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“Perceptions of experienced and novice English teachers working in private elementary schools in the State of Guanajuato”

TRABAJO DE TESIS

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PRESENTA

Diana Esther Huacuz Herrera

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Thesis Director

Dra. Irasema Mora Pablo

Thesis readers

Dr. Edgar Emmanuell Garcia Ponce

Dra. Martha M. Lengeling Kimberly

Dra. Alejandra Núñez Asomoza

ABSTRACT

In our days, private elementary schools in the State of Guanajuato offer English classes as part of their school curricula. This has generated an increase in the number of teachers hired to teach English classes. Some of these professionals are beginning their teaching journeys, while others have a wide experience. This study was carried out with the purpose of knowing the current perception among novice and experienced teachers in relation to their teaching practice in private elementary schools in the State of Guanajuato. For this purpose, a case study was conducted, where ten participants were selected due to their level of experience teaching in private elementary schools. Five of the participants had more than three years of experience, whereas the other five had three or fewer years of experience. The data gathering tool used for the study was an online questionnaire distributed via WhatsApp. The results obtained reveal that the level of experience of a teacher does affect their perception of their teaching practice in private elementary schools. The differences between experienced and novice teachers were in relation to administrative issues and the use of textbooks, despite the fact that their view remained the same in terms of technology and facilities provided by private schools.

DEDICATORIA

Esta tesis está dedicada a todas aquellas personas que formaron parte de mi crecimiento académico e influyeron para poder realizar este trabajo de investigación.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This study aims to present the different perceptions that English teachers in the State of Guanajuato have towards private elementary schools based on their teaching practice and experience. In this chapter, I will provide an introduction to my research considering the following sections. First, I will explain the motivation that originated my interest in carrying out this study. Then, I will point out the research objective. Next, I will present the details in which this project was performed. After that, I will state the present study's research objective, the research questions, and a brief description of the methodology used. Finally, I will concisely explain the sections that are included in this research.

1.2 My motivation

The inspiration for carrying out this research project came from my experience as an English teacher in a private elementary school. Six months before working on this study, I started my teaching practice. I began to work in the private education sector, in an elementary school in León, Guanajuato. During those six months, I perceived some aspects of the private school education, that contrasted with my previous thoughts about how would it be to work in a private school. I studied High school in a private school, and I believed, prior to work I a private school, that professors there had more opportunities of using resources that could not be found in public schools, as well as less stress dealing with students because of the number of students per group. However, as I started teaching in a private institution, and talked with my coworkers who had more experience teaching in the private education, I identified that we had different perceptions towards the same situations. For example, some aspects that they found troublesome, were not a problem for me and vice-versa. I remember that one of my biggest problems was regarding classroom management, while my other coworkers who had been teaching longer, had no trouble with that. For this reason, I started to consider that points of view change depending on the experience and situations one is facing. Beyond my teaching context, I asked some of my peers from the *Licenciatura en Enseñanza del Inglés (LEI)* at the University of Guanajuato who I knew that worked in private schools, about their beliefs and thoughts about certain teaching situations. This, considering that I had established a previous

point of view of the circumstances, and I realized that they had similar perceptions as mine. Additionally, I became aware of a study performed by Adam (1982), which looked at the perceptions student teachers had at the beginning of their teaching practice, and their perceptions when they acquired experience teaching. I found the study interesting and took it as a starting point for this thesis.

My second motivation came from a realization I had as a student. Throughout the LEI I read papers and had discussions inside the classroom which were concerning issues and considerations of teaching English in public schools, but little was considered from private schools. I believed that the reason to do so was that there is a bigger number of public schools in the country (and the world) than private schools. However, considering my classmates, only three out of twelve worked in public schools, and the rest were teaching in private schools. As I asked more LEI students, I realized that there is a considerable number of student teachers that are teaching in private schools. Thinking about this, I believed that it was essential to research the private school environment and the teachers working there, and I decided to base the study on the context of private education.

1.3 Context

This research project was conducted in eight elementary schools from the private sector located in different cities in the state of Guanajuato, Mexico. These schools differ in some aspects, such as internal rules and teaching philosophies. However, all of them are part of *Secretaría de Educación de Guanajuato* (SEG) and follow their program for curricular classes, including other books to help students enhance other abilities. They also share similar school facilities, infrastructure, student and teacher's environment as well as administrative characteristics. Regarding the English classes, these schools do not follow the *Programa Nacional de Inglés* (PRONI) designed for public schools. Instead, all the schools analyzed for this project base their curricula on the contents of different books to work with, platforms and methodologies (such as Sistema UNOi, cool Kids by Richmond, etc.). The selection of the schools for this study was done regarding the English teachers that worked there. The requirement for selecting the teachers participating in this study was that they have worked for at least for one year in a private school. This, in order for them to have reached a perception of the private school. Also, that they had only worked in private schools in their teaching careers and that they were

currently working in a private elementary school in the State of Guanajuato.

Ten teachers participated in this study. The level of experience varied among the participants, for example, five participants had been working for three years or less in a private school. The other five teachers had more than three years of teaching experience. Seven of the teachers selected for the study were student teachers in the LEI program; however, even when they are still studying to get their degree, two of the participants are experienced teachers. The criteria for considering teachers within this range of experience was based on Melnick and Meister's (2008) definition: "Beginning teachers are defined as teachers who had not yet completed three years of teaching" (p. 41). Having the participants selected, some questions were given to them so that they could answer based on their previous experience and beliefs regarding their teaching practice in the private school.

1.4 Research question and objectives

Since this research has the objective of exploring different points of view that teachers have regarding their teaching practice in private schools, it was decided that the most suitable was working on this investigation with a qualitative methodological approach. Marshall and Rossman (2014) claim that qualitative research is "pragmatic, interpretive and grounded in the lived experiences of people" (p. 2). The fact that this study is based on perceptions which are to be formed due to previous experiences of people, makes it understandable to involve the qualitative approach as the methodology for the study. Moreover, the method used for this research was a case study. Zianal (2007) states that case studies are prominent in terms of educational research due to the complexity of issues that it embraces. For this reason, using this method for the project seems interesting because the research is focused on the educational field and the complexity of considering perceptions.

As the objective of this research focuses on understanding the perceptions of English teachers working in private elementary schools, the research question proposed for this study was the following:

RQ What are the perceptions that experienced and novice English teachers have about their teaching practice in private elementary schools inside the State of Guanajuato?

This research question was planned based on the previously stated motivation and thinking about the possible outcomes that the results of the study could show. To collect the data for the study, a questionnaire using the WhatsApp platform was carried out. This platform was used for two reasons. The first due to the facilities that it has for locating people from different geographical areas. The second, for the limitations that the Coronavirus pandemic had regarding traveling.

The main objective of this research study is to explore the different perceptions of English teachers towards their teaching practice in the context of private elementary schools in the state of Guanajuato. Exploring perceptions in teaching has been considered by diverse authors in literature such as Gorder (2008), McNab and Payne (2000) and Scruggs and Mastropieri (1996). The perceptions that this study aims to approach are from novice and experienced teachers that have been working in private elementary schools disregarding the level (1-6) that they teach, but with the only consideration that they have been teaching for at least one year. The experience may change the perception that they have towards particular aspects embedded in this research. This is the reason why I considered it as a variant for performing the thesis.

1.5 Structure of the thesis

The present thesis is divided into five sections. In the first chapter, I provided a brief overview of what the study is about, including my motivation for performing the research and the importance of this investigation. In the second chapter, I review literature about some topics that are relevant to this investigation, such as the definition of perceptions and considerations about the teaching practice, and private schools. In the third chapter, I explain in detail the methodology and method followed to perform this research, as well as the data gathering tools and procedures to collect the information. In the fourth chapter, I show and analyze the results that were obtained during the investigation. Finally, in the fifth chapter, I present the conclusions of the research project, provide implications and limitations encountered while performing the study, and provide ideas for further research on the topic.

