



UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA PARTICULAR DE LOJA

La Universidad Católica de Loja

ÁREA SOCIO HUMANÍSTICA

TITULACIÓN DE LICENCIADO EN CIENCIAS DE LA EDUCACIÓN
MENCIÓN INGLÉS

**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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CENTRO UNIVERSITARIO ZARUMA

2014



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Septiembre, 2018

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María L. Loayza Ochoa

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated in first place to God who has given me the greatest gift of life, my sons Danny Santiago and Luis Francisco, and my special dedication to Danny my husband the beautiful blessing of my life, they are my support, and the reason of my daily effort.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I would like to thank God for the life, to Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja for giving me the opportunity to study, to the institution and the students who helped me filling out the questionnaires, and very special gratitude to my advisor Mgs. Gina Camacho who has contributed to the development of my research project.

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ABSTRACT

The influence of large classes in the English language teaching-learning process in Ecuadorian high schools is the topic of this study. The intention of this investigation is to know about the instructional, social, and psychological implications that large classes have on the teaching-learning process. For this purpose, a population sample composed by 175 students was selected from ninth and tenth grades of one high school located in Zaruma, El Oro province. The data was gathered by administering one questionnaire to the students, then, the answers were tabulated.

A qualitative and quantitative analysis was applied in this research through charts and statistical graphs which represented the results obtained from the students' questionnaires, according to the indicators such as very satisfactory, satisfactory, somewhat satisfactory, and unsatisfactory.

The results of this study allowed to draw the conclusion that the size of a class has great effects on the learning and teaching process of the English language in Ecuadorian high-schools because learners of numerous classes do not have an adequate provision for language instructional material and social and psychological support, therefore, they suffer a lot learning the four skills in the English language.

KEY WORDS: large classes, instructional, social, and psychological implications, managing learning.

RESUMEN EJECUTIVO

La influencia de las grandes clases en el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje en los colegios del Ecuador es el tema de este estudio. La intención de esta investigación es conocer sobre las implicaciones instruccionales, sociales y psicológicas que tienen las clases numerosas en el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje. Para este propósito se seleccionó una muestra de población integrada por 175 alumnos de noveno y décimo grado de un colegio ubicado en Zaruma, en la provincia de El Oro. Los datos fueron recolectados a través de la administración de un cuestionario para los estudiantes, luego las respuestas fueron tabuladas.

Un análisis cualitativo y cuantitativo fue aplicado en esta investigación a través de tablas y gráficos estadísticos que representan los resultados obtenidos de los cuestionarios de los alumnos, según los indicadores tales como muy satisfactorio, satisfactorio, poco satisfactorio e insatisfactorio.

Los resultados de este estudio permitieron llegar a la conclusión de que el tamaño de una clase tiene grandes efectos en el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje del idioma Inglés en los colegios del Ecuador, debido que los aprendices de clases numerosas no tiene una adecuada provisión de material didáctico y asistencia social y psicológica, por lo tanto ellos no logran conseguir las destrezas que el idioma Inglés necesita.

PALABRAS CLAVE: clases numerosas, implicaciones instruccionales, sociales, y psicológicas, manejo del aprendizaje.

INTRODUCTION

It is known that the teaching of English in Ecuadorian high schools does not reach a good level and the students are not able to communicate in a written and oral way.

For these reasons, it is necessary to investigate the influence of large classes in the English language teaching-learning process in Ecuadorian high schools, because it analyzes the current reality of high schools and it is guided to provide valuable recommendations to optimize the process, where students develop the language skills. The specific objectives consist in knowing what instructional, social, and psychological implications large classes have on the teaching – learning process.

Previous researches related to the theme have been conducted in different countries. One of the studies was conducted by Ping & Zhinhang (2012) and the purpose of the study was knowing if individualized instruction improves the students' participation and how teacher-centered, one-for-all lecturing model and individualized instruction model compare in terms of their relative popularity in the eyes of the students. It revealed that individualized instruction can improve the efficiency and effectiveness of large classes and that CALL environments have improved the language knowledge and language skills through feedback.

