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The influence of large classes in the English language teaching-
learning process in Ecuadorian high schools

TRABAJO DE FIN DE TITULACIÓN

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Septiembre, 2018

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Magister.

Lisset Vanessa Toro Gallardo.

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De mi consideración:

El presente trabajo de fin de titulación: The influence of large classes in the English language teaching-learning process in Ecuadorian high schools, realizado por Castillo Castillo Alexandra, ha sido orientado y revisado durante su ejecución, por cuanto se aprueba la presentación del mismo.

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“ Yo Castillo Castillo Alexandra declaro ser autor (a) del presente trabajo de fin de titulación: The influence of large classes in the English language teaching-learning process in Ecuadorian high schools, de la Titulación de Ciencias de la Educación mención Inglés, siendo Toro Gallardo Lisset Vanessa director (a) del presente trabajo; y eximo expresamente a la Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja y a sus representantes legales de posibles reclamos o acciones legales. Además certifico que las ideas, conceptos, procedimientos y resultados vertidos en el presente trabajo investigativo, son de mi exclusiva responsabilidad.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to my parents who with love and patience, guide my life and teach me that with work and dedication everything is possible.

To all my siblings for the joyfulness of their company.

With love,

Alexandra

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The process to complete this research study was hard but with the guidance and support of my thesis advisor, Mgs. Lisset Vanessa Toro Gallardo, this research study was completed. I recognize her work and dedication in order to give me all the academic assistance needed and make of this research a good source for future studies.

Finally, I want to thank Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja for making my dreams come true.

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ABSTRACT

The research is about the influence of large classes in the English teaching-learning process in Ecuadorian high schools, and its purpose is to determine how large classes affect or not the English language teaching-learning process. The study was conducted in five classrooms, from 8th basic to 3rd senior year, that were selected from two public high school in the city of Cariamanga; all the selected courses had over 35 students. The sample consisted of 179 participants whose ages ranged between 12 and 17 years old.

Qualitative and quantitative methods were used as the general approach of this study. Students' surveys were also applied to find out aspects that influence on the English language teaching-learning process.

Mainly the results showed that students' answers were generally positive regarding the instructional implications of large classes. Among social implications was shown that teachers who work with large classes have problems when remembering students' names.

Finally, it was found that large classes affect the quality of classroom atmosphere, students' confidence to speak in class, and the teachers' level of attention towards their students.

Keywords: large classes, instructional, social and psychological implications, factors.

RESUMEN

La investigación es sobre la influencia de las clases numerosas en el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje del idioma Inglés en los colegios del Ecuador, y su propósito es determinar cómo las clases numerosas afectan o no el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje del idioma Inglés. El estudio se realizó en cinco aulas, desde octavo básico a tercero año de secundaria, que fueron seleccionadas de dos colegios públicos en la ciudad de Cariamanga; todos los cursos seleccionados tenían más de 35 estudiantes. La muestra estuvo conformada por 179 participantes con edades comprendidas entre 12 y 17 años de edad.

Los métodos cualitativos y cuantitativos se utilizaron como enfoque general de este estudio. Encuestas a estudiantes también se aplicaron para descubrir que aspectos influyen en el proceso de enseñanza- aprendizaje del idioma Inglés. Principalmente los resultados mostraron que las respuestas de los estudiantes fueron en general positivas respecto a las implicaciones instruccionales de las clases numerosas. Entre las implicaciones sociales, se demostró que los maestros que trabajan con clases numerosas tienen problemas a la hora de recordar los nombres de los estudiantes.

Finalmente, se encontró que las clases numerosas afectan a la calidad de la atmósfera de la clase, la confianza de hablar en clase, y los profesores a los estudiantes de nivel de atención hacia sus alumnos.

Palabras clave: clases numerosas, implicaciones sociales, psicológicas y de instrucción, factores.

INTRODUCTION

The teaching of English in Ecuador, for a long time, has not given the expected results because the majority of the students who finish secondary education do not achieve the basic language communicative competence. In spite of having studied English during six years, students are not able to communicate in a written and oral way in this language. In the last years, important decisions to improve the education of the country, in different fields, have been made by the Ecuadorian government in order to give better opportunities for teaching and learning this language.

Considering that large classes are part of the reality of Ecuadorian high schools, they deserve to be researched due to the fact that working with large classes may be, in some cases, advantageous and disadvantageous in others.

For the above mentioned, it has been proposed the following research topic “The influence of large classes in the English language teaching-learning process in Ecuadorian high schools” with the purpose of determining whether or not large classes affect the English language teaching-learning process. This study aims at answering the following questions: What instructional implications do large classes have on the teaching-learning process? What social implications do large classes have on the teaching-learning process?, What psychological implications do large classes have on the teaching-learning process?.

The beneficiaries of this study are educational institutions, students and teachers in general who are involved in the teaching and learning of this language that provides a lot of opportunities in the academic and professional fields.

The influence of large classes in the English language teaching-learning process has been studied also by different authors in other countries. There are some studies that are worthy to review.

Ping and Zhihong (2012) conducted a study to investigate How does individualized instruction improve the participating students learning outcomes and How do the teacher-centered, one-for-all lecturing model and individualized instruction model compare in terms of their relative popularity in the eyes of the students. In the study the researchers use mainly questionnaires and interviews. From the analysis above, the author concluded that individualized instruction based on students' needs analysis and through CALL environments could be a feasible way to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of large classes of Integrated English.

Additionally, Thaher (2005) conducted a study to answering the following questions: What are the instructional effects of large classes on non –English major EFL students at An-Najah National University ? , What are the psychological effects of large classes on non-English major EFL students at An-Najah National University ? , What are the social effects of large classes on non-English major EFL students at An-Najah National University ? . The researcher asked the students an open –ended question about the effect of large classes on them. In conclusion, it was found in this study that classroom interactions in large classes are negatively associated with class size. Students demonstrated negative and positive responses towards large classes.

