Following the directives and school requirements can be challenging in developing a more communicative and culturally enriched language class. Students' lack of previous knowledge of the language and parents' involvement in their education also affect the teaching experiences. Participant 6 from a public school mentioned that her experience teaching in the school has been challenging:

> *"It has been difficult because the students arrive without knowing the language, in addition to the fact that parents give little importance to the language and formal education." Q/P6*

It is common that in the public sector, students do not have knowledge of the language or English classes before their secondary studies. Many secondary students had their first encounter with the language until this stage in their lives. Participant 4, who is from a private school, has had a good experience overall; however, he found some challenges working in secondary schools:

> *"While it's pleasant, dealing with teenagers can be complex." Q/P4*

The age of students in secondary schools ranges from 12 to 16 years old. Due to the natural changes that emerge at this stage of their lives, students' behavior can be difficult because of the many psychological and social changes they face. Dealing with this change can be complicated for teachers as it comes with behavioral challenges too.

For the less expert teachers who work in public schools, the experiences that they have been facing tend to be positive. However, they also noticed some issues related to the support of directives and the lack of tools to perform their duties. Participant 2 expressed:

> *"Although it's been good, I feel that the managers should provide more support." Q/P2*

In this regard Participant 1 has mentioned that:

> *"For me, it is a very good experience in general. However, I have faced very difficult situations regarding the classroom setting. Due the fact that the classroom does not have a projector so I had to buy my own projector. Providing media to the students is a very difficult aspect to apply in my public school." Q/P1*

Most of them expressed that they have had good experiences so far. Teacher experiences are important to understanding the context in which the participants work. However, it is difficult not to notice the diverse issues these teachers have to face to develop good English language teaching practices because of the lack of support offered by the school administration.

4.2 *Teachers' difficulties with teaching English*

During this research, it was significant to understand the different struggles that English secondary teachers face in the private and public sectors. Although they performed their duties in different contexts, it is noticeable that in the teaching profession, it is impossible not to find challenges in the workplace. These challenges included dealing with the tools to work, the size of the groups, relationships with school administrators, and students' behavior. Participant 1, from a public school, mentioned that the lack of tools has challenged his practice. Another difficulty he faced in his practice was the demand to work in teams due to the implementation of the new federal curriculum known as *Nueva Escuela Mexicana*" (New Mexican School).

> *"In my school, it is mandatory to sit my students in groups due to the new program of the new Mexican school so classes are like that in groups… supervisors school coordinators pass and see that they are working as a team and so it is difficult because it is a very different way of teaching and I think it is also more complicated because as a group of 40 children up it is very difficult to have a good Group control is at least more difficult."* Int/P1.

This teacher shows that there is pressure to follow the school's guidelines because of the group's size, making it hard to control the class. Making that the participant feels stressful to follow these guidelines because of the constant monitoring of the administrators.

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The number of students in public schools tends to be larger than in private institutions. Designing activities that involve teamwork can be a difficult task for any teacher in these conditions. Teamwork may bring behavioral problems and poor classroom management, which can influence class development and the teacher dealing more with the student's conduct rather than teaching the class. Additionally, dealing with administrators' constant supervision can cause stress and anxiety for the teacher as the classroom conditions might lead to a poor perception of the teachers' performance.

Participant 3, a teacher at a private school, mentioned she faced a difficult situation with school administrators. However, her situation involves other kinds of problems:

> *"… it's very stressful sometimes because they don't even have to do with things at work but rather are personal internal things among some administrators who start to have frictions and begin to have a little lack of ethics, sometimes they get involved in matters that do not belong to them then there begins to be friction with each other and ends up being a very stressful environment." Int/P4*

Talking about how this situation has influenced the delivery of her class, participant 3 mentioned that sometimes the principal visits her to maintain order due to other teachers or administrators complaining about the noise in her class. She had to avoid activities that involved games, which were the ones that provoked the noise. She also notices that this situation has influenced the students' motivation because they know other teachers or people complain about the class and have to settle with working with the book:

> *"..they really like activities that involve games, so sometimes it gets a little noisy, and we have to remove thew. They feel like "ah well, for what if we are not even going to be able to do what we like" or it is "we can no longer do this because such a teacher or such a person gets angry," then as they already come to class with "we can do what we like or we will combine more being with the book and quiet because others are angry?" " Int/P3*

Teachers in the public and private sectors find dealing with administrators difficult. They must develop their work easily and implement different strategies to deliver their English classes. Sometimes, schools have certain policies and requirements. Teachers may have seen those guidelines as complicated when designing a functional English class.

