

## Teachers' Perceptions of Being Observed and Its Impact on the Promotion of Lesson Study in ELT

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### **Abstract:**

This presentation is part of the "Creation of Cooperative Teaching Spaces Among EFL Teachers through the Implementation of the Lesson Study Approach: An Exploratory Action Research Study" project. This is a research project funded by the National University of Education in Ecuador and aims to generate spaces that promote pedagogical reflection and collaboration among primary and secondary English teachers through the implementation of the lesson study approach.

The lesson study (LS) is a professional development approach that "allows teachers to examine their practices in the classroom setting" (Naem, 2020). LS comprises a collaborative cycle where teachers collaboratively plan, implement, reflect, and replan a lesson (Adler, Mwadzaangati and Takker, 2023). In the present study, five National University of Education researchers worked with six in-service English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers from different public schools.

Thirty EFL teachers were trained on the university premises to gain familiarity with the LS process. After that, the researchers invited these EFL teachers to continue the study, and only ... accepted. The researchers organized the LS meetings through Zoom, where EFL teachers planned a class and then they chose the teacher who would implement the class. One researcher visited the teacher who was selected to implement the lesson and videoed the entire class. Then, the video was shared online with the rest of the schoolteachers for its analysis. The researchers planned another session where the six teachers reflected on the first lesson, modified the planning based on their suggestions and recommendations, and chose a new teacher to implement the new lesson plan.

During the process of class observation, despite the collaborative planning, EFL teachers' practices limited creativity and innovation in the class. This presentation shows the areas teachers focus on when being observed.

A questionnaire was created and administered to 3813 EFL teachers around the country to identify the aspects that EFL teachers focused on during class observations. The questionnaire contained three domains regarding class observations: 1. EFL teachers' priorities, 2. Teachers' feelings, and 3. Affective responses to the people who observe them.

Regarding the EFL teachers' priorities when they are observed, the instrument presented 11 activities to the respondents to rank them in order of importance, where 1 was the most important and 11 the least important. Teachers organized these activities: 1. Completing prepared activities, 2. Promoting a good relationship with the students, 3. Controlling students' discipline, 4. Complying with the institutional rules, 5. Using general teaching strategies, 6. giving feedback to students, 7. Using English in the classroom, 8. Group work, 9. Using the ELT methodologies established in the national curriculum, 10. Using technological resources and equipment, 11. The amount of time that the teacher speaks. The results show that teachers the five most important activities they do, show the structure of a rigid class that may not provide space for innovation and creativity. What is also interesting is that EFL teachers seemed not to apply the ELT teaching methodologies recommended in the EFL national curriculum. Additionally, what is essential to notice is that the teachers ranked the least the amount of time that the teachers speak. Considering that the national curriculum promotes

communicative classes where students need to talk more and the teachers reduce their talking time, these results confirm that when teachers are observed, they want to project an image of control of their classes and application of institutional policies.

Regarding the teachers' feelings when being observed, 40% of respondents manifested that they felt confident, 23% relaxed, 9.4% impatient, and a small percentage of EFL teachers feel uncomfortable and nervous. It can be implied that during teachers' observations, they felt confident and relaxed when show control of the class follow the lesson plan and institutional policies. As was said before, it does not provide room for innovation and creativity in the class, and in the case of English, the use of the language, which is the objective of the class, is not promoted.

This data complements the affective responses towards the authorities that observe them. 92.8% of teachers expressed gratitude towards the observer, and 7.2% felt frustrated. This also shows that teachers may be inclined to please the school authorities.

Considering that LS is a process where teachers are observed mainly by their peers and the intention is to plan more pertinent classes, EEFL teachers need to change their priorities when they are observed in classes and open more to try different aspects that promote innovation and creativity in classes.