Finally, Harfit (2012) conducted a study to examine whether, and how class size reduction might help to alleviate language learning anxiety, which has long been

seen as an obstacle to second language acquisition . In the study the researcher use mainly questionnaires , class observations and interviews.

In conclusion this study suggests that the student voice can provide insights into language learning classrooms.

One of the main limitations of this study was that the information of the students survey could not be real since their opinions were influenced by their classmates.

METHOD

Settings and participants

This research study was carried out in the city of Cariamanga, which is located in The Province of Loja. Two public high schools were selected randomly to apply a survey for this study. In these high schools, one course of 8th, 9th and 10th years of basic education and 1st and 3rd years of senior high school were surveyed to gather the field information. The 8th year was composed of around thirty seven boys and girls, The 9th year was composed of around thirty five boys and girls, The 10th year was composed of around thirty seven boys and girls, The 1st year was composed of around thirty five boys and girls, The 3rd year was composed of around thirty five boys and girls. Approximately, the students are 12 years old in the 8th year, 13 years old in the 9th, 14 years old in the 10th year of basic education, 15 years old in the 1st, 17 years old in the 3rd year of senior high school. The Level of academic knowledge of the English language showed by most of the students was basic. There were some exceptions of students who demonstrated to have good competence on the use of English.

Procedures

To have a better understanding of the topic of this research, scientific information and previous studies related to the influence of large classes on the English language teaching-learning process were gathered from different sources like books, online sites and journals; the most relevant information is included in the literature review.

After that , the field research started . Two public high schools of the city of Cariamanga were selected. The survey aimed to determine whether or not large classes affect the English teaching-learning process. The students were asked an open –ended question about the effect of large classes on them which were classified into three major areas: instructional, psychological and social. The gathered data was registered in tables, to do this, the quantitative method was taken into account. The research techniques used in this study were: Questionnaire , Note-taking. Instruments like questionnaire and tables were also applied. To analyze the results of this research, a descriptive analysis was used.

DISCUSSION

Literature Review

This literature provides better knowledge of the topics that are related to the large classes and their influence on the English language teaching learning process.

Teaching approaches and methods

Richards and Rodger (2001), Larsen–Freeman and Anderson (2011) suggest that the use of commands to teach language through physical activity corresponds to the total physical response method which is built around coordination of speech and action. Learners in this method have the primary roles of listener then they are encouraged to speak when they feel ready to speak and when a sufficient basis in the language has been internalized. The teacher plays an active and direct role in this method.

Richards and Rodger (2001), Larsen–Freeman and Anderson (2011) about Communicative Language Learning, mention that when a learner presents a message in L1 to the knower to be translated into L2 for later the learner repeats the message in L2, addressing it to another learner with whom he or she wishes to communicate. Being able to communicate requires more than linguistic competence, knowing when and how to say what to whom. Communicative Language Teaching, aims broadly to make communicative competence the goal of language teaching.

Richards and Rodger (2001), Larsen–Freeman and Anderson (2011) suggest that other approaches used for teaching English in the classroom are Cooperative Language, Content-Based Instruction and Task-Based Language Teaching. They consider that the main purpose of Cooperative Language Learning is to teach language and at the same time teach cooperative skills among learners; here

the teacher is the facilitator and take part in the teaching-learning process as independent participant.

In the same way , Richards and Rodger (2001, p. 204) state that :

Content-Based Instruction is an approach in which teaching is organized around the content or information that students will acquire , rather than around a linguistic or other type of syllabus. It is the teaching of content or information in the language being learned with little or no direct or explicit effort to teach the language itself separately from the content being taught .

Richards and Rodger (2001), Larsen–Freeman and Anderson (2011) suggest that Task-Based Language Teaching, it is based on the use of the tasks core unit of planning and instruction in language teaching. Language learning is believed to depend on immersing students not merely in comprehensible input but in tasks that require them to negotiate meaning and engage in naturalistic and meaningful communication.

Class size

The idea of class size is understood by everyone, however large classes are a matter of perspective. Woodward (2001) says that to work with one-to-one or small groups is easier than to work with very big groups and the unique consideration that the teacher needs is to learn how to keep classes interesting, for this reason the author considers some practical principles for teaching one-to-one or very small groups such as plan plenty of time at the first meeting for getting to know each other, letting the student take as much responsibility as they wish and completing personal profile forms on the students background wants , make the encounters as equal as

possible , make the occasions you meet a real exchange of information and underline this metaphorically by exchanging things , use the students as a resource by, bring other people in (by photo, letter, phone call, anecdote, etc.) so that neither of they feel lonely or bored, use the local environment, so that neither of they feels cooped up , bring in more materials and activities than you would normally so that you can be very flexible as to level and interests.

Gurian (2011) considers that we consistently read and heard about the problems associated with the large schools and large class sizes, it goes without saying that the smaller the class sizes the higher the potential for deep bonding with classmates and with teachers, and the lower the potential for discipline problems. Especially in early to middle adolescence, discipline is more easily accomplished if the potentially undisciplined student cannot hide in a big school (or even a big classroom).

Managing learning

The process of managing learning is a multi-faceted process. According to Wajnryb (1992), feedback is important because helps to identify errors that students can produce during the class and that will be corrected by the teacher. It means allowing learners to experience the effect of what they produce as a guide in their future effort. The author believes that feedback must be more than encouragement, for empty and automatic encouragement is often pointless. A genuine response from the teacher provides some indication to learners of the effectiveness of their utterances.