The role of the administrators is important for developing a good work environment. For teachers, it is key to have their support in implementing activities that help motivate students to learn English.

Another challenge for teachers in public sectors is the lack of materials the school provides. The institutions' failure to provide technological devices in the classroom limits the use of diverse materials that allow them to implement technology in their lessons.

Participant 5 mentioned that they can access projectors in her school. However, she finds it difficult due to the time in advance she has to notify to use one. The teacher also faces other problems that make using technology in her class difficult:

> *"The truth is they are very special to lend them (the projector), you have to order it a week in advance, then I decided to buy my own projector, and I also have my speaker and everything, but since December at the school where I am working, near the food bank, they stole the light connections, and we have no power so I can not use my projector." Int/P5.*

Using technology makes language learning even easier for students like teenagers who are used to using technology in their daily lives. Technology can also provide more immersion in the language and a wide range of activities. It is sad that public schools do not have enough access to these tools. Participant 2 (also from a public school) has experienced the same difficulties. She

gave her opinion about what can be done to increase the support in the English class at the school where she works:

> *"One of the things that would be good is that… the classrooms are well, but they could have more tools, even a few simple curtains to be able to project, and even projectors. Yes, there are, but they need maintenance because the cables do not serve. Such things or even the directives constantly approach teachers to see what materials or tools we can use apart from that, for example, books in English, etc."* Int/P2.

Teachers have expressed their difficulties in teaching in those environments. The teachers from the private sector did not express any difficulty related to their tools. They expressed that the school provided them with a screen and other materials like books, posters, and copies. Comparing the private sector, we can notice that public schools have more problems using technology in their classrooms and even having a better setting to deliver their classes.

After discussing the teachers' difficulties, it is noticeable that these situations can affect the development and planning of an English class. Teachers had to arrange their class design to provide a good environment for the students and develop and acquire their own materials to help their teaching practice. This is to increase the students' motivation in language learning.

4.3 *Students' motivation and engagement in learning English*

Teachers make considerable efforts to enhance language learning in both sectors. Even though they are from two different contexts, teachers share an interest in developing a better learning environment for the language. Teachers from public schools are aware of their budget limitations. However, they create their own material and have bought the tools to improve their English classes and motivate students. In the private sector, teachers take advantage of the material the school provides them with. Nevertheless, private school teachers also show an interest in their students' language learning by complementing their classes with diverse activities.

The participants in this study agree that the social context in which the students develop significantly influences how they view the language, academically and personally. In this aspect, participant 6 from a public school stated that:

> *"Students who do not wish to continue their academic training avoid working on the subject."* Q/P6

Students from the public sector seem reluctant to learn the language. Teachers had expressed that their social context influences the importance students give to the language in their academic development. Participant 2 expressed:

> *"Their beliefs influence their views on the language and how they learn it and thus the interest in the subject."* Q/P2

Participant 5 said her students felt insecure about the language, making them struggle with learning and practicing it. Nevertheless, they are others that are willing to know more:

> *"There are people who flatly say I don't like it, I don't like it, and I don't understand it, and I'm not going to do anything. However, there are others who do call their attention, who do study and when the class finish are asking: hey! And how I said this and how it is said that? but yeah, there are very few people. And then, when I was in the first year in the past cycle, it was like that, with fear because I didn't know anything and because I didn't understand anything and I don't know. Then it's hard to get them out of that idea."* Int/P5

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In public school, teachers face similar experiences, all related to the previous experiences students had with the language, and some because they realize students do not have any experience with the language at all.

