LANGUAGE TEACHING STRATEGIES OF NOVICE TEACHERS AND UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS OF AN ENGLISH TEACHING UNIVERSITY PROGRAM: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

Estrategias de enseñanza de idioma de profesores nóveles y estudiantes de un programa universitario de pedagogía en inglés: un estudio comparativo

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RESUMEN

La competencia del profesor de inglés es una preocupación muy importante en el campo del ILE.[3] Ser un profesor de inglés destacado requiere conocimiento adecuado y expertcia para enseñar a los estudiantes en el aula. Este estudio intenta describir la relación entre la práctica de la profesión y el desarrollo de estrategias de enseñanza en profesores noveles y estudiantes de pregrado. Para ello se recopilaron datos utilizando dos instrumentos: la prueba de conocimientos de enseñanza (TKT) y una encuesta que fue diseñada con este propósito. Los resultados dan cuenta que la mayoría de los estudiantes de pregrado y profesores de inglés principiantes tiene un conocimiento adecuado en la enseñanza de la lengua. Sin embargo, los profesores nóveles obtuvieron mejor resultado que los estudiantes en el módulo TKT que rindieron los participantes. Al parecer, la práctica real ha entregado a los profesores más herramientas y estrategias para manejar de mejor manera los procesos de enseñanza y aprendizaje que tienen lugar en el aula. Los hallazgos de este estudio pretenden otorgar retroalimentación, enfocada en la mejora, a un Programa de Pedagogía en Inglés de una Universidad Privada Chilena. Además de proveer evidencia a profesores e investigadores interesados en el tema.

Palabras clave: Profesores noveles, competencia del profesor, prácticas de enseñanza, ILE.

ABSTRACT

Teacher competency in language teaching is a very relevant concern for EFL[4] education. In order to be an efficient teacher of English, one must exhibit appropriate knowledge and expertise to teach students in a classroom. This study attempts to describe the relationship between the practice of the profession and the development of language teaching strategies in novice teachers and undergraduate students. To this end, data was collected using two instruments: Teaching Knowledge Test (TKT) and a survey designed for the purpose. The findings indicate that most of the undergraduate students and novice teachers of English have an adequate level of teaching knowledge. However, novice teachers performed better than students in the TKT module taken by participants. It seems that real practice has given teachers more tools and strategies to manage better the teaching and learning processes occurring in the classroom. The findings of the study aim to provide feedback for improvement to an English Language Teaching Program from a private Chilean University, as well as to provide evidence for practitioners and researchers interested in the topic.

Key words: novice teachers, teacher competency, teaching practices, EFL.

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INTRODUCTION

The role of teachers has always been a very important issue for the educational system of a country. Without competent teachers, students would not able to accomplish learning objectives in an effective manner. Although, there are different factors that influence students´ performance in the classroom, the quality of teachers is a very significant one (Darling- Hammond, 2000). Effective teachers must be skillful enough to combine both, the pedagogical and the knowledge content. Qualified teachers must be able to ensure that the learning process which takes place in the classroom works efficiently (Shulman, 2017).

It is crucial that foreign language teachers are able to achieve and demonstrate two relevant professional competencies: knowledge of the subject matter (in this case the English language) and pedagogical content knowledge.

The following study seeks to compare the relationship between the practice of the profession and the development of the language teaching strategies in novice teachers and undergraduate students. To this end, data will be collected using two instruments, The Teaching Knowledge Test (TKT) and a survey designed for this purpose.

Second Language Teacher Education in Chile

Many factors have contributed to the development of different second/foreign language teaching education programs in Chile in the last two decades. One of the main reasons for this is the fact that our economy has been opened to the world through various business agreements, which implies having bilingual professionals in the market (Abrahams & Farias, 2010). Another relevant aspect to mention, is the development of a free market model in tertiary education that has also contributed to the raise of EFL teacher education programs offered in the country (Barahona, 2014).

At the same time, the Chilean government has invested in English language teaching through the English Opens Doors Program that has developed some policies to contribute with funds for in-service teachers, graduate studies, and one semester abroad program, among other actions (Abrahams & Farias, 2010).

For a long time, English language teaching programs have been based on applied linguistic models. Nevertheless, ELT programs have lately revised their curricula and have incorporated different types of knowledge, such as pedagogical knowledge, school based experiences, and progressive teaching practicum from early stages. Programs have introduced changes in order to balance the language knowledge, language teaching and learning with the teaching of competences (Barahona, 2014). However, some experts state that all these curricular variations seem not to help teachers of English in Chile to be effective (Tagle, Del Valle, Flores, & Ackley (2012).

The concern then deals with the type of competences teachers, and in this case, teachers of English should manage. According to Shulman (2017), a competent teacher must be able to distribute knowledge inside the classroom and ensure that all the students can understand the content (methodology and strategies) and, at the same time, the competent teacher needs to know the subject matter well (content knowledge).

According to Barahona (2014), there are three models in ELT that can be distinguished. The first one is the craft model, in which the pre-service teacher is supposed to imitate what the teacher mentor does in the classroom. The second model is the applied science one that emphasizes that learning to teach is the application of the theory in the school context. The last model introduced by Wallace (2004), is the reflective model, where the premise is that teachers learn by reflecting on their own practice. However, ELT programs in Chile have adopted a hybrid model where features of the three models previously discussed are present (Barahona, 2014).

Considering the elements discussed above, one of the main objectives of this research study was to undercover if novice and pre-service teachers display the same or different content and pedagogical knowledge in language teaching.

Teacher Cognition in Language Teaching

Teacher cognition has grown in importance in the last decades, due to the interest in understanding teachers´ work and the relationship between what teachers believe and, the decisions they make regarding their teaching practices inside the classroom.

According to Barahona (2014), teachers´ beliefs have different origins such as their experiences as learners, programs for teacher education, personal life accounts, and school norms. They are the result of the interaction human beings have with their own contexts and they are supported by a sociocultural view point of learning. Beliefs are considered to be socially created and they appear in specific situations. Beliefs about language teaching and learning come into view, in school and university contexts and are closely related to teacher cognition.

Additionally, teacher´s cognition is related to what teachers know, believe and think. In general, teachers have cognitions about different aspects of their work, where their experiences as learners play an important role. (Borg, 2003).

Teacher cognition and prior language learning experience

Beliefs acquired during the first years of life are very difficult to change or modify, even when there is evidence that shows opposite views (Borg, 2003). Teachers learn a lot based on their own experiences as language learners and these experiences stay firmly in their memories and are very difficult to erase (Johnson, 1992).