Wajnryb (1992) considers that instruction involves both the choice of what to include and exclude, what accompaniments are available, and what sequence is effective. Wajnryb also considers that observation plays an important part in this

section, because it helps the teacher to determine if the language of instruction-giving varies as the students become more familiar with the kinds of activities they are asked to do. Some possible paradigm for instruction-giving to use gestures to engage classes attention, state briefly the overall nature of the task, organize seating/groups, give instructions, signal to start and monitor understanding- repeat/re-phrase as necessary.

Wajnryb, also says that teaching is an event that needs to be structured and planned, event that is affected by the parameters and constrain of timing. When teachers are in their first years as educators they could have some problems with the duration of the lessons and much more with a correct way of control the students behaviors, therefore they often advise plan the timing factor of their lessons very carefully with more experienced teachers, factors as timing and discipline come easier, they become more familiar with the students activities and can do the class more relaxed to flow softly.

Additionally, Nolasco and Arthur (1995), mentions it is important however to remember that sanctions are brought into play after a breach of discipline and the key to discipline is the creation of an atmosphere which breeds motivation and cooperation. Such an atmosphere is extremely difficult to characterize except that its absence is immediately apparent to any observer. Other aspects mentioned by this author are instructions , in large classes the problem is magnified because once the students have embarked on tasks it is very difficult to rectify any misunderstandings, If you try to talk while the students are working most of them will not listen or hear, If you stop everyone just as they are getting involved it will cause frustration and lack of faith in your ability to organize, especially if this happens often, If you try and repair the misunderstandings group by group the last groups will be totally lost

and confused by the time you reach them. There is therefore no acceptable alternative to getting the instructions right the first time.

Nolasco and Arthur (1995), think that allocating time limits for each activity when you are planning the lesson and avoid the temptation to let activities carry on until the students are bored. All the activities should be sufficiently challenging to keep the students interested for a reasonable length of time. This is especially true if you want to circulate and listen to students during pair work. If the task requires little more than the creation of two or three sentences, the students will have finished and become bored by the time you have listened to two or three pairs.

Finally, referring to feedback the author considers important because it is a major source of motivation in any form of learning. Feedback on oral performance can be particularly difficult to organize in a large class and students need to be trained to accept that on the spot correction is neither necessary nor desirable. Feedback on communicative performance should go beyond the correction of grammatical error.

Managing large classes

Managing Large classes will differ from teacher to teacher and from culture to culture. Woodward (2001) considers that working with big classes is difficult because the teacher has not enough contact with the students, in the same way for the students is difficult to have contact with the teacher to ask for and receive individual attention, aside of be impossible to organize dynamic and creative teaching and learning classes.

Similarly, Harmer (1998) states that using worksheets is useful for many of the tasks which they would normally do with the whole class-if the class was smaller. Referring to pairwork and groupwork in large classes, they are techniques that

maximize students' participation but using chorus reaction it becomes difficult a lot of individual repetition in big groups.

Another aspect that helps to work with large classes is the use group leaders, they can be used to hand out copies, check that everyone in their group has understood a task, collect work and give feedback .

Finally, the use of size of the group have disadvantages of course, but they also have one main advantage they are bigger. Experienced teachers use this potential to organize exciting and involving classes.

Activities for working with large classes

One classic idea that allows large classes to flourish are activities that are centered around pair or pair work. Lewis and Bedson (1999) consider that to control a large class is one of the hardest tasks facing even the most experienced teacher. It is a simple fact of teaching life that the large the group, the more difficult it becomes to set up activities which promote active language use. The teacher can play some games with large classes, especially those based on total physical response, such as "line-ups". "Simon Says", but they tend to elicit passive responses to prompts.

Rather than spending time looking for activities which allow for 25 or more children to participate simultaneously, it is best to divide a class up into smaller, more manageable groups which can play game more effectively. The author proposes some ideas which could help to promote an active language uses.

Turn players into turns. If teacher have a game which is suitable for eight players, teacher can expand it to 24 players by playing in groups of three. Try and encourage English as the means of communication between team members must

produce the target language. Teacher could also get each team to respond in chorus if the game permits.

Set up “game stations” in the classroom, game stations enable groups of children to play different games at the same time. Set up everything teacher need for each game in a different part of the room. The station should be clearly marked with bright and colourful signs. Split the class into four groups and assign them each to a station where they should play a game.

Additionally, Baker and Westrup (2003) suggest that pair work and group work may be a new teaching and learning technique for teachers and students. Some people may think that pair and group work is not “real” learning, and it is true that it can be noisy and time-consuming. However, pairs and groups very useful to manage large classes with mixed abilities and it can improve motivation and students’ use of English. The teacher does not give up control during pair or group work, but controls the whole class differently.

Baker and Westrup (2003) consider that in large classes pair work and group work needs careful planning to keep all the students involved in the lesson an allow them to work with each other. Pair and group work gives all students lots of practice time. Larger groups can be more difficult to organize, so teacher can start with pair work. When students and teacher can organize and work in pair quickly and easy, teacher can go on to try a larger group work activity.

Seating arrangement and classroom space

The way that students and the teacher sit in the classroom has an impact on the learning. For the classes that are large and the teacher is addressing the entire class at once, the traditional set of rows is often found and referred to as “orderly rows “. Harmer (1998) says that in many classrooms around the world students sit in orderly rows, you may see small groups of them working in different part of the room, when the students sit in rows in classroom there are obvious advantages. It means that the teacher has a clear view of all the students and the students can all see the teacher in whose direction they are facing.

Harmer (1998) considers that orderly rows imply teachers working with the whole class. Some activities are especially suited to this kind of organization like explaining a grammar point, watching a video, using the board, demonstrating text organization on an overhead transparency which shows a paragraph.

When teachers are working with the whole class sitting in orderly rows, it is vitally important to make sure that they remain in contact with the students and that they keep everyone involved.

In many classrooms of the world, teachers are faced with classes between 40 and 200 students at a time. In such circumstances, orderly rows may well be the best or only solution.