In the private sector, students show a different perspective of the language. In this sector, the students' interest is more noticeable because of the opportunities outside the school to experiment and their previous experience with the language. Participant 4, who has worked in both sectors expressed:

> *"In private, you meet guys with a little more willingness, even as with a little more language knowledge... the attitude of students in private schools unlike the public ones is that what they seek is like to excel in English, most seek to prove that they know more English than the other and in most cases it is a status symbol for them to know more English than the other." Int/P5*

Teachers from the public sector need to implement different strategies to increase the students' interest in learning the language. The participants expressed the different strategies they implement to enhance English learning. For Participant 5, using art to complement the learning topics and using games have been the best activities to increase students' interest. Equally, Participant 2 sees the use of games and the use of topics and themes related to their interests as helping to motivate students. Participant 1 mentioned the importance of enhancing students' interest and relating them with the language:

> *"What I try to do is always tell them that the things they like are always going to be able to find them also in English, then in that way I feel that the reason why it doesn't matter if such a student likes this artist, or another student likes to play video games is always going to be an equivalent in the language in this case English. Then he encouraged them to look in their own context, in this case, using social networks, TikTok, and Instagram, to start looking for content they like in English and begin to enrich a little... Also, teach them new musical genres and new artists to develop more and see that there is much more than using those two strategies to balance their interests." P1/Int.*

Teachers used their students' context to create a more exciting learning environment and promote language learning. In the private sector, teachers also provide different materials and activities to promote better language learning. Participant 3 offers opportunities to speak on diverse topics inside the classroom. She allows them to discuss their interests and monitors the topic to keep them on the educational side. Participant 4 promotes English learning by using songs and musical activities to enhance language learning. This participant also has the advantage that the school delivers other classes in English. Another exciting activity provided by his school is the presentation of a theatre play to practice the language. Regarding language learning motivation, private schools seem to have an advantage because of the experiences students and teachers have in their schools.

Different individuals support students' education, but the most important factor in this student's stage is the presence of parents in their educational development. Teachers were asked about the parents' presence and their expectations of the language. There were many differences in the perspectives teachers had. In private schools, teachers see the parents' support through their desire for their kids to learn and experiment with the language and provide opportunities to them. One of the teachers commented:

> *"In fact, almost all parents want their children to finish school already speaking English. In that sense, specifically in the matter, we have had a good response from the parents." Int/P4*

In private schools, parents seem to be very involved in their children's language education. Teachers value the support that this provides to their children and their language development:

> "Parents believe that it is crucial for their children to speak a second language, and they believe that it is important to ask more for more things and they even enroll them in private classes, which provides extra support." Int/P3

It is noticeable that economic factors could significantly influence parent support. In contrast with public schools, parents seem to make some effort to provide students with aid to enhance language learning. However, there are few of them. Participant 1 stated that:

> "I feel that very few parents really expect something from the language. I have noticed that parents who have expectations about English, which are very few, already have their children in private schools, or I have them in separate schools. I realize that when we have parent meetings and also when I talk with students who are interested in English and tell me that they are already going to courses or that they went to courses. with those students, there is support from the parents; they are interested in their child learning another language, but they are minimal, very few." Int/P1

Little is known about the parents' support for the language among the rest of the teachers from public schools. However, the teachers mentioned that economic factors significantly influenced their ability to practice the language outside of school because they were not familiar with it, which could discourage them from being interested in it.

4.4 *The impact of socio-economic factors on English teaching and learning*

As we know, public education is accessible to the majority of the population living in Mexico. However, the public sector faces many budget struggles. Teachers have to use their own money to provide materials to students, and sometimes, they have to dedicate additional resources to afford electronic materials to enhance their classes. Students also face struggles influenced by their economic status. In the interviews, some teachers mentioned that some students sometimes had insufficient money to eat, which is a shocking factor that affects their performance in school and their lives.

Compared to public schools, private schools had better access to technology and other materials. The difference in accessibility to language practice in private schools and how socioeconomic factors enhance language learning in this educational sector was very noticeable. Teachers were asked if they think their social context influences their language learning. In this aspect, the participants agree that social context significantly influences how they see the language and its importance in learning it. Participant 1 commented:

> ¿"I think that, especially in English, some students come from different economic and social backgrounds. They do not see the language as something 'useful' because they know that they will hardly have the opportunity to travel or to speak it, and sometimes the parents influence this way of thinking of the students." Q/P1.