Chapter 2: Literature review

2.1 Introduction

Performing a study involves different aspects, but one of the most important is to have clear and accurate material to base the study and look for this material in the correct places. In this chapter, I will present the literature that I relied on and considered relevant for this study. I will divide the chapter into three sections. The first will examine perceptions, the second will explore the teaching practice, and the third will deal with the topic of private schools.

2.2 Perceptions

As perceptions are the core of this study, it is important to define what perception is. *The Longman Dictionary of Teaching and Applied Linguistics* (Richards & Schmid, 2010) defines perception as the recognition and understanding of events, objects and stimuli through the use of senses (sight, hearing, touch, etc.). Hamlyn (2007) agrees with the definition considered above and mentions that perception is the result of stimuli to our sense-organs. Moreover, Vernon (2017) considers experience as being part of a perception by writing that “Knowledge and experience are particularly involved in inferences we commonly make as to the nature of objects and events” (p. 12). While Richards and Schmid and Hamlyn refers more to sensations in his definition of perception, Vernon involves the concept of experience and previous knowledge of the meaning of perception. Schacter et al. (2011) consider both of the previous definitions, and write that:

a perception occurs when one interprets a stimulation in order to form a mental representation of the object, event or situation that provoked that stimulation. But to do so, one has to have experience, even if it is only the experience of being able to formulate that mental representation in our brain. (p. 123)

Based on these definitions of perception, one can understand that every person will have a different perception of a situation based on their experience and the reaction that the event provokes in them. For the purpose of the present study, the perceptions of teachers were

considered, which involves the different stimuli and previous knowledge of situations that they have had in their teaching experience were considered.

2.2.1 Teacher perceptions

Teachers deal with students from different social situations and manage circumstances in their daily life that enhance them to have different ways of thinking about it. This is part of the context of social perceptions, which are considered by Molden & Dweck (2006) to be “concerned with how people interpret and respond to the behavior of others and what inferences they draw from others’ actions and outcomes” (p. 197). As teachers play a fundamental role in the learning- teaching process, it is essential to get to know their perceptions.

Rahimi (2015) states that teacher perceptions are defined as “the thoughts or mental images which teachers have about their professional activities and their students which are shaped by their background knowledge and life experience” (p. 119). Considering Rahimis’ definition, one can identify that teachers do need to take into consideration the amount of time they have spent in front of a group, in a particular teaching environment, and exposed to a situation in order to have clear thoughts on what is going on, and, of course, this perception may vary depending under which circumstances it happened. Positive perceptions tend to be a response to recalling or witnessing a positive (rather than a negative) experience (Icekson & Pines, 2013). On the other hand, negative perceptions are influenced by the negative evaluation (from someone) of the characteristics that integrate the target, which can be a person or situation (Martijn et al., 1992). Regarding teaching, both types of perceptions could be present in the different participants inside a classroom: students, teachers, and even the administrative staff from the school. Considering teachers, which are the subject of study in this thesis, their perceptions may vary depending on the aspects that they find important based on previous knowledge, but also their education and behavior in the moment that a situation takes place, and it can be cataloged as positive or negative depending on them. However, to obtain the experience/ knowledge to be able to identify if the perception is positive or not, the teacher may have previous experience that leads to that discernment. It may not be the same point of view from a teacher with experience than one that is beginning the teaching career. This is the reason why considering teaching practice while exploring teachers’ perceptions is required.

2.3 Teaching practice

As stated by Fitzgerald et al. (2018), teaching practice is the way in which professors provide instruction in a classroom. This teaching will influence the learning of the students. Depending on the subject, the teacher may adapt their manner of imparting the classes and may include or exclude certain aspects to make the class successful. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (2009) considers that “Close monitoring, adequate pacing and classroom management as well as clarity of presentation, well-structured lessons, and informative and encouraging feedback have generally been shown to have a positive impact on student achievement” (p. 89). Considering what the OECD (2009) states, a teacher may possess a set of different skills and techniques at the moment of teaching in order to have an accurate knowledge of what to implement in every situation while they are teaching. For foreign language teaching, Pachler et al (2007) emphasize the importance of a foreign language teacher to have ‘subject knowledge’. This refers to be skilled in second language acquisition theory, pedagogical knowledge, curricular and syllabus knowledge and cultural knowledge, as well as being proficient and aware of the structure and features of the target language (Pachler et al., 2007). To acquire this subject knowledge teachers need to have previous preparation to face the demands of teaching. Part of this subject knowledge implies pedagogical knowledge, which is defined by Verloop et al. (2001) as all the pedagogical-related knowledge that is relevant to teachers’ activities in a teaching-learning situation. This refers to having both, theoretical knowledge and practice-based knowledge to know how to approach a situation in the classroom. The theoretical knowledge is learned at school, while studying to become a teacher; however, the practical knowledge is only acquired by experience. To become a competent teacher, besides being aware of the theory about managing a classroom, and applying different techniques to help students learn properly, practice is needed. In the paper written by Hager et al. (2008), they comment on two Green Papers that were published in 1998 where part of the premises stated that it was necessary to raise the expertise that the education personnel have, especially considering teachers. To do so, it is necessary to consider teachers who are already teaching in a school, say, with ‘experience’ and novice teachers who are starting their teaching career to raise expertise in both.

2.3.1 Teaching expertise

To gain expertise in something, one needs to practice constantly. In the teaching field, it is important to get to know how things are going to be before one is trained to be a teacher. For this reason, Cohen et al. (2004) state that student teachers must be encouraged to practice, so they acquire knowledge for their future teaching. They recognize that it is necessary to take into account an evaluation for them considering aspects such as antecedents, transactions and outcome, being the latest ones that will provide more feedback to the student teacher. The reason for evaluating student teachers may be to prevent and help them to face the “reality shock”. Veenman (1984) states that reality shocks “deal with the assimilation of a complex reality which forces itself incessantly upon the beginning teacher, day in and day out.” (p. 144). A student teacher may not perceive the same things as a beginning teacher, or even an experienced teacher, but it is fundamental to help the student teachers to realize what they will face when they start teaching on their own. Even when the perception of a student teacher may change the way of looking at particular problems inside a classroom, they can be helped by their assessors and literature easier than when a novice teacher is inside the classroom trying to deal with a problem, without any help from someone else, but by their own. Aglazor (2017) states that one of the advantages of having practice as a student teacher is that student teachers will be exposed and will be in touch with real-life classroom experiences, but under the supervision of someone else. This statement reaffirms the beliefs of decreasing beginning teachers to have a “reality shock” (Veenman, 1984).

However, not only beginning teachers can encounter difficulties. Brock and Grady (2007) write that “The first year of teaching is often filled with high expectations and extreme difficulties.” (p. 6). This statement could refer mostly to beginning teachers who are starting to teach and encounter challenges, but they also consider the first year in a new school for experienced teachers. It is true that teachers who have taught in the past are more likely to know what to do in certain situations. For example, Wolff et al. (2014) indicated that expert teachers are better in terms of classroom management rather than novice teachers. However, this does not indicate that experienced teachers are better, moreover, they have faced more situations and know how to react, but this can also lead to a position in which the expert teacher wants to handle a situation in a specific way, which has worked in previous similar cases. This may not always be the best idea because it can lead to a feeling of obliging someone to do something due to the control from the teacher (Morris-Rotschild & Brassard, 2006).

The level of expertise in a teacher is of importance because, as Berger et al. (2018) write “teachers increase their confidence in their abilities, which helps the teachers adopt autonomy-supportive and structuring practices” (p. 8). Developing teaching expertise may take specific time for every teacher depending on them, but also the place where they acquire their knowledge. The OECD (2009) considers that the knowledge and practices that teachers have may change from one country to another, but also inside the same country depending on the teaching in every state or region. Examining this, the level of expertise within teaching could also be influenced by the place where they work, in geographical terms but also in terms of the type of school that they work or receive instruction in. For this reason, the concept of private school will be explored below.