Harmer (1998) considers that in smaller classes, many teachers and students prefer circles or horseshoes. In a horseshoe, the teacher will probably be at the open end of the arrangement since that may well be where the board, overhead projector

and/or tape recorder are situated. In a circle, the teacher's position where the board is situated is less dominating.

There are different ways to arrange the chair, according to Guitj and Thompson (1995), consider each arrangement has a particular advantage and disadvantage. In general, the more group work you have planned, the better it is to use the banquet or fish-bone style. This does not require the moving of the chairs and therefore limits the disruption as you shift from presentation or lecture to buzz groups.

Guitj and Thompson (1995) say that rows of the table and chairs in which more people can fit into room and everyone faces the front but participants cannot make eye contact with each other, is difficult for trainer to make eye contact with those at the back, trainer cannot walk easily amongst participants, is impossible to break into groups without major reorganization of chairs and tables and people tend to sit at the back first and distancing themselves from the trainer.

Guitj and Thompson (1995) consider in the Hollow U-shape the trainer can walk easily amongst participants and trainer has eye contact with all participants but participants along each arm of U do not have eye contact with each other, fewer people can fit into room and is impossible to break into groups without major reorganization of chairs and tables.

Referring to Fish-bone or banquet style the participants arranged in groups and arrangement is easy to use if mixing lectures with buzz session and group work, trainer can walk easily among groups but fewer people can fit into room, participants cannot make full eye contact with all other trainers, tables are too long and thin

participants and the end are likely to be left out the conversation with conference table, large portion of participants have eye contact with each other and large table useful for plenary group discussion but cannot break into small groups easily , cannot fit many participants around table and during general discussion, several sub-discussions may form and disrupt proceedings and circle and semicircles of chair, people can relax and interact well , participants able to adopt open poses , no natural top position for trainer , easy to move into various exercises and games and stops people sticking to a specific desk or chair but in this style no flat work surface , no tables on which to rest books or material , no physical barriers , so more openness needed and intimidate shy people . In large groups , participants sit far from these opposite them .

Concluding with the different ways of arrangement the chairs proposed by the author table trios is used like banquet style , with tables pointed towards the front , the trios are all close together , so better than banquet for group work but need many tables , more than banquet style, If the total group is large , tables take up much space. Many people are used to sitting in rows, knowing that they may be able to daydream or fall asleep .

Different level of proficiency

Proficiency levels in any given class will have some degree of fluctuation ranging from beginners to advanced students. According to Harmer (1998), one of the biggest problems teachers face is a lesson where students have different levels, some with quite competent English, some whose English is not very good, and some whose English is only just getting started. As with many other classroom subjects, teachers face this problem every day unless the most rigorous selection has taken place.

Harmer (1998) considers that using different materials, when teachers know who the good and less good students are, they can form different groups. While one group is working on a piece of language study, the other group might be reading a story or doing a more advanced grammar exercise. Later, while the better group or groups are discussing a topic, the weaker group or groups might be doing a parallel writing exercise, or sitting round a tape recorder listening to a tape.

Do different task with the same material, where teacher use the same material with the whole class, they can encourage students to do different tasks depending on their abilities. Ignore the problem, it is perfectly feasible to hold the belief that, within a heterogeneous group, students will find their own level. In speaking and writing activities, for example, the better students will probably be more daring, in reading and listening, they will understand more completely and more quickly. However, the danger of this position is that students will either be bored by slowness of their colleagues or frustrated by their inability to keep up.

Harmer (1998) says to engage the students in the class, some teachers adopt a strategy of peer help and teaching so that better students can help weaker ones. They can work with them in pairs or groups, explaining things, or providing good models of language performance in speaking and writing. Thus, when teachers put students in groups, they can ensure that weak and strong students are put together. However, this has to be done with great sensitivity so that students do not get alienated by their over- knowledgeable peers or oppressed by their obligatory teaching role.

Additionally, Ur (2012) considers heterogeneous classes are seen mostly as problematical; however they have advantages as well and some of these can be used to help solve the problems.

Heterogeneous classes provide a richer pool of human resources than more homogeneous ones. Between them the individuals have far more life experience and knowledge, more varied opinions, more interests and ideas all of which can be used in classroom interaction.

There is educational value in the close contact between very different kinds of people, classmates get to know each other's cultures, experiences, opinions and so increase their own knowledge and awareness of others as individuals.

Cooperation is very important, the fact that the teacher is less able to pay attention to every individual in the class means that for the class to function well, the students must help by teaching each other and working together. Peer-teaching and collaboration are likely to be common, contributing to a warm and supportive classroom climate.

These classes can be seen as very much more challenging and interesting to teach, and provide greater opportunity for creativity, innovation and general professional development on the part of the teacher.

In a heterogeneous class – particularly a large one – you cannot possibly be actively teaching all the time. You can achieve balance by ensuring that you vary your lessons in some ways like :

Level and pace, the teacher can use something more demanding text and task, at other times easier ones; and similarly work sometimes at a faster pace, sometimes more slowly.

Type of classroom organization, some students really like working with their classmates; some like working alone; others prefer to interact directly with the

teacher. Try not to get into a routine of doing a lot of teacher-led work and very little individual work; or a lot of individual but very little group – or pair-work.

The existence of many factors influencing the English language teaching-learning process in large classes has unleashed the interest of many researchers where some studies have been developed giving many results useful for this theme and that be analyzed one by one below:

Ping and Zhihong (2012), conducted a study to investigate How does individualized instruction improve the participating students learning outcomes and How do the teacher-centered, one-for-all lecturing model and individualized instruction model compare in terms of their relative popularity in the eyes of the students. In the study, the researchers use mainly questionnaires and interviews. Other instruments employed in this study included data from pretests and posttests. The questions were designed to analyze students' motivations for learning English, perception and ability of autonomous learning, opinions on both teaching models, LMS's roles, their expected teachers' roles, etc.