According to Johnson (1992), pre-service teachers, make their decisions based on images of material, and classroom organization developed by teachers they had during their experiences as second language learners. Numrich (1996) states that novice teachers promote activities in their own classroom that were positive for them as second language learners or avoid them if the activities they went through as students were not positive.

In general novice teachers' beliefs about how a second or foreign language should be taught come from their prior knowledge, this is mainly because experiences as language learners are very powerful. (Farrell, 1999).

Teacher cognition and classroom practice

There are several factors that can be mentioned that are part of teacher´s cognition in the classroom. Teachers´ cognitions have a very powerful impact on teachers' practices in the classroom. (Borg, 2003).

According to Golombek (1998), some of the factors that influence teachers´ decisions in the classroom are, for example, those that are related to the role that affective, moral and emotional factors play in constructing classroom practices. Johnson (1992), declares that some decisions made inside the classroom on what to do or not, deal with the fact that the teacher intends to assure the student understanding and motivation.

The reality and sociocultural environment of the school is another element that teachers take into consideration when they make their decisions, these factors also involve parents, the principal´s requirements, the school curriculum, school policies, standardized tests. (Borg, 2003).

Barahona (2014), states that beliefs are dynamic, they are shaped and reshaped as pre-service teachers and novice teachers get involved in the action of learning to teach English. Their experiences as language learners, as university students, and in their teaching practices play an important role in the activity of learning how to teach English.

Pedagogical content knowledge

According to Shulman (2017) there are two terms to define what teachers do in the classroom. The first one is pedagogical content and refers to the way teachers present contents to the learners, in other words, methods of teaching and learning. The second term is pedagogical knowledge that deals with knowledge about the subject matter, in this case English.

Additionally, Shulman (2017) declares that competent teachers should have these two skills, the pedagogical content and knowledge, along with classroom management, to be efficient teachers and to ensure that the learning process that takes place in the classroom is successful. Shulman (2017) also states that the pedagogical content knowledge is crucial for

the development of teachers´ careers.

Farrell (2003) indicates that some of the challenges novice teachers have to deal with during their first years are workloads, implementation of convenient teaching strategies to meet students´ cognitive needs and discipline. Classroom management in the structure of the teaching practice repertoire, generates difficulties for novice teachers. They need to be competent in their content knowledge and in the strategies they use to teach. Additionally, they need to deal with classroom management but are not always prepared to do so.

Britt (1997) refers to some aspects related to pedagogical content knowledge, he points out that there are four aspects that are of considerable concern: Time management, discipline, parents´ involvement and preparation of the class.

The information discussed above suggest that the first years for novice teachers are the most difficult ones, since they need to adapt to difficult and unprecedented conditions. They need to learn how to teach in a real scenario, they need to learn by doing.

METHOD

This research study can be situated within the positivist paradigm, which seeks to capture reality from pure observation, outside the researcher judgement (Creswell, 2008). Within this paradigm, the methodological approach is quantitative. According to Hernandez, Fernandez & Baptista (2010), the quantitative approach uses data collection and analysis to answer research questions and tests hypotheses previously established, relying on numerical measurement and the use of statistics to approach the phenomenon.

Type of study

This research piece is defined as non-experimental study, since there is no manipulation of the variables. The phenomenon was studied in a natural environment, without influencing the reality. No situation is built in a non-experimental study, on the contrary situations which already exist are observed, not intentionally caused by the researcher (Hernandez, Fernandez & Baptista, 2010).

Additionally, this study is transactional, since the collection of data was done in just a moment in an exclusive period of time and, it is correlational because there is an association of the results obtained from two groups.

Sample and Setting

The first sample of participants was a group of undergraduate students that belong to an English language teaching program, from a Chilean private university. The second group of participants was a group of novice teachers of English that graduated from the same program and same university.

The students that took part in the study were a group of 31 undergraduates in their 8th semester, who were doing their professional practicum. When data was collected, they were taking Methodology in Language Teaching II, which is one of the core subjects of the program. Previously, they had at least five semesters of short periods of observation and some specific interventions as student teachers during the practicum experience that started in their 4th semester.

The second group of participants was a group of 27 novice teachers of English who had been working in different schools from private to public ones, within a period from 1 to 6 years.

Table 1. Number of Participants

Participants	Female	Male	Total
Undergraduate students	17	14	31
Novice Teachers	17	10	27
Total	**34**	**24**	**58**

Research Instruments

The instruments used to collect the data included a survey and the international examination TKT. The survey has 28 questions in total about methodology in language teaching. Some questions in this instrument intend to uncover if undergraduate students and novice teachers relate what they do in their teaching practices to theory studied at the university, or to the experiences they have had in the classroom. This survey was validated by three experts from a public university from the Biobío County.

The second instrument was the TKT (Teaching Knowledge Test). It is an international examination that includes concepts related to language, language use and the background to and practice of language teaching and learning and it is assessed by means of objective format tests. Candidates have the opportunity to demonstrate their practical teaching competence. The TKT is designed and produced by University of Cambridge ESOL.

The TKT is divided into three modules: Module 1: Language and background to language learning and teaching. Module 2: Lesson planning and use of resources for language teaching. Module 3: Managing the teaching and learning process. In each module, candidates are required to answer 80 questions by selecting a letter for the correct answer. The module used as an instrument in this study was Module 3. This module tests candidates knowledge of what happens in the classroom in terms of the language used by the teacher or learners, the roles the teacher can fulfil and the ways in which the teacher can manage classroom events and interaction.

In terms of the grading, each question carries one mark, so the maximum mark for each module is 80. Candidate performance is reported using four bands. Each module is free-standing, and there is no aggregate score. Candidates receive a certificate for each module they take. The following chart shows the grading system.

Table 2. TKT Grading System

Band[1]	A candidate at this level demonstrates
1	Limited knowledge of TKT content areas
2	Basic, but systematic knowledge of TKT content areas
3	Breadth and depth of knowledge of TKT content areas
4	**Extensive knowledge of TKT content areas**

[1]For a candidate to achieve TKT Band 3, a score of at least 45-50 marks (out of 80) is required.

With the purpose of analyzing data more accurately, the 80 questions in module 3 (Managing the teaching and learning process), were subdivided into twelve dimensions.

Table 3. Dimensions for Analysis

N°	Dimension	Questions
1	Teacher´s classroom language	1 to 7
2	Classroom language	8 to 16
3	Instructions with adult learners	17 to 21
4	Use of students first language	22 to 27
5	Conversation advanced learners	28 to 32
6	Grammar mistakes	33 to 40
7	Teacher´s roles	41 to 49
8	Ways of grouping	50 to 55
9	Management strategies	56 to 63
10	Classroom situations	64 to 70
11	Correction strategies	71 to 75
12	**Feedback**	**76 to 80**

Procedure of data Collection and analysis

For the group of undergraduate students, the instruments were applied in two different opportunities. During the first day, they answered the 80 questions of the TKT international examination in a period of time of 90 minutes, which is the official time stated in the handbook of TKT. The second day, they answered the 28 statements of the survey.