2.4 The concept of private school

The education of children is a global priority, as it is the basis for the social and cultural prosperity of the world's inhabitants, as well as the economic development of countries. In order to improve the learning opportunities for all students around the world, international organizations such as United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), The World Bank, and OECD influence educational politics in developing countries. Part of the educational politics that they propose involves the concept of the private school. Private schools can be defined as those schools that are managed by a non-public authority, for example, a private institution or the church which tend to have better resources and more autonomy than public institutions (OECD, 2012). Private schools differ from public schools in a wide range of areas. Riley et al (1997) comment that part of the differences between public and private institutions relies on variations among students attending both types of schools, teachers working there, the school organization and management, and the academic programs and extra activities they offer. Different authors have investigated the differences between public and private schools in order to find which one is better (Coleman, 1981; Dronkers & Robert, 2008; Witte, 1992). Regardless of the constant ‘competition’ between public and private schools in literature, one can identify that the number of private schools in the world is increasing. Considering the statistics from (UNESCO) (2020) it was revealed that 350 million children around the world attend private institutions. These numbers provide a clear vision that private schools are not to be compared with public schools, which possess a higher enrollment of students but need to be approached in depth considering other aspects or

the simple nature of the private school. Especially when the World Bank (2011) in their World Bank Group Education Strategy 2020 suggests making private investments in order to improve learning opportunities for all students around the world. As Mexico is part of the developing countries that these international organizations influence, it is necessary to explore the role of private schools in the Mexican context.

2.4.1 The private school in Mexico

In Mexico, the concept of the private school dates back to the Conquest and the period of the New Spain where preceptors were responsible for the individual education of children and young people (Torres Septién, 1997). Even when few investigations have been done about the private school in Mexico, the results from the Sistema Nacional de Información Estadística Educativa performed by Secretaría de Educación Pública (SEP) (2022) show that there are 30,389 private schools of basic level in the country, which provide education to 2,378,457 students in basic education. From these numbers, in the State of Guanajuato, which is where this study takes place, SEP (2022) informs that there are 1341 private schools providing basic education to 121,939 students. It is true that the number of students attending public schools in the State of Guanajuato is superior, but the numbers taken from this statistics reveal that private schools are considerably essential in society in our days to provide education. Moreover, *La Ley de Educación para el Estado de Guanajuato* (1996) encourages the creation and participation of private institutions in education as they state “La participación de los particulares en la prestación del servicio educativo es fundamental para ampliar la oferta y excelencia educativa de la Entidad” [The participation of private companies that offer educational services is crucial to expand the supply and excellence of education in the Entity.] (Gobierno del Estado de Guanajuato, 2012, p.2). Considering this, the access to private education is important in the State because it increases the academic offer to many students who may have the opportunity to attend a private institution. This helps as well for students to have access to more facilities and extra activities that may help them in their development. Torres Septién (1997) suggests that the main difference between public and private schools in Mexico are the additional teachings that the private school offers rather than the syllabus that the schools follow. As the students learn mostly the same in terms of content (such as Math, Language, Science, etc.) in private and public schools in Mexico, and the differences rely mostly in the extra facilities and activities that the private institutions offer, students can search

a private school that fulfills the requirements that they want and offers the services and extra activities that they consider better for their development.

2.5 Summary

In this chapter, relevant literature related to the themes covered in this study was explored. Relying on literature is important at the moment of performing an investigation to understand the topics that will be part of it. For the purpose of this study, the definition of a perception was given, as well as focusing on social perception, which involves teaching due to the contact that teachers have with other people such as students, parents and administrative staff. Teacher practice was considered in order to find information about the level of expertise that teachers have and how they affect their teaching practice, where it was stated that beginning teachers tend to have more problems, but experienced teachers could have them as well. Finally, the concept of private school was approached as well as the statistics of private schools in the United States. In the following chapter I will state the methods and techniques used to perform this research.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the methodological procedures and techniques used for the present study. The aspects that I will cover in this chapter are the following. Firstly, I will outline the research question and objectives of the study. Secondly, I will explain the research paradigm, method, and data collection techniques employed for the study. Thirdly, I will analyze the research site where the study took place, the participants selected for the study and the procedure for collecting the data. Fourthly, I will mention the ethics considered for performing the study.

3.2 Research question and objectives

The present study aims to explore the different perceptions that English teachers working in the private education sector, specifically in private elementary schools in different parts of the State of Guanajuato, have had according to their teaching experience in private schools. The main question raised for the study was the following:

RQ: What are the perceptions that experienced and novice English teachers have about their teaching practice in private elementary schools?

The reason for conducting the study was to understand how the job experiences of English teachers modifies the perceptions that they have about the private school considering different factors including administration, students, working environment, advantages and disadvantages that they have found during their teaching practice. Experience is a factor in teaching, and the perception that one has as a novice teacher or as an experienced one could vary significantly at the moment of defining how one sees their practice that one has had. It was decided to apply the study in the private educational sector due to the number of English teachers working in private schools in the State of Guanajuato and the few studies performed in this area. In order to do the study, a qualitative research paradigm was employed.

3.3 Qualitative research

The study was performed by adopting a qualitative approach. To begin, several authors such as Marshall and Rossman, (2014), Denzin and Lincoln (2008), and Silverman (2011) state that qualitative research is widely used in social sciences. For this reason, performing research using the qualitative paradigm seemed interesting and suitable considering the topic of study and the field where the study is carried out; that is in social sciences. The qualitative approach attempts to understand the reasons behind why a certain phenomenon occurs exploring the situations and context where it takes place. Denzin and Lincoln (2008) state that “qualitative research consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible” (p. 4). According to this definition, qualitative research explores the world by gathering and interpreting information in terms of the meaning that people give to the situation that is being studied, which relates to the topic of perceptions that is part of this research. Cantril (1968) mentions that perception is an awareness that emerges due to factors that a certain situation carries. People may have different perceptions of the same circumstance, providing information on a new or different way to see the world. Moreover, Erickson (1986) writes two questions which are to be considered when performing qualitative research, which are: "What is happening here, specifically? What do these happenings mean to the people engaged in them?" (p. 124). Looking at these questions, the study can be narrowed considering not only the perceptions from a given situation but delimiting it to a concrete sector. This is the case of the present study because it confines to a sector (private schools in Guanajuato), a delimited population (English teachers with a certain experience) which is what was aimed to investigate. After choosing to work with the qualitative paradigm for this investigation, a specific method that could help to perform the research successfully was selected, which will be considered below.

3.4 Case study

The method used for this research project was a case study. Yin (1984) defines a case study as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context” (p. 23). Considering the definition of Yin (1984), a case study aims to research a specific phenomenon situated in a particular context, which is related to the research topic of the study. With a case study, the researcher can understand and examine the behavior of the

participants considering the situation investigated. Moreover, Zainal (2007) contemplates case studies as studies to investigate a small and concrete geographical area or a particular number of subjects, which clearly conveys the research purpose of focusing on a specific geographical area, which is the State of Guanajuato, and a delimited number of subjects with specific characteristics. Different types of case studies are encountered by researchers. Stake (1995) identifies three types of case studies: intrinsic, collective, and instrumental. The latest is the type of case study that was selected for this study. Laframboise and Shea (2009) write that “an instrumental case study allows researchers to gain an insider’s view of an issue or concern” (p. 109). By having a concrete understanding of the issue, the researcher can have a better comprehension of the study and the issue. Moreover, Stake (1995) writes that in instrumental case studies, the issue is the dominant aspect of the study, from the beginning to the end of the study, the issue is the dominant factor, which associates to the topic that is covered in this study, and connects to the issue.