From the analysis above, the authors conclude that individualized instruction based on students' needs analysis and through CALL environments could be a feasible way to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of large classes of Integrated English. In this empirical study, the students' comprehensive mastery of English has been improved, in terms of both language knowledge (vocabulary and grammar) and language skills (reading and listening). The LMS Rofall system was considered helpful in facilitating students' individualized learning with the relatively good questions and immediate feedback mechanism.

Thaher (2005) conducted a study to answering the following questions: What are the instructional effects of large classes on non –English major EFL students at An-Najah National University ?, What are the psychological effects of large classes on non-English major EFL students at An-Najah National University ?, What are the social effects of large classes on non-English major EFL students at An-Najah National University ? . The researcher asked the students an open –ended question about the effect of large classes on them. After gathering the data, the answers were classified into three major areas: instructional, psychological and social which were considered as the study instrument by the researcher in the form of a questionnaire. The questionnaire included two kinds of variables: dependent and independent. The dependent variables included the students’ responses on the questionnaire. The independent variables were gender, study level, college, and Placement Exam marks. To ensure content validity, the researcher discussed the problem with the English language teachers who have had experience in teaching English and then distributed the questionnaire to four referees from the College of Education and the Department of English at An-Najah University who ensured its appropriateness by suggesting some modifications in the arrangements of some items.

In conclusion, it was found in this study that classroom interactions in large classes are negatively associated with class size. Students demonstrated negative and positive responses towards large classes. It is important to point out that while dealing with the negative instructional effects which large classes have on EFL students, teachers should take into consideration the social and the psychological effects since these effects are interrelated. It seems that, large classes in many developing countries are unavoidable. They are the typical features of the education systems of these countries, and reducing class size seems to be an obvious way to

facilitate learning and increase achievement. Therefore, teachers of large classes should encourage students' interaction either by pair or group work.

Harfit (2012) conducted a study to examine whether, and how, class size reduction might help to alleviate language learning anxiety, which has long been seen as an obstacle to second language acquisition. In the study the researcher use mainly questionnaires , class observations and interviews, this study employed multiple case studies in four Hong Kong secondary schools. Each case constituted one teacher teaching English language to first language Chinese students in a reduced-size class (where class size was between 21 and 25 students) and a large class (where class size was between 38 and 41 students) of the same year grade, and of similar academic ability. In conclusion this study suggests that the student voice can provide insights into language learning classrooms. Data from the case studies reveal that students' sense of anxiety can be reduced in smaller classes and that class size reduction may assist in breaking down cultural barriers.

Raj Khati (2010) conducted a study to find out the very common expectations of students in a large English class where students have different levels. The study is mainly focused on six different areas: classroom management, establishing collaboration, range of tasks, giving feedback, classroom English and home assignment. For the questionnaire survey, sixty students of tenth grade from government-aided school were selected to get required information. In this study the population was sampled using purposive non-random sampling procedure. To collect primary data, one structured questionnaire was developed containing nineteen closed ended questions. Students were asked to tick the both nominal and ordinal alternatives. The author concluded that many teachers do not seem to make trouble to

learn names of the students but in this study, more than ninety percent students reported that they like to be called by their first names.

This study also proves that an English teacher should move all around the class. Some teachers often find giving lectures easier and more comfortable than organizing group work and pair work in spite of the students' interest in these activities. It shows that sharing experiences of teachers and students has strong motivational drive on the part of students.

This study also supports that limited use of mother tongue in English classroom is bearable and accepted. However, while using English, the teacher should introduce some new words every day in simpler and shorter expression. In case of feedback, feedback at personal level inside classroom is more preferable. The study also reveals that most of the students like challenging activities, neither too easy, nor too difficult. It is commonly believed that excessive 'check' work cannot be managed in large multilevel classes. But the same home assignment to all may be demotivated because of the different levels of students. Therefore, in a large heterogeneous class, there is no alternative of developing a collaborative working atmosphere, providing a variety of works and making all students involved in various activities appropriate for different levels.

Jimakorn and Singhasiri (2006) in their study explore the teachers' beliefs in terms of perceptions, opinions and attitudes towards teaching English in large classes. In the study the researcher use mainly questionnaires and observation schedules.

In conclusion, thai teachers thought that teaching in large classes was difficult in several aspects such as the relationships of teachers and students, monitoring and giving feedback and assessment. However, teachers also suggested ways to deal with

large classes. For example, teaching management should be well-planned and well organized. Moreover, teaching in large classes may be suitable for teaching receptive skills such as reading and listening even though it is inappropriate for productive skills like speaking or writing which require more attention and interaction from teachers. If the school or universities cannot avoid teaching in large classes, they need to provide sessions where students can practice in small groups and consult with their teachers. With references to the results of this study, it is quite essential for the executive administrators to understand teachers' attitudes and their beliefs as well as the nature of language learning and teaching. Also, teachers themselves may need to be trained in how to teach and manage in large classes.

Description , Analysis , and Interpretation of Results

This section contains a quantitative analysis which shows the influence of large classes on the English language teaching-learning process. Each table below indicates instructional, social and psychological aspects which may influence the English language teaching-learning process in large class.

What Instructional implications do large classes have on the teaching –learning process ?