In private schools, the difference is noticeable because of the opportunities the students have to develop the language.

> "Some of them have more opportunities to even leave the country, and some are paid private classes. Many parents want their children to develop skills." Q/P4

As discussed previously, parents' influence on language learning is important for better language development. They could provide students with other alternatives and opportunities to practice the language. However, it depends on their economic capacities and the

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chances they can provide to students to feel secure learning a language. In public schools, it is hard to find parents who offer the same opportunities to travel, study abroad, or even study the language in other schools.

Socioeconomic factors are also very noticeable in the school structure and material provided to teachers. This research previously emphasized the lack of material provided by the school administration and the lack of interest in the language, which deeply affects the development of an English class in public schools. Two of the teachers from public schools have mentioned how the location of their school has affected their educational center and how it has affected their language classes. Participant 6 has expressed:

> *"It's challenging because the school is situated in an area with high crime rates, and they have been involved in theft. So, they don't want to put fixed projectors in the classrooms, and we have to apply for the projector. And there were also 8 cannons, 6 were stolen now in the pandemic, today we only have 2, and we try to implement as much as possible with the resources that already exist and that I give to children. The number of groups and having to move from the classroom can be a negative point, especially when connecting and disconnecting the cannon, which takes about 15 to 20 minutes of class, takes away from the rest of the class." Int/ P6*

Participant 5, also commented about a similar experience that affected the school in general:

> *"The school where I teach has been without electricity since December because the electrical cables were stolen, so I cannot use my projector." Int/P5*

Being near zones with a high crime rate is a problem which impacts education different ways. Students' behavior is sometimes influenced by the context in which they interact. Therefore, bigger effort would be needed from the government to pay more attention to these situations and provide a more secure place to develop education.

One of the contrasting points between public and private schools is the support for acquiring or providing materials to teachers. Teachers from private schools have mentioned that their schools provide them with the necessary materials and spaces to implement their classes. This material includes screens, projectors, and classrooms dedicated to the English class. On the other hand, teachers from public schools had expressed their discomfort with their schools because they don't have support to provide material to students like an aid for copies, an adequate space to deliver their class, and appropriate books:

> *"In the public system, it is one who puts all the resources, you are the one who invests, even a simple copy, you have to pay it because the school does not have money and many times parents, well, sometimes children do not have enough to eat." Int/ P6.*

Teachers' perspectives about socioeconomic factors reveal the many differences students from both sectors experience in their educational environment. Public schools struggle with budget constraints, forcing teachers to fund classroom materials themselves, and some students face basic needs insecurity, which affects their academic performance. In contrast, private schools enjoy better access to technology and resources, offering students more opportunities to develop language skills and experiment with the language outside the country.

Parental influence plays a significant role, as wealthier families have the means to provide extra learning opportunities that are often unavailable to public school students. The lack of support and resources in public schools and issues like high crime rates and inadequate infrastructure are obstacles to educational development. To address these inequalities, the government, who is the provider of public education, needs to improve the conditions and

resources in public schools, ensuring a secure and supportive learning environment for all students.

5. Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to analyze and compare the potential differences and similarities in the perceptions of English teachers in language teaching and learning in secondary public and private schools. The study's importance was to realize the aspects that influence the way English is taught and learned in the different sectors of schools in Mexico.

The results of this study suggested that teachers believe English teaching and learning in the public sector could benefit from various factors such as directives' support, student interest, and socio-economic conditions. Likewise, the private sector faces challenges concerning administrative roles. However, a noticeable distinction between both sectors has to do with socioeconomic support and student motivation. It seems that these tend to be greater in the private sector.

Some of the limitations of the study were the balance between the participants of the public and private sectors a larger sample size would be advisable in other studies. Future research will benefit from conducting a focus group where participants can share and discuss their different experiences teaching English with other teachers in the same and other sectors and provide different perspectives to their colleagues.

Acknowledgements

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