3.5 Research site

The present study was conducted in eight private elementary schools in five different cities around the State of Guanajuato: León, Guanajuato, Cortázar, Valle de Santiago and Silao. Elementary schools consist of six grades, and children attending these grades are between 6 and 12 years old. The schools that were considered for the study have similar characteristics concerning the students’ environment and infrastructure. The schools were selected according to the English teachers covering different grades within elementary schools, so the study could include the complete elementary school and not only one grade. All of the schools are part of the SEG and the curricular classes of these schools follows the SEG program. Nevertheless, the curriculum for the English classes is not the one established by SEG. The English curriculum that each of the schools considered for this study follows differs from one to the others. However, the study is not focused on curriculum, but on perceptions of the English teachers teaching in these schools. The fact that the project was conducted in private schools from different locations made it interesting for the findings to see how different or similar the perceptions of English teachers working in various locations inside the same state differ.

3.6 Participants

The participants selected for this research project were required to cover two requirements. The first was that they were English teachers currently working in a private elementary school in the State of Guanajuato. The second was that the participants have only worked in private institutions during their teaching careers. This, is in order for the participants to have clear perceptions of their teaching practice in the private institution, and to avoid the comparison between public and private institutions. Ten participants collaborated in this research. All of them covered the requirements stated above. The participants are ten Non-native Mexican EFL English teachers currently working in a private elementary institution in the State of Guanajuato. One male and nine females. Seven of the participants were student teachers at LEI when the study was performed, although, even when they were student teachers, they had already acquired experience as English teachers. One of the participants had a degree in *Lenguas modernas e interculturalidad*. Another participant holds a degree in *Educación preescolar*. The other participant started to work in the field because she had the opportunity to do it, but does not have a teaching degree. As the study aimed to find differences between the perceptions that experienced and novice English teachers working in private elementary schools had, the participants were asked about their teaching experience in private schools. Experienced teachers are considered the ones that have more than three years of teaching experience. Rivkin, Hanushek and Kain (2005) write that the three first years of teaching are the ones where a teacher could change their teaching practice, which is a rare thing to do for more experienced teachers. According to this criterion, the participants selected had different ranges of experience. Five of them had three years or less of experience, while the other five had four to nineteen years of experience. To maintain the confidentiality of the participants, they were given pseudonyms, which are presented in the following table.

Table 3.1 Teacher profile

Participant	Gender	City	Degree	Teaching experience
Participant 1 (P1)	Male	Guanajuato	LEI	2 years
Participant 2 (P2)	Female	León	LEI	3 years

Participant 3 (P 3)	Female	León	Licenciatura en lenguas modernas e interculturalidad	4 years
Participant 4 (P4)	Female	León	LEI	3 years
Participant 5 (P5)	Female	Cortazar	LEI	3 years
Participant 6 (P6)	Female	Valle de Santiago	LEI	7 years
Participant 7 (P7)	Female	Guanajuato	LEI	1 year
Participant 8 (P8)	Female	Silao	LEI	8 years
Participant 9 (P9)	Female	León	Does not hold a degree	19 years
Participant 10 (P10)	Female	León	Educación preescolar	10 years

3.7 Data collection tools

The technique that was applied to collect the data during this study was an online questionnaire. The questionnaire was applied using the cell phone application WhatsApp and the participants answered the questionnaire using voice messages. Online tools were applied in this research encouraged by the idea that Ritchie and Ormston (2013) propose, which states that through online research, it is easier for the researcher to gather information, specifically when the participants of the research are not located in the same geographical area as the researcher. As the participants of the study were in different parts of the state of Guanajuato, the use of an online questionnaire with open-ended questions seemed an accurate idea to collect the data. By using this technique, the data could be gathered in a considerably short set of time and be analyzed by the researcher without the necessity of moving from one place to another in the geographical aspect. Below, the use of online questionnaires will be explained in detail.

3.7.1 Questionnaire

A questionnaire is defined by Franklin and Osborne (1971) as an instrument that consists in a series of questions and opinion segments that can elicit responses that can be converted into measures of the variable that is being researched. The use of questionnaires in data collection could be used as the only method for gathering data, or it can be used along with other techniques. For the purpose of this study, the questionnaires were used as a unique method of data collection. Marshall (2005) claims that “questionnaires can yield high quality

usable data, achieve good response rates and provide anonymity” (p. 132). The use of a questionnaire can provide the participants with a feeling of freedom to express themselves, taking the time they need to answer the questions posed on the questionnaire. As the participants are from different parts of the State of Guanajuato, and have little time available due to the activities they perform (as part of their jobs, being students, having a family, etc.) I believed that the most appropriate would be to have an online questionnaire that could be sent to the participants easily and they can answer. Deawaele (2018) writes that “Using online questionnaires in applied linguistics and multilingualism research is a great way to obtain rich and abundant data while sitting behind one’s desk” (p. 284). Regarding this, the questions to be used in the questionnaire were stated. The questionnaires applied in a qualitative paradigm should include clear open-ended questions, so the participants can understand the question and answer them properly. Marshal (2016) writes that “questionnaires should only ask things directly relevant to the research area” (p. 132). So, the questionnaire used for the research was neat, concrete and to the point, so the participants could answer it without problems. The questionnaire was in English because it was not considered to be an issue for the participants to understand, as they are all English teachers; however, they could answer these questions in either English or Spanish, depending on how they felt more comfortable. (See appendix 1).

3.8 Data collection procedures

The data collection started after defining the research question and the objective of the research. For studying experienced and novice teachers, I had to look for literature supporting what an experienced teacher and a novice teacher are, and decide the range of experience years that they should have to select the participants. After doing so, the participants were selected. This was done agreeing that an experienced teacher could be any teacher with more than three years of experience, and novice teacher if he/she has less than three years of experience. These participants were selected regarding that they had only worked in private institutions along with their careers and that they were from different cities inside the State of Guanajuato. When the participants were selected, asked to participate and informed about the study, a consent sheet where they signed an agreement of participation in the research was provided. The data was collected using an online questionnaire via instant messaging. The reason for using an instant message application is because one can have rapid and real-time conversations when using instant messaging (James & Busher, 2016). As the participants received the questions for

the questionnaire, they could easily answer them. Different Instant messaging applications were considered for collecting the data. However, a study reported in *Boletín UNAM* and conducted by Luis Ángel Razo Hurtado (2019) shows that WhatsApp is the most used instant messaging app in Mexico, this is the reason why it was found suitable for the purpose of the study. The participants were asked for their cell phone numbers to send the questions. These questions were sent to the participants in October 2019. The participants were suggested to answer the questions before October 31st, however, two of them answered the questionnaire on a subsequent date. The participants answered the questions using WhatsApp audios, so they could elaborate on their answers.

When all of the participants have answered the questionnaire, the audios were transcribed in order to analyze the answers in depth. Both the audios and transcriptions were stored by the researcher as evidence for the study (see Appendix 2).

3.9 Ethics

Ethical considerations are a fundamental aspect to take into account when performing any type of research. However, as Brooks et al (2014) mention, qualitative research involves a larger engagement with human participants, and one must be careful when approaching the participants to be part of the study and consider that they have the right to know the purpose of the study and all of the implications and important information about it. Ramrathan et al (2017) state that " no research can be conducted without due regard to ethics" (p. 432). When this study was planned, the ethics on how to approach the participants and maintain their confidentiality in the study was considered. Knowing this, to perform the present study the participants were informed about the purpose of the research and how the data collected from the questionnaires they sent was going to be analyzed only by the researcher. They were informed that their names were not to be used to maintain their identities private, as well as the confidentiality that their answers and information provided in the questionnaires will have. Also, the researcher extended her contact information to the participants in case they got any further doubts about the research or data management. The participants were as well informed that they could withdraw their participation if they no longer want to continue participating in the study.