N°	In classes with a large number of students:	Totally agree		Agree		Partially Agree	Disagree		TOTAL		
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
1.	The activities done in class help to apply what students learn in class.	109	60,90	70	39,10	0	0	0	0	179	100
2.	The activities done allow to practice listening, speaking, reading and writing skills.	109	60,90	70	39,10	0	0	0	0	179	100
3.	The students are attentive and participate in class activities, including those sitting at the back of the classroom.	72	40,22	107	59,78	0	0	0	0	179	100
4.	Varied class activities are used such as group, individual, pair-work activities, etc.	72	40,22	107	59,78	0	0	0	0	179	100
5.	Activities such as plays, competitions, debates, games, etc. are used in class.	72	40,22	107	59,78	0	0	0	0	179	100
6.	Students can cheat during the test.	0	0	0	0	0	0	179	100	179	100
7.	Students get distracted by doing assignments from other subjects.	0	0	0	0	0	0	179	100	179	100
8.	The seating arrangement facilitates the tasks that are carried out in class.	37	20,67	107	59,78	35	19,55	0	0	179	100
9.	Students cannot receive regular feedback from the teacher due to the large number of students.	37	20,67	37	20,67	105	58,66	0	0	179	100

Author : Castillo Castillo Alexandra.

Source: Students Questionnaire.

This table shows the obtained results in relation to instructional implications that large classes have on English language teaching learning process. The first statement aimed to know if the activities done in class help to apply what students have learned, Sixty point ninety percent of them indicate that they totally agree, the 39,10 percent agree. These results reveal that the majority of students can learn with the activities applied by the teacher. Which indicates that large classes are not an obstacle in the English language teaching- learning process.

The second statement aims at finding if the activities developed in class allow to practice the four language skills. The results revealed that most students that is to say the 60,90 percent totally agree and 39,10 percent of them agree. Thus, it is essential to indicate that the students can develop all the language skills during the class and that the learning is meaningful.

Jimakorn and Singhasiri,(2006) believe that sometimes teaching in large classes may be appropriate for teaching receptive skills such as reading and listening, even though it is unsuitable for productive skills like speaking or writing which require more attention and interaction from teachers.

Statement three shows the results of the students' responses in relation to their attentiveness and participation in class activities, including those sitting at the back of the classroom.

The results show that 40,22 percent of the students totally agree while the 59,78 percent of them agree, which represents the majority of the students. It means that the large number of students is not a factor that impedes students to be attentive and participative in class.

From the 179 students who answered the fourth statement in the questionnaire that ask if the class activities are varied as group, individual, or pair-work, the 40,22 percent said they totally agree and the 59,78 percent of them agree.

All of the interviewed students reported that they learn through the use of diverse activities which allow them to get a better learning with respect to the lessons. However, it was found during the survey that in some classes the space is not enough and it may be difficult for teachers to group students for the different activities. According to Baker and Westrup (2003), large classes pair work and group work needs careful planning to keep all the students involved in the lesson and allow them to work with each other. Pair and group work gives all students lots of practice time. Larger groups can be more difficult to organize, so teacher can start with pair work. When students and teacher can organize and work in pair quickly and easy, teacher can go on to try a larger group work activity. These considerations are very important in larger classes because it will help teacher to organize group in a better way.

With respect to the statement 5 that search to know if activities such as plays, competitions, debates, games, etc. are used in class, the 40,22 percent of the students answered that they totally agree, and the 59,78 percent of them agree. These results reflect that the majority of the teachers in their classrooms use integrated activities that permit the students to learn in a better way.

Lewis and Bedson (1999) consider that to control a large class is one of the hardest tasks facing even the most experienced teacher. It is a simple fact of teaching life that the large the group, the more difficult it becomes to set up activities which promote active language use. The teacher can play some games with large classes,

especially those based on total physical response, such as “line-ups”. “Simon Says”, but they tend to elicit passive responses to prompts.

The results obtained in statement six show that hundred percent of the students disagree with the idea that they can cheat in their classes because of the great amount of students that there are in their classes. The results show that the majority of the surveyed students consider that despite the number of students in the class, the teacher does not allow them to cheat during the test

The results in statement seven revealed that hundred percent of students reported that they do not get distracted by doing assignments from other subjects even though they are studying in classes with many students.

Statement eight, aims at knowing if seating arrangement facilitates the tasks that are carried out in class, the results showed that the 20,67 percent of the students totally agree. On the other hand, 59,78 percent of them agree and the 19,55 percent disagree. It reveals that most of the students consider that the way teachers arrange seats facilitates the tasks that are carried out in the class.

Harmer (2005) thinks that appropriate seating arrangement facilitates the teaching process specific learning activities and it also allow to the teacher to have a clear view of all the students. Furthermore, he mentions that in organizing the physical atmosphere of the classroom, instructors should try to provide a safe, pleasant perspective for learning, which will help social contact among instructors and students to grow students’ knowledge, confidence and abilities in human interaction.

Another item covered by the survey applied to the participants is to know if, students cannot receive regular feedback from the teacher. The results show that the 20,67 percent of students totally agree, the 20,67 percent of them agree but 58, 66

percent partially agree. According to these results, it can be inferred that most of the students consider they receive regular feedback from the teacher. It means that in spite of the large number of students, it is easy for the teacher give them regular feedback when they need it.

What Social implications do large classes have on the teaching –learning process ?

Nº	In classes with a large number of students:	Totally agree		Agree		Partially agree		Disagree		TOTAL	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	F	%
10.	There is a proper balance of student-student and teacher-student interaction.	144	80,45	35	19,55	0	0	0	0	179	100
11.	Students have the opportunity to build a relationship with their classmates.	109	60,90	70	39,10	0	0	0	0	179	100
12.	The teacher has problems remembering all the students' names.	0	0	74	41,34	105	58,66	0	0	179	100
13.	The atmosphere is less stressful since the teacher does not ask several questions to the same student.	35	19,55	72	40,22	35	19,55	37	20,67	179	100
14.	It is easier for students to use their cellphone or any other mobile device without being seen by the teacher.	0	0	0	0	0	0	179	100	179	100

Author : Castillo Castillo Alexandra.

Source: Students Questionnaire.

The responses for item 10 that consists in knowing if there is a proper balance of student-student and teacher-students interaction, shows that 144 students agree, which represents the 80,45 percent ; 35 students agree, which corresponds to the 19,55 percent. Which means that large classes does not impede that the interaction between students-students and between teachers-students takes place.