For the group of teachers both instruments were applied in two opportunities. During the first day to a group of 2 participants both the TKT examination and the survey and in a second day, a group of 25 participants answered the TKT and the survey.

Once the data was collected through the two instruments, it was analyzed and represented through tables and graphs, using resources provided by the SPSS software. This was done for an optimal organization of the information and interpretation.

The analysis of the results of the TKT examination was performed using the Chi-square test. This allowed the researcher to establish a possible relationship between the results of the test with the teaching practice, considering the length of time for novice teachers working as teachers.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

The following table presents a crosstab that shows the results of students and teachers in the TKT examination.

Table 4. TKT Results

		Lower than Band 3	Equal or upper than	Total
Students	Frequency	8	23	31
	Percentage of the Group			
Groups		25,81 %	74,19 %	100%
Teachers	Frequency	2	25	27
	Percentage of the Group			
		7,41 %	92,59 %	100 %
Total	Total Frequency	10	48	58
	Total Percentage	**17,2 %**	**82,8 %**	**100%**

The results show that the majority of participants achieved Band 3, which means they got a score of at least 45-50 marks (out of 80). These results demonstrate that a 74,19% of students and a 92,59% of teachers demonstrate Breadth and depth of knowledge of TKT content areas. This could be considered the minimum level required for someone who teaches English. It is important to highlight that the percentage of teachers who passed the minimum level required is higher than the percentage of students. Although the difference between these two groups is not statistically meaningful (Chi-Square= 3, 42; df=1; p=0,064).
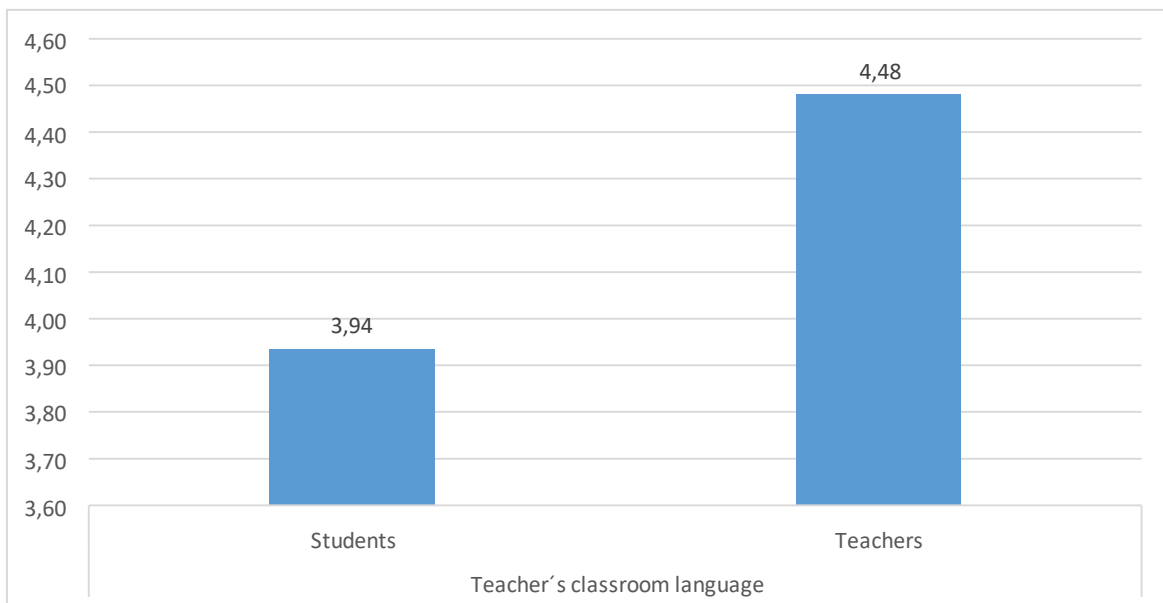

Figure 1. Mean in Dimension "Teacher´s Classroom Language" for Students and Teachers.

As it can be noticed novice teachers got a higher mean in this dimension compared with the group of students, but the difference is not statistically meaningful assuming equal

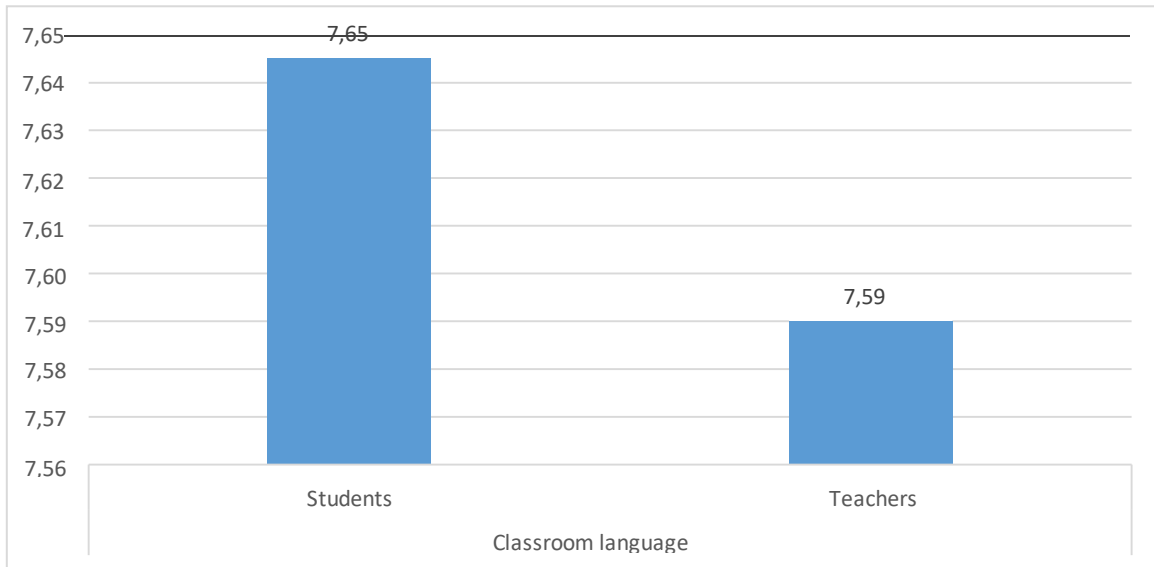variance between groups (t=- 1,77; df=56; p=0,082).