The British Educational Research Association (BERA) (2011) points out that the first step in obtaining consent is for researchers to ensure that participants understand the process that they are engaging in, why their participation is required, who will use the research findings and how it will be reported. For this reason, after informing the participants about the study and having a positive answer for their participation in the study, they were presented with a consent sheet (see Appendix 2) where the aspects commented above are stated, and where the participants signed an agreement of participation. In the data analysis section, the identity of the participants is confidential and the terms ‘participant 1, 2, 3, and so on are used instead of their real names.

3.10 Conclusion

To conclude, in this chapter, I covered and explained the research paradigm and methods that were selected to perform the present study, which relies on a qualitative paradigm and an instrumental case study. In this section, the process of selecting the participants, research site and data gathering tools are explained. As well as the ethics that this research process carried out. In the following chapter, the analysis of the data will be done.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will analyze the results that emerged from this research, discussing certain aspects covered by the participants that could shed light on the research topic. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the objective of this study is to explore the perceptions that experienced and novice teachers have considering their teaching practice in private schools. To do so, I will divide this chapter into two sections 1) perceptions regarding the facilities in the private school, and 2) perceptions concerning the administration.

4.2 Perceptions regarding facilities in private school

While analyzing the data, one of the aspects considered repeatedly by the participants was the different facilities encountered in a private school. The facilities that schools have are different depending on the necessities of the students they will teach. Facilities in a school are considered by Alami et al. (2012) to include multiple factors such as consumables, electricity, services, audio-visuals, among other things. These facilities are perceived in a positive or a negative way by people working in the educational sector. Regarding private schools, participants expressed:

...all the private schools have services like, they have a good bathroom, they take care, especially more of the needs of the children and they are like, they specialize more in their needs and in their learning. (P2, Q3)

The equipment these schools (private schools) have and the classrooms are better. (P10, Q4)

Taking into account the statement of these, there is an opinion even among teachers, that private schools offer what participant 2 calls ‘services’, which involve facilities that go beyond the physical characteristics of a school but to a more cognitive level, where the needs of students are considered. A report written by the OCED (2012) states that private schools have to be more reactive to the students’ needs, in order to have more successful results on the children’ education. To do so, the teachers working in private schools may be more prepared and incorporate techniques in their teaching practice, related to what Kwong (1997) states that “Private schools demand instructors with a

variety of skills” (p. 250). Part of those skills involves engagement from teachers in students’ and different teaching techniques that suit students. It is interesting to consider that Participant 2, who does not have a wide teaching experience, was the only one that considered that private schools care about the students’ needs, while other participants mentioned facilities regarding technology and school supplies rather than the facilities offered to students by teachers.

As stated above, a facility that different participants mentioned was the technological resources that the private school provides. Technologies started to be incorporated into the teaching field since the nineties, as stated in the literature (Barker, 1990; Dwyer et al., 1991; Sandholtz, 1997). With the emergence of technology and the use of it in the classroom could be understandable that, as the participants below state, teachers consider having some technological material in their classroom.

I think that one of the best advantages in private schools would be that... it would be this all technological resources like TV's, computers, internet... (P3, Q4)

La escuela te apoya con tecnología, las ventajas que he encontrado son mayoritariamente en cuestiones tecnológicas. (P9, Q3 and 4)

Another [advantage] is that you have all the different resources, like technological resources and you can make use of these cool tools (like internet and so on) to give your class. (P1, Q4)

The technological resources are considered an advantage of working in private elementary schools by the participants. Moreover, a study performed by Zallas et al. (2015) in Sonora, Mexico encountered that in the private sector 95% of the teachers asked involved technology in their classroom. Technology has become a necessary tool for teachers both in the private and public sector and having the appropriate tools facilitate the teachers’ work. Based on the findings of the comparison between public school teachers that incorporate technology in their classrooms and private school teachers that Zallas et al. (2015) did, one can see that there is a higher use of technological resources and incorporation of them in the private sector than the public one. The reason for this is mostly due to the amount of money invested in private schools towards resources. Kennedy (2018) writes that one of the things that students get from the amount of money invested in private education are facilities that enhance an appropriate learning experience. Based on this, one of those facilities would be technology,

which provides students with more resources to acquire learning, but also teachers to involve and use the technology in their classroom for educational purposes, which help the delivery of the class. Participant 1 agrees that technological resources have helped him in the way he teaches his classes.

...we have a whole technological environment where you can use a lot of apps, a lot of technology, a lot of cool stuff in order to give your classes, in order to learn something new, in order to teach something new. (P1, Q3)

Based on the perception of Participant 1, the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) can benefit the classes given by teachers in private schools due to the technological environment that surrounds the students, and, moreover, the motivation of the teacher towards the class could also change for having different technological resources to use. Wang et al (2015) write that “in English teaching fields, computer-assisted language learning can support and extend English curriculum goals” (p.100). Part of the goals can be defined by the teachers, which find necessary and useful the implementation of different technological resources (such as apps, websites, programs, etc.) to teach and have better results.

Interestingly Participants 3 and 9 are experienced teachers who considered the use of technology as an advantage and benefit for teaching. The answer from Participant 9, who has nineteen years of experience, is specifically intriguing because she considers technology as an advantage of teaching in a private school. One can easily believe that teachers with more experience may not be very attached to technology, but the answer from this participant states the contrary. Piñón et al. (2017) consider that applying different technologies in the English class is beneficial for teaching basic education. This is a congruent reason for the perception of participant 9 because technology is considered an advantage for her that has been offered to her in the years of experience working in the private school.

The last aspect considered by participants as a facility provided by private schools is the useful material provided by the private school for their teaching practice. Participant 4 comments that:

They give us a lot of, a lot of resources, they give us books, they give us online resources, they give us physical material, flashcards, mmm, a classroom, posters. I don't know laptops for everybody. So, I could say that they have plenty of resources. (P4, Q3).

The material provided by the school is crucial for having an accurate teaching practice, and if the school provides enough material to the teachers, they could exploit those resources to the maximum, facilitate their teaching and obtain effective results. Balogun (1982) affirms that an education program cannot be effective if it does not include accurate equipment for teaching. Bearing in mind that part of the equipment used for education involves different resources provided in a private school, one can consider that those resources facilitated by teachers in private schools make them have better performance in their teaching practice. All these materials are provided to the teachers due to people at school who manage the economic resources so that there is enough accurate material to work with. Yet administrative staff in private schools does more than that, and teachers perceive some of the aspects that they regulate differently.

4.3 Perceptions of administration in private schools

The only factor where all the participants from the study seemed to have an opinion, either positive or negative, was regarding the private school administration. One of the possible reasons for having a specific perception towards administration is that, as it is managed by private proprietors or a specific group of individuals. This means that each private school has different manners of organizing the classes, curriculum, and other aspects concerning teachers and the delivery of their classes. As mentioned before, there were found positive and negative perceptions among the participants. One of the positive features that teachers working in private schools have found towards administration is the support that the administration provides.

...teaching in private schools will be that you have a good back-up by your superiors. (P3, Q3)

They're keeping track of their teachers; they're keeping track of the English level. The coordinators or their principals, I don't know, someone is in charge of, let's say, evaluating or, mmm... maybe observing the teachers, the English teachers to keep a good level to keep a good work for everybody. (P4, Q4)

Our coordinators always try to help and support us. (P6, Q3)

Based on those answers, teachers perceive that the administration (either coordinators, administrators, principals, etc.) ply them with good support and are aware of what they are doing in order to help them improve. An investigation performed by Ballou and Podgursky (1998) found that “inexperienced private school teachers also report more cooperative relationships with other staff.” (p. 413). Contrary to the results of the study from Ballou and Podgursky (1998), two of the three participants stated above are experienced teachers, that consider the administration as being supportive of them, which involves a positive relationship between the teacher and the administrator for perceiving them as supportive and concerned about the school staff they have in charge. The proficiency as teachers that the participants have may also influence their perception towards the administration. Part of the support received from the administration involves aspects deeply relevant to the teacher’s performance in the classroom.