Baker and Westrup (2003) say that language interaction between the instructor and students and peer work among the learners become difficult due to visual and physical challenges with large classes. Consequently, classroom may even be out of control in some occasions. Pairwork and groupwork in large classes, they are techniques that maximize students' participation and interaction in class.

Another item covered by the survey applied to the participants is to know if students have the opportunity to build relationships with their classmates. The results show that one hundred and nine students totally agree, which makes up the 60,90 percent of the sample and 39,10 percent agree. The overwhelming majority of the students claim that there is a healthy balance of social relation among the class. This perception suggests that these students feel that they have sufficient opportunities to develop relationships inside the classroom.

From the 179 students who answered the item 12 that search to know if the teacher has problems remembering all the students' names, the 41,34 percent agree; and the 58,66 percent partially agree.

The results show that most of the students consider that the teacher has problems remembering all the students' names. It means it is difficult for the teacher to remember all of student's name in a large class.

Another item covered by the survey applied to the participants is to know if, the atmosphere is less stressful since the teacher does not ask several questions to the same student. In relation to this statement, thirty-five students totally agree, which makes up the 19,55 percent of the sample; seventy two students agree, which makes up the 40,22 percent , the 19,55 percent partially agree, and the 20,67 percent disagree.

Most students have reported that the environment is less stressful because the teacher is not able to ask several questions to the same student. This answer could be viewed as a negative finding since the students know there is a small chance of being called on more than once; they may not be attentive enough to absorb the lesson.

Woodward (2001) suggest that generally, a teacher asks questions because he/she wants to check if students know the information he/she is requesting and to

accomplish other things, such as assessing student knowledge, stimulating classroom discussion, helping students clarify their ideas and thought processes or leading them to consider new ideas and make use of ideas already learned.

This author states that the fact of asking questions is a wonderful tool to turn a student from a passive observer in the classroom into an active learner. Whereas this situation can change when the teacher asks several questions to the same student. This circumstance can cause in the student a feeling of frustration and reluctance. But when the teacher avoids asking many questions to the same student the result is an environment of relax, confidence and comfort.

According to the statement fourteen that aims to find if it is easier for students to use their cellphone or any other mobile device without being seen by the teacher. The results revealed that one hundred percent of students disagree. These results indicate that it is not easier for them to use their cellphone or any other mobile device without being seen by the teacher.

What Psychological implications do large classes have on the teaching –learning process ?

N°	In classes with a large number of students:	Totally agree		Agree		Partially agree		Disagree		TOTAL	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
15.	The atmosphere is stressful.	35	19,55	0	0	35	19,55	109	60,90	179	100
16.	Students feel inhibited when speaking in front of the rest.	0	0	35	19,55	107	59,78	37	20,67	179	100
17.	Students do not have the opportunity to express their opinions.	72	40,22	72	40,22	0	0	35	19,55	179	100
18.	Students do not like to participate because they feel afraid.	0	0	35	19,55	70	39,10	74	41,34	179	100
19.	The teacher does not pay equal attention to all his/her students.	74	41,34	70	39,10	35	19,55	0	0	179	100
20.	Students feel they can act competitively with other students.	144	80,45	35	19,55	0	0	0	0	179	100
21.	Students feel relaxed because they can go unnoticed.	0	0	0	0	70	39,10	109	60,90	179	100

Author : Castillo Castillo Alexandra.

Source: Students Questionnaire.

Another item covered by the survey applied to the participants is to know if the atmosphere is stressful. The results indicate that thirty-five students totally agree, which makes up the 19,55 percent of the sample; the 19,55 percent partially agree, but the 60,90 percent disagree. The results show that most of the students do not feel that there is a stressful environment in class. Despite the large-number of students in class, the atmosphere is not stressful. It is consider a positive factor in the teaching-learning process of English.

Baker and Westrup (2003) think that a large class is normally completely occupied, which will bring a lot of problems directly related to classroom organization in all senses. For example when the teacher uses groupwork, there might be a mess in the classroom with so many chairs moving around it. This scene may cause a stressful English learning atmosphere.

Besides, the instructor has to talk loudly to make sure everyone can listen to her/him clearly, which will create him/her feel tired.

The statement sixteen aimed to know if students feel inhibited when speaking in front of the rest, the 19,55 percent of the students indicate that they agree, the 59,78 percent partially agree, and the 20,67 percent of them disagree.

These results reveal that most of the students sometimes feel inhibited when speaking in front of the rest. It is consider a negative factor that affect the English language teaching-learning process.

Ur (2012) mentions that panic of judgment is a disincentive for many learners, especially in large classes where students are afraid to be embarrassed in front of their classmates. To deal with students' fears of peer judgment, it is crucial that teachers promote an environment of trust and mutual help from the very beginning of a course. In such an atmosphere, students are more likely to feel safe to actively participate in class, and also this environment tries to promote a sense of personal connection between students and teachers through group and pair activities that help learners to get more familiar.

The statement seventeen aimed to know if students do not have the opportunity to express their opinion, seventy-two students totally agree, which make up a percent of 40,22 totally agree, on the other hand the 40,22 percent of the students indicate that they agree and the 19,55 percent of them disagree. The results

show that most students can express their opinions in class. It means that despite the large number of students, teacher give them the opportunity to express their opinions in class.

Harmer, (2007) states that there are many benefits to teaching large classes, there are always enough students to get interaction going, and there is a rich variety for human resources too.

He says that in large classes should exist some key elements to give students the chance to express their points of view, such as: to be organized, establish routines, use a different pace for different activities, maximize individual, pair and group work, use chorus reactions, take account of vision and acoustics, and if worked in groups take advantage of the size.