Figure 2. Mean in Dimension "Classroom Language" for Students and Teachers

In this dimension students got a higher mean compared with the group of teachers. The difference is not statistically meaningful assuming equal variance between groups (t= 0,182; df= 56; p= 0,856).
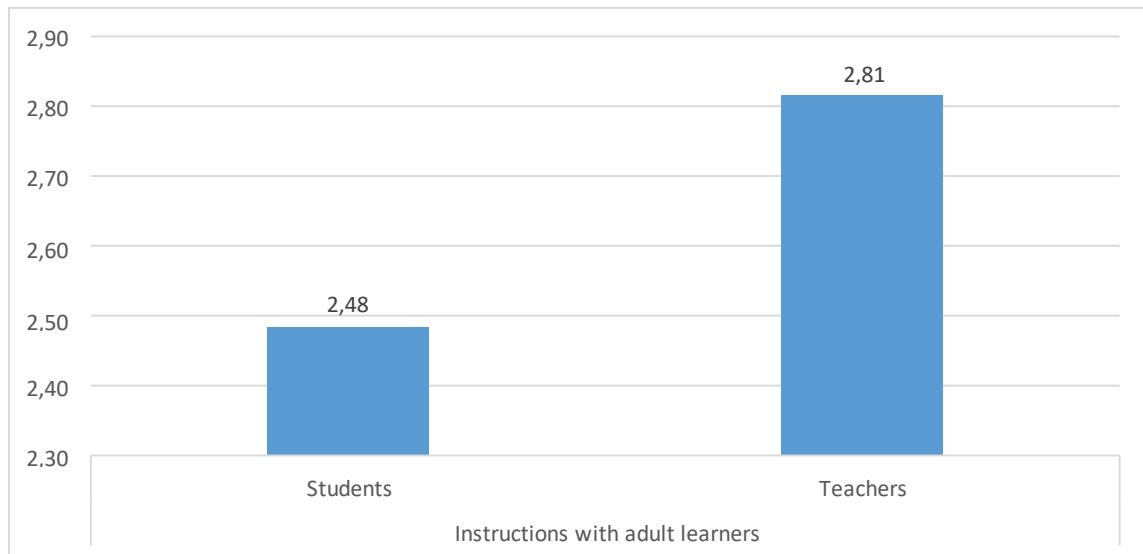

Figure 3. Mean in Dimension "Instructions with Adult Learners" for Students and Teachers.

In this dimension teachers got a higher mean compared with the group of students, but the difference is not statistically meaningful assuming equal variance between groups. (t= - 0,932; df= 56; p= 0,355).
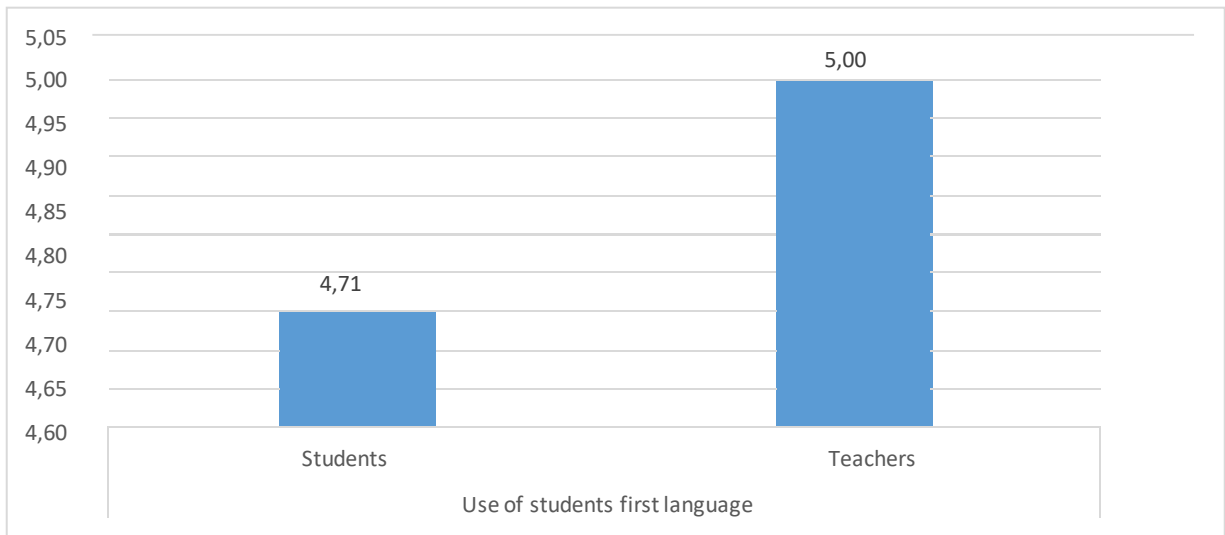
Figure 4. Mean in Dimension "Use of Student's First Language" for Students and Teachers.

In this dimension teachers got a higher mean compared with the group of students, but the difference is not statistically meaningful assuming equal variance between groups. (t=-1, 08; df=56; p=0,285)
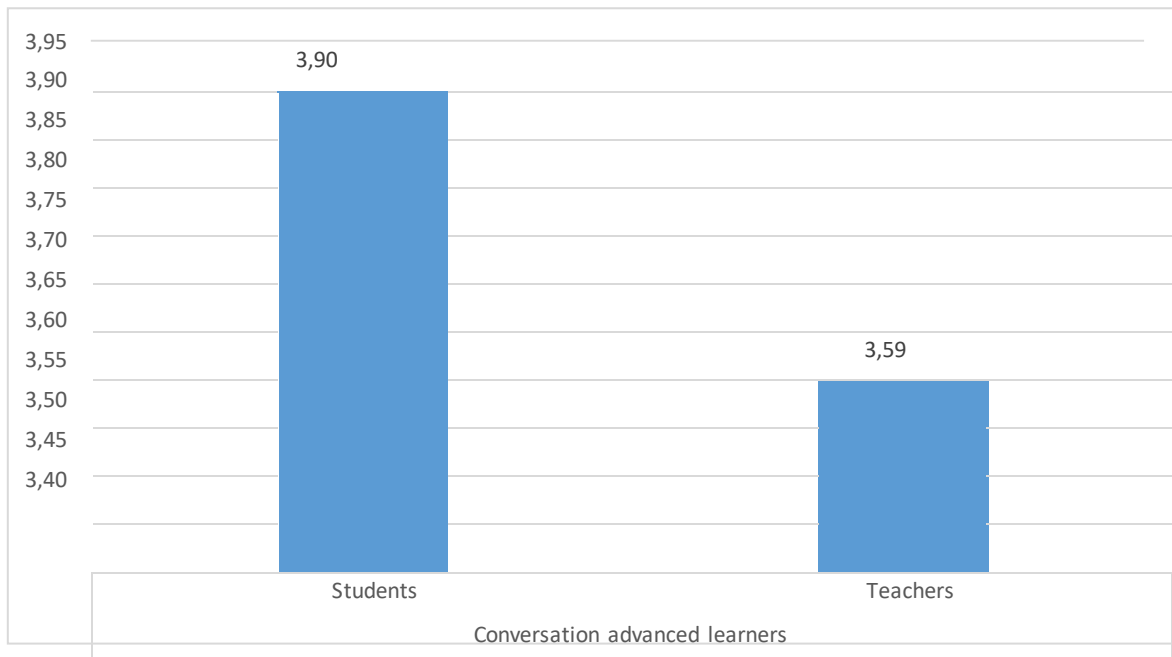

Figure 5. Mean in Dimension "Conversation Advanced Learners" for Students and Teachers.