Ellos mismos [the administration] ya te dan una propuesta de planeación. (P8, Q4)

Participant 8 believes that the fact that having a pre-established proposal of a lesson plan given by the administration contributes to an advantage of the administration from private elementary schools. Fujii (2019) writes that “teachers spend a lot of energy and time crafting a lesson plan” (p. 685). In this sense, the lesson plan given by the administration could serve as a guide for the teacher to create the lesson plans for the content that must be covered. But, relying only on the imposition of lesson plans given by the administration could result in a lack of freedom for the teacher. This was one of the issues perceived by a participant and is brought up in the following excerpt.

As a teacher, maybe you lose a bit of freedom, you know, you lose freedom in your classroom, in your classes because maybe you cannot include certain activities, certain games, certain topics that you’ll like to include in your classes because you have to follow certain rules, because you need to follow specific requirements, specific topics, specific curriculum that it’s already created. (P4, Q5)

Participant 4 mentions the concept of freedom in the classroom and the feeling that as one has to follow certain pre-established lesson plan, some activities and topics that could be of interest for the student or that the teacher considers relevant to teach are left aside. A study performed by Misco and Patterson (2007) showed that a majority of teachers believe they have a limited degree of freedom in their classroom, which is often restricted

by the school district or school board. All institutions have their policies and as teachers, it is important to be aware of those policies; but it is necessary as well to maintain the teachers' autonomy to decide the topics, activities, and resources that enhance the students to have a proper comprehension of the subject that is being taught. However, the freedom to teach is an ongoing issue for the participants in this study, as it is mentioned by participant 7 below.

Tú tienes que acoplarte a lo que te pide la institución, a lo que te piden este... de la forma que te piden que enseñes. No es tanto como libre, y que tú decides qué actividades, qué temas vas a enseñar. (P7, Q3)

Participant 7 considers that school policies interfere with the freedom that teachers have to teach what they consider best for students. This could be either the content of the course or the way of imparting the classes. According to Rothstein (2002), the majority of the teachers have to teach what the principal tells them to teach.

This statement could be considered as the administration or the people in charge of the school (e.g., the principal, the coordination, etc.). They perhaps do not have much flexibility with teachers to enhance them teach what they think would be more convenient for the students to learn. Also, they could imagine that the methodology and techniques that the teachers want to use may not match the beliefs or methodology claimed to be part of the institution. Looking into official documents from the Mexican government one can see that the third article of the *Constitución Política de Los Estados Unidos Mexicanos* (1917) considers private education, but it does not consider anything about the 'freedom' that the school gives, or not, to their teachers. Considering this, one can assume that there is no specific information about the freedom that teachers can have or not inside the school where they teach. Concerning the local rules of the '*Ley de Educación del Estado de Guanajuato*' published by *Gobierno del Estado de Guanajuato* (1996), the thirteenth article contemplates the freedom that public and private schools should give, but it is more about the aspect of teaching to have a collaborative harmony between the school, teachers, students, and parents. In order to examine more the topic of the freedom that teachers have inside the private elementary school, one may further investigate the specific statute of a private elementary school and how they approach the topic of freedom.

Besides the perception from participants that the school does not allow freedom for teaching certain topics or for using different methodologies or techniques than the ones

established by the institution, they had a particular perspective about what the administration requires them to do. One of those aspects is specifically to fill in the books that the school acquires for the students. Participant 5 stated the following:

I would ask them [administration] to allow me to be more free [sic] and not have to depend completely on the book. Because finally the book is just a resource, it just helps us to, you know, to teach a topic and that's it. (P5, Q6)

Earlier in the document, it was mentioned that private schools have different resources to work with, however, the mandatory use of the resources could be a negative aspect to consider as well. If teachers are supposed to use and cover every page of a textbook, there may be little time to perform other activities and for the teacher to work on their teaching identity, but only focus on other authors' beliefs or the institutional beliefs. Allwright (1982) maintains that textbooks can be too inflexible, and that they generally reflect the pedagogic and linguistic preferences of the authors that wrote them. If the teachers must follow a book, and its methodology dictates all the course, the classes could fall into a cycle where teachers follow what somebody else finds important for a specific set of students whose characteristics may not fit with the ones that their students have. Also, they can differ in the teaching style or teaching method from the teacher imparting the class. Other participants commented on the topic of books stating that:

It's kind of complicated sometimes to fill the books (as in complete and cover all of the content and activities of the book). (P1, Q6)

For me, it is not important to fill up a book, fill in the blanks. (P5, Q6)

I think that maybe, not having that specific book because I think it's, it's not really, it is not indicated to the kids' needs. (P6, Q6)

Considering these participants' answers one can identify that the teachers believe that filling in the books used in the school where they work is not easy nor significant. This particular idea could be considered more often by newly teachers, taking into account the study carried out by Mohammad and Kumari (2007). In the findings of the research, Mohammad and Kumari comment that teacher training programs enhance students to go 'beyond the textbook' and consider other ways of teaching and coming with new materials to the classroom. These findings make sense because Participants 1 and 5 state that filling in the books is simply not

important for them. However, Participant 6, which has more experience teaching, explains the reason why filling in the books may not be useful, which does not suit the students' needs. It is necessary to evaluate a textbook before using it because, as Abdollahi-Guilani et al. (2011) state that "For EFL learners, the textbook becomes the major source of contact they have with the language apart from the input provided by the teacher" (p. 26). If the student is provided with a poor textbook which does not include relevant or appropriate material for the needs nor adapts to the context, it may be harder for both teacher and student to follow the book. Moreover, Mukundan and Kalahai (2013) write that "It is very important to conduct ESL/EFL textbook evaluation so as to ensure ELT textbooks can effectively facilitate the attainment of our teaching objectives, and at the same time, be economically viable to teachers and students" (p. 40). By evaluating the textbooks in depth that will be used in the school, the teachers may see the textbook more as a useful resource, which may increase the attention of students and help in the learning process.

The use of the book may be required for fulfilling an aspect of private schools that should be considered, which is to keep in touch with parents. Participant 8 considers the use of the textbook as a limitation, but she believes that:

Los papás, la única prueba desde mi punto de vista que tienen respecto a que se ha trabajado o no en la escuela es el libro, entonces si ellos ven libros vacíos consideran que, que no se ha trabajado. (P8, Q6)

As this participant mentions, the fact that parents focus on considering the book as the only evidence that their children are working may result in a problem for the teacher, but also for the administration. The OECD (2012) considers that privately managed schools must be more sensitive to parents' demands concerning curricula, teaching methods, facilities and discipline. Regarding this statement, school administration and teachers should be aware of what parents want their children to know, and if they want the books to be completed, the administration should take it into account but also raise awareness to parents that books are not the only way of seeing progress in a student, but in the performance in the language that they are having. Moreover, there could be an implementation of different activities performed openly by the school to see the language competence of the students, but this should be regarded in-depth in the future in each school. Lalau (2014) writes that "Parents' opinions are important because they are directly involved in the education of pupils" (p. 68). So, if parents consider that books must be all filled up, one has to take that into account for teaching. Although, the preoccupation

of parents for seeing books that are completely filled up can be due to the price they pay for books at the beginning of the school year, as two participants mention.

The books are really expensive, and if you don't complete the books, most of the pages, and parents are aware of this, maybe you get in trouble. (P1, Q6).

As far as the curriculum goes, the books are very expensive. (P6, Q6).

In both responses, we can see that novice and experienced teachers perceive the cost of textbooks as quite elevated, which may elicit the parents to complain if the textbooks are not completed during the school year. Nicholls (2009) comments that textbook prices have increased at twice the rate of inflation. The increase in the cost of textbooks represents an extra expense for parents, and as they already paid for them, they want to see that they are being used. If the position of using textbooks in the classroom is maintained, probably a good solution would be to address the findings in the study performed by Lalau (2014) regarding textbooks. The study contemplated opinions of parents, students, and teachers in regard to textbooks; and concluded that the content presented in textbooks is sometimes insufficient for students, so parents and students are using also other information from different sources (Lalau, 2014). Bearing this in mind, textbooks should be analyzed in depth according to the needs of the students in the school and probably consider mixing the activities from the book with new activities that can enhance the learning of the students.