According to the results in statement eighteen that aims to find if students do not like to participate because they feel afraid. Most students, that is to say the 41,34 percent disagree. On the other hand, 19,55 percent of them agree and the 39,10 percent partially agree. These results show that the majority of the students like to participate in class, which means despite the large classes they do not feel afraid of participating.

Gurian (2011) mentions that encouraging class participation can be challenging in any class, but it can be difficult for instructors of large classes. To effectively promote participation in such teaching contexts, it is helpful to understand the factors that discourage involvement.

There are some issues that influence student's participation and fear. One of them could be students' perception of faculty authority that can make a substantial difference in determining whether or not students participate. Students' perceptions of the teacher, developed through interactions outside of the class, have a large

impact on student participation. Finally, students' fears of judgment explain why many students choose not to participate.

The statement nineteen aims to find if the teacher does not pay equal attention to all his/her students. The results showed that most students, that is to say the 41,34 percent totally agree. On the other hand, the 39,10 percent of them agree and the 19,55 percent partially agree. These results reveals that the teacher does not pay equal attention to all students due to the large number of students. It means that the students do not feel they get the same amount attention as others.

Woodward (2001) considers that working with big classes is difficult because the teacher has not enough contact with the students, in the same way for the students it is difficult to have contact with the teacher to ask for and receive individual attention, aside of being impossible to organize dynamic and creative teaching and learning classes.

The results of the statement twenty that aims to find if students feel they can act competitively with other students showed that 80,45 percent totally agree. On the other hand, the 19,55 percent of them agree. This reveals that most of the students consider the large classes help them to feel they can act competitively with others students. It means students absolutely feel they are able to be competitive with each other in the large classroom setting.

The statement twenty-first aimed to know if students feel relaxed because they can go unnoticed, the 39,10 percent of the students indicate that they partially agree but the 60,90 percent of them disagree. These results are reflecting how large class operates; The most students consider that the teacher can only be actively attentive with them about half of the classes at any given time.

Gurian (2011) says that students often go unnoticed in a large classroom setting; the unfortunate reality is that teachers are not unable to devote one-on-one time to each one of their students. Therefore, many students, that need extra help, do not get the opportunity to work individually with their teachers. Because students do not get this individual time with their teachers, the tutors are not able to assess their students' strengths and weaknesses and provide them with the appropriate tools to improve their language learning process.

Conclusions

- In spite of the large number of the students, they receive regular feedback from the teacher.
- This research demonstrates that students find in- class activities helpful in learning the four basic skills of English: Reading , Writing , Listening and Speaking.
- Even though the classroom space was adequate, it was not good enough for the amount of the students. Students seats were too closed together and made it difficult to arrange seats in groups.
- In the social aspect, the high number of students in class does not affect the interaction between teacher and students.
- Despite the large number of students, they have the opportunity to build a good relationship with their classmates.
- Within the psychological aspect, students feel they can act competitively with other students; thus demonstrating the level acquired in the language.
- Most of the students expressed within the psychological aspect that they do not feel relaxed with the fact that they can go unnoticed in class.

Recommendations

- Regular seminars should be given to keep teachers abreast of new technology and how to apply it in the classroom.
- Teachers should improve their teaching process through methodologies that help them to manage large classes in order to involve the students in the learning process effectively.
- Space should be distributed in a way that students may work in all the activities designed by teachers.

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ANNEXES



UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA PARTICULAR DE LOJA
La Universidad Católica de Loja
OPEN AND DISTANCE MODALITY

ENGLISH DEGREE

Dear student,

The aim of this brief questionnaire is to obtain information concerning the: *influence of larges classes on teaching and learning English*. The following information will only be used for academic/research purposes. Please answer the following questions as honestly as possible based on the following criteria.

Very satisfactory:	Totally agree
Satisfactory:	Agree
Somewhat satisfactory:	Partially agree
Unsatisfactory:	Disagree

Informative data: Please fill in the information below.

Name of institution: _____

Type of institution: Public () Private ()

Year of study: 8th year. () 9th year () 10th year. ()
1st senior high school . () 2nd senior high school. () 3rd. senior high school. ()

City: _____

Instructions: place an (X) in the box that best reflects your personal opinion:

A. Academic issues

	In classes with a large number of students:	Very satisfactory	Satisfactory	Somewhat satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
1.	The activities done in class help to apply what students learn in class.				
2.	The activities done allow to practice listening, speaking, reading and writing skills.				
3.	The students are attentive and participate in class activities, including those sitting at the back of the classroom.				
4.	Varied class activities are used such as group, individual, pair-work activities, etc.				
5.	Activities such as plays, competitions, debates, games, etc. are used in class.				
6.	Students can cheat during the test				
7.	Students get distracted by doing assignments from other subjects.				
8.	The seating arrangement facilitates the tasks that are carried out in class.				
9.	Students cannot receive regular feedback from the teacher due to the large number of students.				

B. Social issues

N°	In classes with a large number of students:	Very satisfactory	Satisfactory	Somewhat satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
10.	There is a proper balance of student-student and teacher-student interaction.				
11.	Students have the opportunity to build relationships with their classmates.				
12.	The teacher has problems remembering all the students' names.				

13.	The atmosphere is less stressful since the teacher does not ask several questions to the same student.				
14.	It is easier for students to use their cellphone or any other mobile device without being seen by the teacher.				

C. Psychological issues:

	In classes with a large number of students:	Very satisfactory	Satisfactory	Somewhat satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
15.	The atmosphere is stressful.				
16.	Students feel inhibited when speaking in front of the rest.				
17.	Students do not have the opportunity to express their opinions.				
18.	Students do not like to participate because they feel afraid.				
19.	The teacher does not pay equal attention to all his/her students.				
20.	Students feel they can act competitively with other students.				
21.	Students feel relaxed because they can go unnoticed.				

Thank you for your collaboration!