In this dimension students got a higher mean compared with the group of teachers, but the difference is not statistically meaningful assuming equal variance between groups. (t=-1, 08; df=56; p=0,285).
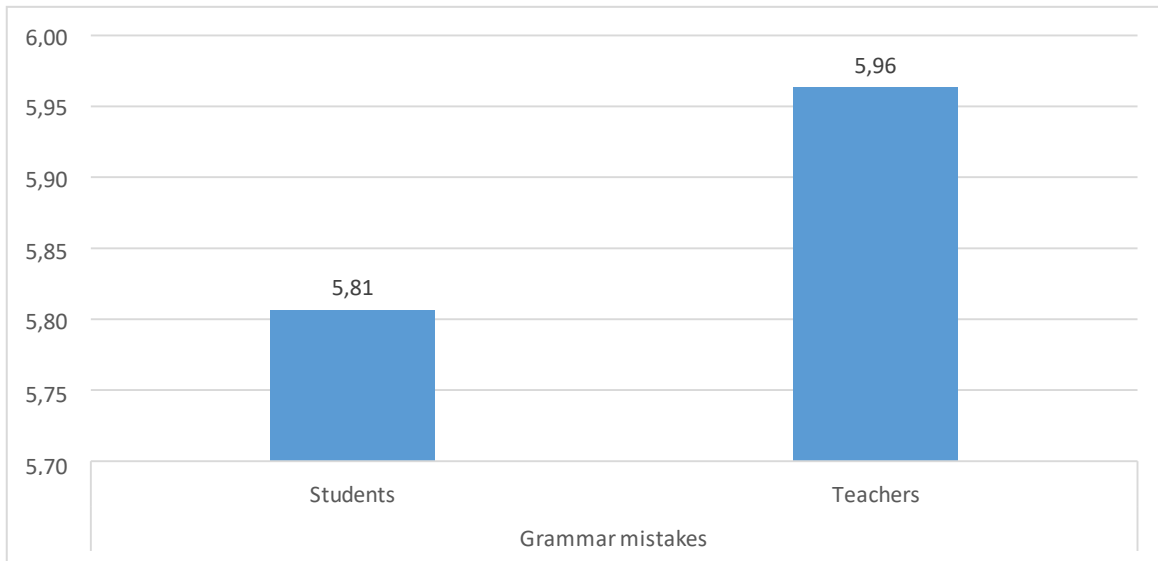
Figure 6. Mean in Dimension "Grammar Mistakes" for Students and Teachers

In this dimension teachers got a higher mean compared with the group of students, but the difference is not statistically meaningful assuming equal variance between groups. (t= -0,332; df=56; p= 0,741).
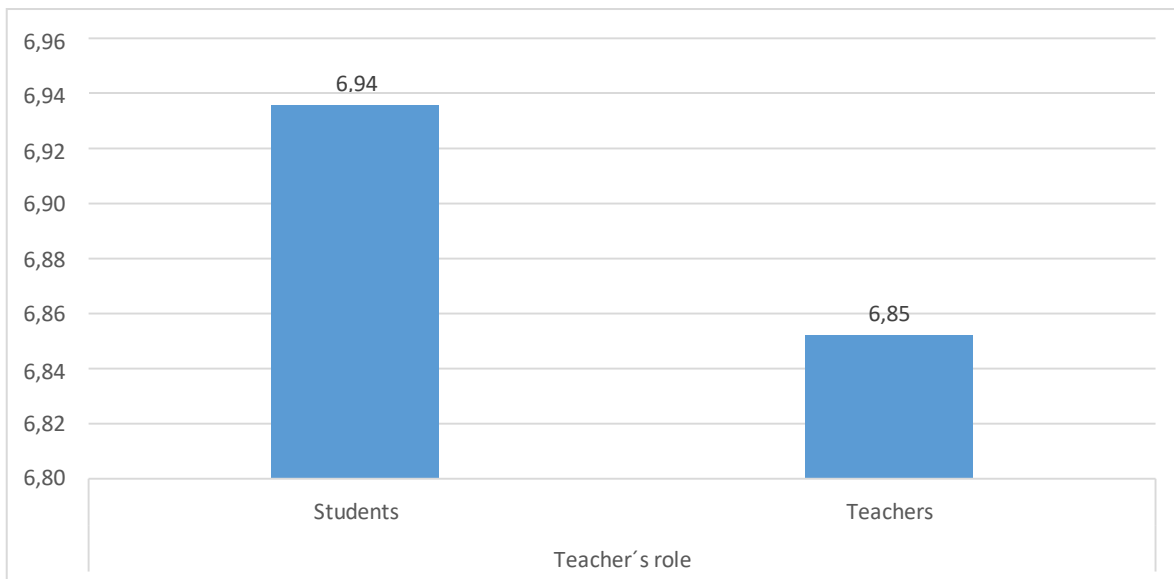

Figure 7. Mean in Dimension "Teacher´s Role" for Students and Teachers.