4.4. Conclusion

In this chapter, a presentation and interpretation of the data obtained in the study regarding the perspectives that teachers have of private schools according to their teaching experience were done. The chapter covered the two most relevant topics that were considered by the participants. The first one was the facilities and different resources that a private school offers to the teachers working there. Some of the aspects considered were mainly the presence of technological resources in the language classroom in private schools. Even when both, experienced and novice teachers agreed on having a perception towards the technology in the classroom, it was interesting to consider that some experienced teachers with a wide teaching experience commented on technology as an advantage. The second topic covered was administration. Experienced and novice teachers have similar perceptions towards this topic,

considering that the administration could be more supportive with teachers and provide them with more freedom in the classroom. Moreover, the use of textbooks in private school was contemplated, where novice teachers do not find them very useful, on the contrary to experience teachers who argue why they find them appropriate or not.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Introduction

In the current chapter, I will present the conclusions of the present study discussing various aspects encountered during the data collection process and the findings stated in the previous chapter. First, I will start by answering the research question stated in previous chapters and the findings encountered in the study. Then, I will state the implications that this research had. Next, I will present the limitations that were found in this study. After that, I will provide some recommendations for further research. Finally, I will give my final thoughts about the research.

5.2 Restating the research question.

In Chapter Four, an exploration and analysis of the results obtained from the data collected were done. The research question began as an idea of understanding better my teaching practice and to research the private educational sector in the state of Guanajuato Mexico. To do so, the study considered the question: What are the different perceptions that experienced and novice English teachers working in private elementary schools in the State of Guanajuato have about their teaching experience? What was found due to this research is that the perceptions of experienced and novice teachers working in private elementary schools do not differ much and there are some similarities even when the years of experience differ.

Considering the factors evaluated in Chapter Four, some of the findings were the following:

- Experienced and novice teachers agree that private schools have different facilities that enhance teaching practice.
- Both experienced and novice teachers see technology as the main advantage of the private school according to the teachers' experience, coming to terms that technology is key for teachers in our days, whether they have years of experience or they are novice teachers.

- Administrative issues are considered by both types of teachers as a challenge in private schools; however, novice teachers feel more support from the administration in their workplace than experienced teachers do.
- Experienced and novice teachers have a positive perception of textbooks. However, novice teachers state that they do not find textbooks precisely useful in their teaching; while experienced teachers state a reason why they consider textbooks hard to use or not in their experience.

These findings consider that experience influences the perception that teachers have of their practice in private schools. But they do not change to a great extent. Both types of teachers find facilities in private schools as the best part of their teaching, as well as technological resources. Interesting to consider is that experienced teachers who have learned about technology consider the usage and access of technology in private schools as necessary as novice teachers do. This finding helps us to understand the great aid that technology is in our days and that it has come to help and support teachers. Moreover, the findings showed that with experience, teachers working in private schools feel a lack of support from the schools' administration. On the contrary, novice teachers find more support from their administration. Regardless of the support that the administration gives, both types of teachers find some issues regarding private schools' policies and methods that they impose on the teachers. After analyzing these aspects, one can understand that the perception that one has may change as one acquires experience, but for good or bad, it simply changes. Some aspects that as a beginner teacher were seen as negative, could become positive as time passes by, or remain the same depending on the personal experience and situation of the teacher.

5.3 Implications

The findings reported in this thesis have important implications for my personal teaching practice. Through this investigation, I realized that some questions, positive aspects, and issues I have encountered while working in private schools are also perceived by other English teachers working in private schools in the State of Guanajuato. During the research, I realized that the three main aspects covered are a constant matter for the private teachers considered in the study. Knowing this, the study could help other private school teachers to not

feel isolated in their issues and perceive some differences that they could have in their teaching to what this study found in order to perform further research about private school issues or advantages. Moreover, this study could serve as a guide for novice English teachers working in private schools to consider some of the aspects that other peers in the same situation consider as positive or negative. They could also help novice teachers to understand what they could face in a private elementary school to see the perceptions that other teachers with and without experience have about working in the same terms as they do and understand that their perceptions could be relatable. Another implication of this study would be to continue with the research in Mexican private elementary schools, especially regarding the subject of English because it is not a widespread area where research is carried out.

Besides the pedagogical implications that the study has, regarding methodology, the tool used for gathering data in this study could be considered by future researchers as a data-gathering tool, especially for studies that involve participants from different geographical locations.

5.4 Limitations

There were two limitations in the study. The first was that I was researching different points of view, and some participants did not want to express much about their beliefs and how they perceived the teaching experience in their workplace. I was conscious that participants may not have wanted to answer the questions due to school policies or the fear that their answer could be exposed to their superiors if they express something negative about their working environment. Regarding this situation, I clearly stated to the participants the purpose of the study and the fact that their answers were only for academic purposes. I provided them with a consent sheet where they agreed to participate in the study where it was expressed the objective of the study and that their personal information was not going to be revealed in the study. However, some teachers decided not to participate in the study due to beliefs about having repercussions in their workplace.

The second limitation was related to literature. Many articles regarding teaching English in public schools in Mexico are written, but few consider private schools. Regarding perceptions of teachers working in private schools, there was not enough material, or the articles and books were regarding private university teachers, which opinions differ

considerably from basic education perceptions due to the context. As mentioned before, not many studies have been done in Mexico considering English in private schools, so encountering localized information was somehow complicated.

5.5. Further research

There could be different aspects to be explored in further research. The most important is to take into consideration the teaching of English looking upon the private education sector in the state of Guanajuato and Mexico in general. There is a considerable number of English teachers working in private schools around the country and there are few studies performed regarding this sector. For this reason, I invite future researchers to investigate the topic and contribute to new findings in this area by researching private schools in Mexico. Moreover, bearing in mind the findings stated in this study, further research could be done on each of the aspects that were covered. For example, exploring the idea of ‘textbooks’ in private schools could provide interesting information about the reason behind the belief that they work or not. One aspect that could be explored in depth may be the policies and regulations that the SEP, SEG and private schools internally have regarding English teaching. Some of them are not consolidated or well stated in the public documents, which can be an interesting topic to research in the future.

5.6. Final thoughts

This research has helped me to explore the perceptions that English teachers from different private schools all over the State of Guanajuato have considering their teaching experience. I started this research with the intention to obtain better understanding of the teaching experience of English teachers working in elementary private schools influences the perception that they have towards certain aspects of their teaching experience. To a certain extent I wanted to explore if other teachers in the same conditions as myself, English teachers working in elementary private schools in the State of Guanajuato Mexico have similar perceptions toward the students, parents, administration, advantages, and disadvantages of their teaching experience. I believe that perhaps novice teachers and experienced teachers’ perceptions may change considerably. However, based on the results obtained I realized that

the perceptions do not change radically, but remain similar. Due to this, I have become aware that the way of perceiving the elementary private school when one is a novice teacher may not differ much as one gains experience.

As a researcher, this has been my introduction to the world of research. It has been an interesting journey and I have learned several new aspects to integrate for further research. I have understood the importance of research and I am willing to investigate more in the future. Moreover, I have acquired the knowledge of how to perform research which will help me in my professional development in the future.

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Appendix 1: Questionnaire

1. For how long have you been teaching in private schools? Which level (s) have you taught?
2. Why did you decide to be an English teacher in a private school?
3. How would you describe your experience teaching in a private school?
4. Which are the advantages that you have found working in a private school?
5. Which are the challenges that you have faced working in a private school?
6. If you had the chance, which are the aspects that you will change in your teaching practice working in a private school? Why?

Appendix 2: Sample Transcript

Participant #4: Female, 3-4 years of teaching experience.