In this dimension students got a higher mean compared with the group of teachers, but the difference is not statistically meaningful assuming equal variance between groups. (t= 0,197; df=56; p= 0,844).
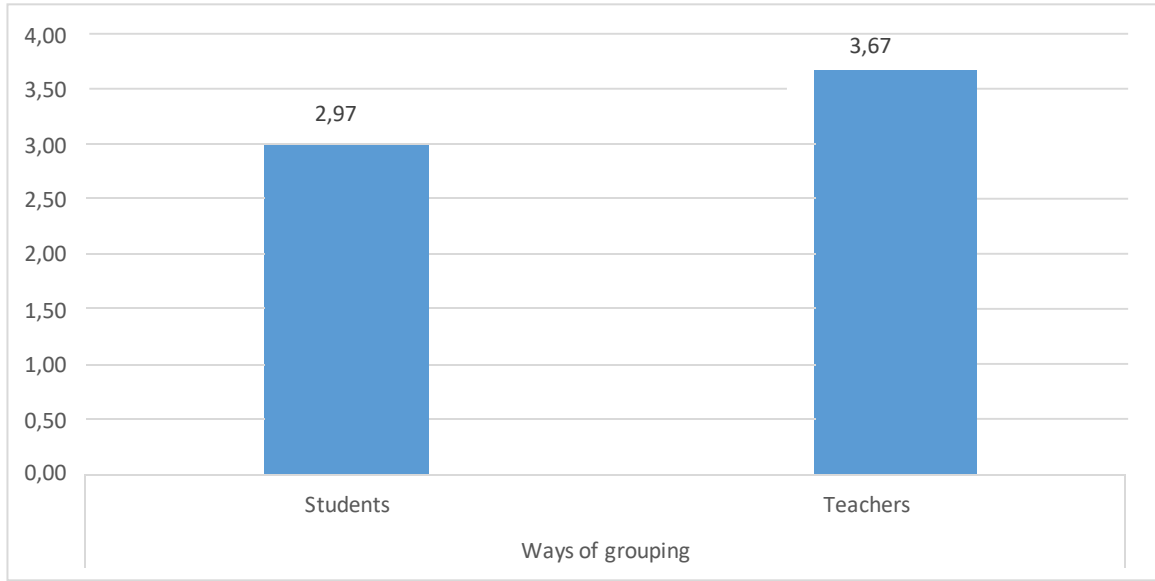
Figure 8. Mean in Dimension "Ways of Grouping" for Students and Teachers

In this dimension teachers got a higher mean compared with the group of students, and the difference is statistically meaningful assuming equal variance between groups. (t= -2,545; df= 56; p=0,014).
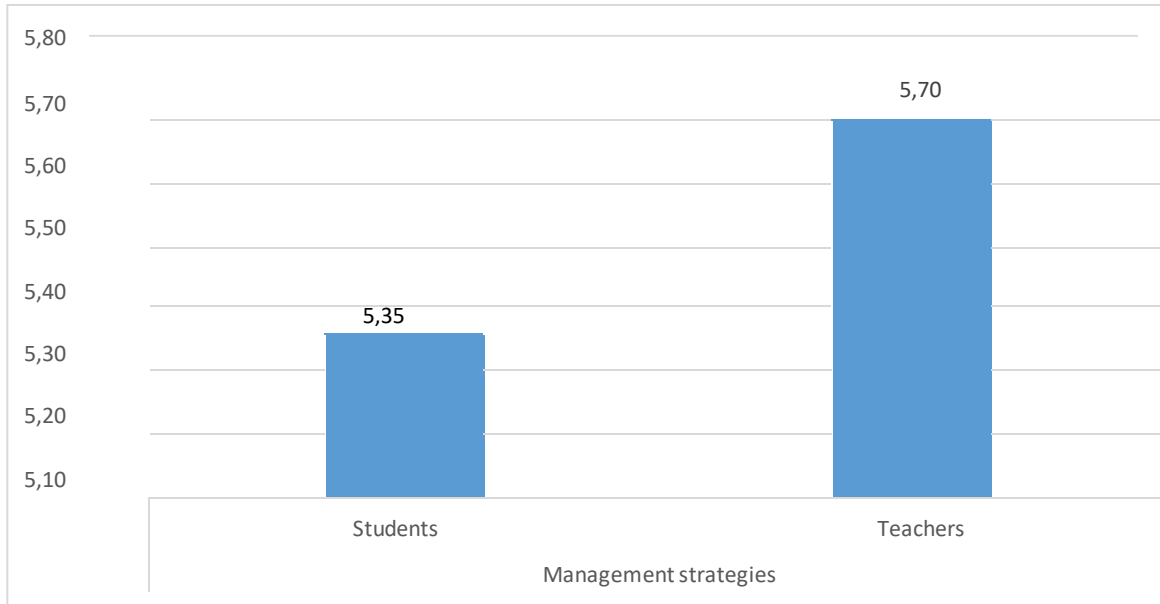

Figure 9. Mean in Dimension "Management Strategies" for Students and Teachers.

In this dimension teachers got a higher mean compared with the group of students, but the difference is not statistically meaningful assuming equal variance between groups. (t= - 0,659; df= 56; p=0,513)
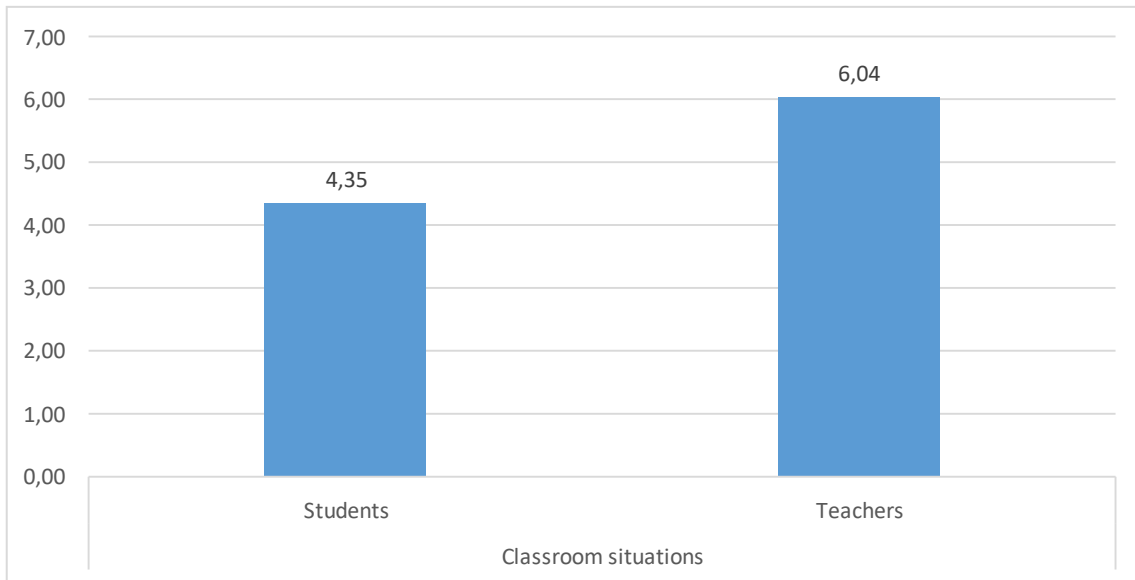
Figure 10. Mean in Dimension "Classroom Situations" for Students and Teachers.

In this dimension teachers got a higher mean compared with the group of students, and the difference is statistically meaningful assuming equal variance between groups. (t= -3,139; df= 56; p=0,003).

Figure 11. Mean in Dimension "Correction Strategies" for Students and Teachers.

In this dimension students got a higher mean compared with the group of teachers, but the difference is not statistically meaningful assuming equal variance between groups. (t=0,561; df=56; p=0,577)

Figure 12. Mean in Dimension "Feedback" for Students and Teachers.

In this dimension teachers got a higher mean compared with the group of students, but the difference is not statistically meaningful assuming equal variance between groups. (t= -0, 97; df= 56; p= 0,33)
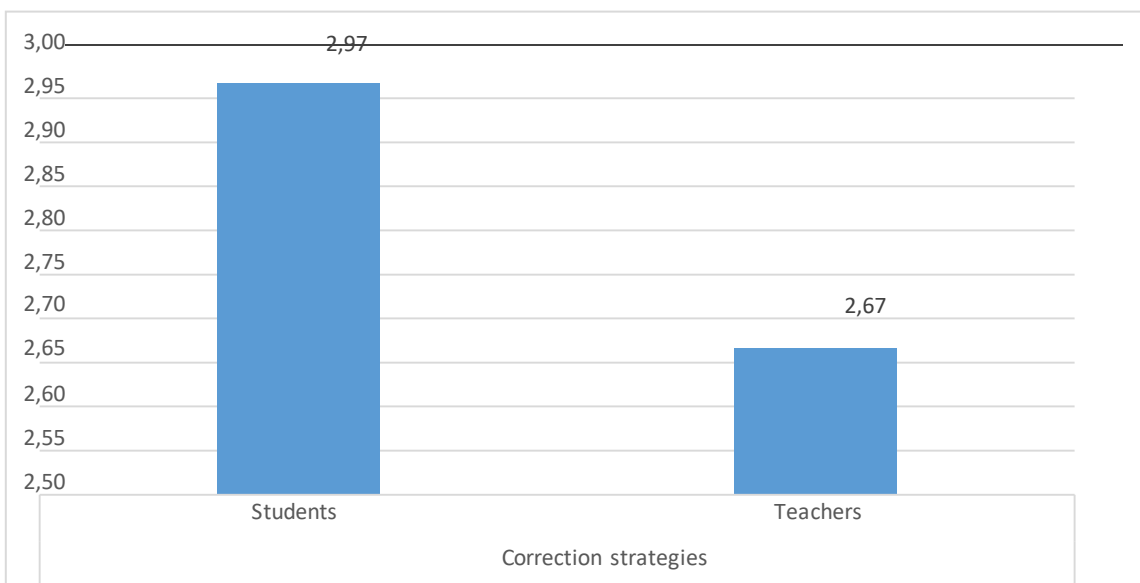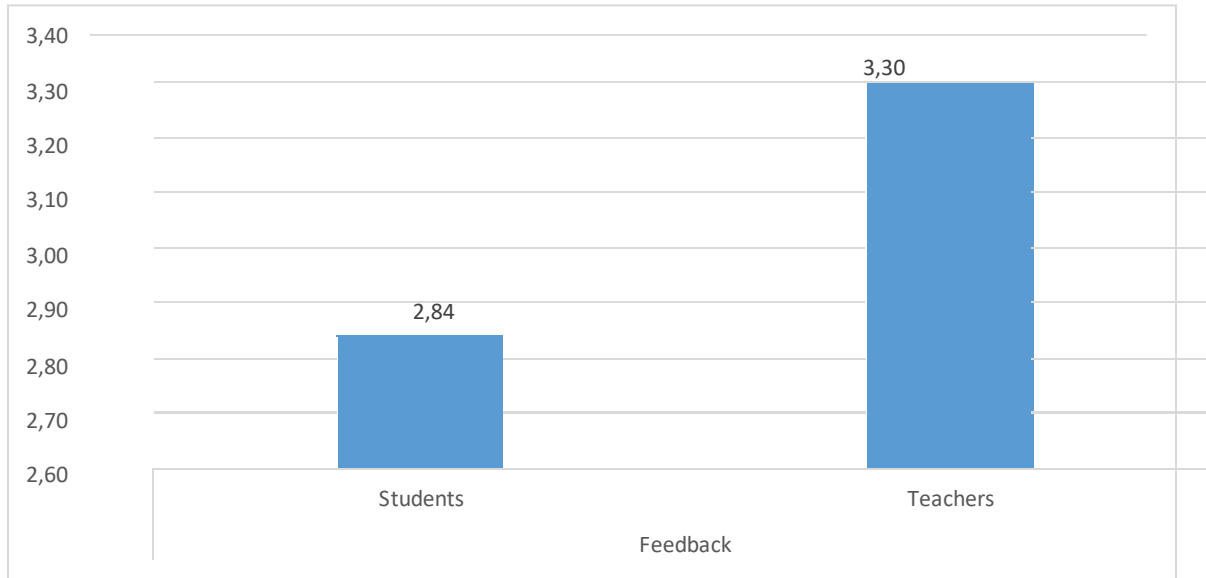
The survey contains 28 questions which intend to get information from the novice teachers and the undergraduate students, about their beliefs about the decisions they make in the classroom.

Table 5. Results for the Survey

Survey Statements		Descriptive		t-Test for independent groups		
	Group	Moda	Media	t	df	sig.
The specific language that I use in the classroom is the result of my practicum experience.	Students	4	3,93	-0,105	55	0,91
	Teachers	4	3,96			
I adapt the language I use in the classroom according to the group I teach.	Students	5	4,33	-1,741	55	0,087
	Teachers	5	4,67			
The decisions that I make in the classroom depend on my experience as a teacher/student-teacher.	Students	4	4,27	-0,871	55	0,387
	Teachers	4	4,41			
The English language teaching program contributed in my initial teaching profession.	Students	4	4	-0,78	55	0,439
	Teachers	4	4,19			
The work environment influences the strategies I use in the classroom.	Students	4	4,23	-0,718	55	0,476
	Teachers	5	4,41			
I use classroom management strategies I was taught at the university.	Students	4	3,87	0,191	45,788	0,849
	Teachers	4	3,81			
The type of students I have are important at the moment of organizing my class.	Students	5	4,63	-0,414	55	0,681
	Teachers	5	4,7			
It is possible to give instructions in English to the students all the time.	Students	4	3,6	1,169	55	0,247
	Teachers	4	3,26			
It is good to give the students the feedback in Spanish.	Students	4	3,6	0,932	55	0,356
	Teachers	4	3,37			
The school´s curriculum affects the way English is taught.	Students	4	3,93	1,548	55	0,127
	Teachers	4	3,48			
I learned the strategies how to correct the students´ mistakes in my undergraduate program.	Students	4	3,8	1,997	43,422	0,052
	Teachers	4	3,33			