1.

I've been teaching in private schools for like, three four years more or less. And I have taught the levels, well, very different levels. I started, aah, as I said three years or four years ago with kindergarten, with preschool. Then, I taught primary school, elementary school with all the levels. That means from first grade to sixth grade. And... I have stayed like that, I haven't taught secondary or high school, I just taught primary and preschool. The levels of the English, if you are, if you are asking me that... Mmm, their proficiency may be, could be from beginners, true beginners, to maybe, intermediates.

2.

Ammm, why did I decide to be an English teacher in a private school? I think that's a complicated question because I actually think I didn't decided that part, I didn't decided to teach in a private school. The thing is that, when I became a teacher it was because another teacher told me to look for a job. He suggested me to be an E, an English teacher. And when I started to look for job opportunities on internet, the only job opportunities that appeared to me were only in private schools. So, I really didn't decided because there were no more options. It was private school because there were job opportunities.

3.

My overall experience teaching in a private school or teaching in private schools is quite well, it is very good, it was very good. There are positive and negative aspects as in every single job, but overall everything is good. I can tell you for example that in the private school where I started to teach. I was a novice teacher and it was very good, it has helped me a lot. I, I learned a lot and.... Mmm... maybe, the first two or three schools, the first three private schools where I taught had a lack... a big big lack of resources. I only counted with books and that's it. That could be a negative aspects, aaah, that could be a negative aspect maybe, because I needed to create my own material and most of the money that they, that they paid me was for creating material aah, and for example in the third private school that I taught a negative aspect that I can tell you is that it was multilevel. That means that it had aah, ages and levels mixed all

together and they were children., I was working with children and imagine, working with levels, ages, all mixed it was, was very difficult. And I could say that's a negative aspect because you cannot.. mmm... well, focus your attention on certain level, or certain age or certain goals. But they have plenty of resources. Amm, they have some laptops, they have books, they have CD's so, that's a positive aspect. In this school that I'm teaching right now, currently, amm, I need to say that my experience has been very good, very good. Mmm, my groups are excellent, the level of English is only one, and they, I can say that it's intermediate, they give us a lot of, a lot of resources, they give us books, they give us online resources, they give us physical material, flashcards, mmm, a classroom, posters.. I don't know laptops for everybody. So I could say that they have plenty of resources.

4.

Well, as I was saying in the previous question, amm, there are positive and negative aspects in every job. But some advantages that I can manage about working in a private school, amm could be maybe that they have money, they have resources, and they have material. So, I can say that, from my experience, I have seen that private schools count with sufficient materials, sufficient resources, and well, that's, that's an advantage. Another advantage could be that private schools try to, amm... organize their curriculum, they try to organize their, their times, they try to observe, they try to evaluate, they try to have, kind of a management of the English language, you know? Of the English teaching, let's say. So for example, they ask for lesson plans, they ask for aah, maybe I don't know, products, they can tell you that they are going to observe you, so they're they're keeping track of of this kind of things. They're keeping track of their teachers, they're keeping track of the English level. So, I cannot tell the difference between a private and a public school for example, but I can tell that from my experience that is an advantage because their coordinators or their principals or, amm... I don't know, someone is in charge of, let's say, evaluating or, mmm... maybe observing the teachers, the English teachers to keep a good level to keep a, a good work for everybody.

5.

Some of the challenges that I can encounter in teaching private schools is something that I actually mentioned as an advantage in the previous question. I was telling that, English programs in private schools are very regulated, are very controlled. Amm, so, which is good, which is good. But, as a teacher, maybe you lose a bit of freedom, you know, you lose freedom

in your classroom, in your classes because maybe you cannot include certain activities, certain games, certain topics that you'll like to include in your classes because you have to follow certain rules, because you need to follow specific requirements, specific topics, specific curriculum that it's already created, so you lose this freedom of creating your own curriculum, or creating your own... plan for the year, or for the program. So maybe that could be, challenging, as, as a disadvantage maybe, mmm.... But also other challenges in priv... well, that goes very related with the other is that you need to follow, you need to... amm, how can I say this? You need to do whatever someone else tells you, and that could be very challenging because if you are very creative, if you want to be innovative, then you don't have that opportunity, but, well, that's challenging. But about other challenges that I have found in teaching the private school, amm.... Maybe, dealing with parents. Ah, parents are very... very immerse, very involved in private schools, and, sometimes they shouldn't. That's a challenge that I have encountered. Mmm, sometimes dealing with students could be perfect, but parents are another thing. Yeah, so maybe those are the challenges that I have encountered.

6.

If I have the chance to change something in my teaching practice maybe would be the curriculum. The curriculum in where I'm teaching is very well-organized and everything, but sometimes the goals are not that important, not signi, not meaningful for, for the students, which is something that I would change. I would like to have class were students feel that they are learning something meaningful for their lives, and well they are learning more like academic stuff and so on. Ahhh, But I, I, I need to say that I feel very comfortable in where I'm teaching right now. Everything is good, everything matches with my beliefs, except that of the curriculum. But they give me certain freedom in my classes, they give me some time to create my things, they give me time to include activities that I would like to include, they give me time for, for experiments, and now that I'm studying the university, that I'm asked to do certain works, certain projects that involve my teaching practice, well, in the school I'm working they give me time for that, or they allow me to do that. So they give me certain freedom, they trust me, and that's something that I like. Amm, so I think I would not change a lot. Administration has been developed these last months, administration has been improved I need to say. So, no, I think that I would not change it. Schedule, about schedule, mmm, maybe I would change schedule a bit, maybe for students it could be a lot of time in an English class, because they have amount three-four hours per day with one group, so maybe it's a lot of time.

But I don't know, I think it helps me also to, to build the rapport with students, it helps me to create my own activities and to follow the activities of the curriculum and, I don't know I think the time, the schedule is good, mm, maybe what I would like to change is that there are some things that are more important than my class. For example those events that Spanish class has like 'honores a la bandera' or mmm, I don't know 'festival ' or whatever you know, those events that schools tend to do. Amm, I don't really like it when they take my time to do that. I think they, ther're... I don't know. They don't take as important as it needs to be the English, English classes but, no I would not change anything, else.

Appendix 3: Carta de consentimiento informado

A _____ de _____ de 2019

Carta de consentimiento informado para recolección de datos.

Nombre del proyecto: **“Perceptions of experienced and novice English teachers working in private elementary schools in the State of Guanajuato.”** [*Percepciones de profesores de inglés con y sin experiencia trabajando en escuelas primarias privadas en el Estado de Guanajuato*]

Por medio de la presente, yo _____ doy mi consentimiento para participar en la investigación titulada *“Perceptions of experienced and inexperienced English teachers working in private elementary schools in the State of Guanajuato.”* [*Percepciones de profesores de inglés con y sin experiencia trabajando en escuelas primarias privadas en el Estado de Guanajuato*], la cual es conducida por Diana Esther Huacuz Herrera, cuyos datos se encuentran al calce de este documento.

Manifiesto que se me ha informado del objetivo de esta investigación, el cual es explorar y analizar las diversas percepciones de los profesores de inglés que cuentan con una experiencia docente superior o inferior a tres años tiene acerca de su experiencia trabajando en escuelas del sector privado dentro del estado de Guanajuato. El medio de recolección de datos será por medio de un cuestionario que será enviado mediante la plataforma de WhatsApp.

Comprendo que mis datos serán confidenciales y no se usará mi información con otro propósito más que el de los fines de este proyecto que son estrictamente académicos. La investigadora me ha proporcionado sus datos y, en caso de surgirme duda alguna le contactaré.

Nombre: _____

Firma: _____

Diana Esther Huacuz Herrera. Estudiante de la Licenciatura en Enseñanza del Inglés, Universidad de Guanajuato. Número Único de Alumno (NUA): 776278 Teléfono de contacto: 4777244500 Correo electrónico: dianitahh15h@hotmail.com