The selection of the activities for my class is important for me.	Students	5	4,7	0,246	55	0,806
	Teachers	5	4,67			
I think that the use of questions as an activation technique is useful.	Students	4	4,13	0,893	55	0,376
	Teachers	4	3,96			
Teachers should try not to correct very much, in order not to demoralize students.	Students	3	3,27	1,393	55	0,169
	Teachers	2	2,85			
Oral corrective feedback should be given privately, not in public.	Students	5	3,87	2,303	55	0,025
	Teachers	2	3,11			
It is also important to draw attention to when students get things right, not just when they get them wrong.	Students	5	4,43	-1,669	54,257	0,101
	Teachers	5	4,7			
Teachers should not let students correct each other´s work, as this is harmful to their relationships.	Students	3	3,37	2,888	55	0,006
	Teachers	2	2,56			
Constant monitoring impacts positively my students´ behaviour.	Students	5	4,57	0,078	55	0,938
	Teachers	5	4,56			
The more chances students have to answer the teacher´s questions has a positive effect on both student achievement and behaviour.	Students	4	4,4	1,316	55	0,193
	Teachers	4	4,15			
It is effective to explicitly teach and follow predictable routines so as to reduce behavioural problems.	Students	4	3,57	-1,077	55	0,286
	Teachers	4	3,78			
The arrangement of the classroom affects the students' behaviour.	Students	5	4,3	2,085	55	0,042
	Teachers	4	3,7			
I always choose the materials and methodology before the lesson.	Students	5	4,57	0,42	55	0,676
	Teachers	5	4,48			
Teachers have more than one role during a lesson.	Students	5	4,63	0,246	55	0,807
	Teachers	5	4,59			
The reason why groups are formed in the classroom is to reduce the teacher´s talking time.	Students	4	3,4	3,024	55	0,004
	Teachers	3	2,59			
The methods of oral and written correction that I use in the classroom now are the same ones I learned with my teachers as a university student.	Students	4	3,77	2,435	55	0,018
	Teachers	4	3,07			
My teaching strategies have been influenced by my teachers´ role models.	Students	4	4,07	1,148	55	0,256
	Teachers	4	3,74			
The practicum and teaching experience helped me acquire teaching techniques more than theory.	Students	5	4,5	-0,304	55	0,763
	Teachers	5	4,56			
Personality traits affect the way teachers develop their practices in the classroom.	Students	4	4,07	-0,168	55	0,867
	Teachers	4	4,11			

Questions (1-3-6-8-10-27), which are about the practicum experience itself, revealed that novice teachers and undergraduate students agree on this topic. Both groups believe that their experience in the school is very relevant and gives them a lot of input to make decisions. On the other hand, for questions (4-6-25-26) which are related with theory that is studied at the university in the language teaching program, the novice teachers 'beliefs differ from the students´. Novice teachers believe that their pedagogical knowledge comes from their daily teaching practices. Conversely, undergraduate students think their knowledge comes from the experience they have had as students at the university.

In relation to questions (2-5-7-9-12-13-14-15-16-17-18-19-20-21-22-23-24), which are about methodology and strategies for the classroom, students again, believe that the decisions they make about strategies and the methodology they use in their teaching practices, are the result of the subjects they have studied at the university. On the contrary, teachers again associate their knowledge with their experience as teachers.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The major conclusions that can be drawn from the present study are mainly related to results of the TKT test. Novice English language teachers got better results in the test, with 92, 59 % passing the exam. In the case of the results for the students, 74, 19 % passed the exam. These results show that the majority of participants got band 3 in the TKT test, which means that they demonstrate breadth and depth of knowledge of the exam content areas. Although these results are positive, they are just a "passing score" for people who teach English and it was an expected result considering that the participants were teachers and students in their final practicum.

Considering the general objective of this research study: "to describe the relationship between the practice of the profession and the development of the language teaching strategies in novice teachers and undergraduate students", findings indicate that novice English language teachers performed better than students in the TKT module taken by participants. Bearing in mind these results, it is possible to infer that the more experience the teacher has, the better the results. In other words, real practice has given teachers more tools and strategies to manage better the teaching and learning processes occurring in the classroom.

Overall, novice English language teachers´ knowledge is adequate, since most of them are in Band 3 or above. As stated in the band descriptor, these novice teachers are in the position of relating their knowledge and applying it in the classroom because they have demonstrated to be familiar with concepts, vocabulary, theories, and practices that they can utilize as part of the teaching and learning process. According to Shulman (2017), a competent teacher must be able to distribute knowledge inside of the classroom and ensure that all the students can understand the content (methodology and strategies), and at the same time the competent teacher needs to know the subject matter well (Content knowledge).

There are two dimensions in which the results between novice English teachers and students were significantly different. These are "Ways of Grouping," and "Classroom Situations", where the novice teachers performed significantly better than the students. Like stated above, it seems clear that the experience and daily practice that novice teachers have in comparison with students doing their practicum, give them the strategies to better deal with the management of the classroom, which includes grouping and discipline. Sometimes, it takes years for teachers to learn how to deal with students and classroom situations, but it seems that the only way to improve is practice.

As reported by Fantilli, & McDougall (2009), the first years for novice teachers are very complicated because they need to adjust to difficult and unexpected conditions, to a new school, on top of this they have to cope with the responsibility to teach students. In addition, Farrell (2003), considers that among the difficulties teachers have to deal with during the first years are for example, classroom management. Considering this, it is important that

university English teaching programs consider the importance of providing sufficient practical immersion in school scenarios for EFL students.

Regarding the differences in language teaching methodology between university students and novice teachers, findings indicate that students consider that theory is relevant for their practices in the classroom, they believe that theory is what supports their professional knowledge. However, teachers did not agree completely with that conception. In their views, theory is important, but practice is more important to become an effective teacher.

In terms of use of English language in the classroom, students performed better than novice teachers. This can be explained by the fact that students have more practice using English at the University on a daily basis, unlike novice teachers who use the language for the class, but mixing it with Spanish, in order to make the message clear for every student, which is not necessarily the best manner to acquire the language.

Additionally, the study also suggests that the courses offered by the university where both groups of participants attended as regular students of the English language teaching program were helpful in terms of the knowledge they acquired. They seem to be well prepared in terms of language and theoretical knowledge, (especially students) and pedagogical and practical knowledge (especially novice teachers).

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