Another study was the one conducted by Raj-Khati (2010). Its objective was to determine how this study attempts to find out the common expectations of students in a large English class where students have different levels. The results revealed that more than ninety percent of students like to be called by their first names, also excessive check work cannot be managed in large classes, and for developing

collaborative work, teachers should involve students in various activities according to their different levels.

A third study was conducted by Jimakorn & Singhasiri (2006). Its objective was to investigate teacher's belief in terms of perceptions, options and attitudes towards teaching English in large classes where the authors concluded that teaching in large classes should use receptive skills such as reading and listening. In conclusion, it is essential for the executive administrators to understand teachers' attitudes and their beliefs and they should train teachers on how to teach and manage large classes.

The main beneficiary of this research will be the students of English. This investigation will help to draw attention for improvements in the teaching-learning process in large classes of the high schools. Also, it invites teachers to improve their activities and methodology, helping students to obtain a better learning of this language which provides a lot of opportunities in both the academic and professional fields.

Among the limitations found in the present study are the negative attitude of some students while they filled questionnaires and it would have been important to apply a questionnaire to teachers too, to have a full vision of the teaching-learning process; all of these restricts the interpretation of the results and did not allow for generalizations.

METHOD

Setting and Participants

This study was carried out in one public high school in the city of Zaruma in the province of El Oro. The participants were one hundred seventy-five students of ninth and tenth grades. There were girls and boys from thirteen and fourteen years old.

Procedures

The first step for developing this study consisted in reviewing the literature related to this topics such as; teaching approaches and methods, class size, managing learning, managing large classes, activities for working with large classes, seating arrangement and classroom space, and different levels of proficiency as well as five previous journal studies on correlated topics in order to get enough background information that would contribute to this research process. The information was obtained from several sources as journals, google books, and books from different authors.

The methodology applied in this study was Qualitative and Quantitative. The collected data was described, analyzed, and interpreted to reach the objective previously stated in this investigation.

The techniques used for this study were questionnaire and note-taking. To gather the data one questionnaire for students was administered and the information was gathered in result charts. The student's questionnaire contained 21 statements divided into three sections: 9 statements about academic implications, 5 statements about social implications and 7 statements about psychological implications on the teaching-learning process in large classes. The information was collected and organized according to the different variables such as very satisfactory, satisfactory,

somewhat satisfactory, and unsatisfactory, then, the results were presented in charts and statistical graphics that were tabulated on the results charts. At the end, conclusions were written as well as some recommendations.

DISCUSSION

Literature Review

The importance of teaching English in Ecuador and in other countries of the world is easily demonstrated because this language is very useful in several aspects such as every days' life, business, studies, technology, among other situations. Also, it facilitates the communication among people all over the world.

In our country, teaching English as a foreign language is not easy if in many high schools the number of students is large or very large and the teaching-learning process do not reach the level that students need.

Therefore, there are many factors related to the theme such as class size, classroom space, managing learning, and activities for large classes among other that affects this process. Also, there will be a revision of previous studies that can contrast and pull all valid conclusions that might benefit the analysis of this important topic.

Teaching Methods and Approaches

In teaching-learning process, the teacher always considers which teaching methods and approaches to use for effective instruction. Concerning this issue, some methods and approaches will be tackled. Richards & Rodgers (2001) suggest that grammar translation approaches the language through detailed analysis of its grammar rules, followed by application of this knowledge of the task of translating sentences and texts into and out of the target language. Also, reading and writing are the major focus and speaking and listening have little or no systematic attention. Also, with this approach vocabulary is based only in using the dictionary and memorization, likewise the teaching and language practice is based in sentences that are translated into the target language.

But a concentration on grammar-translation does not allow students to get the natural language input that will help them acquire language. The danger with grammar-translation, in other words, is that it teaches people about the language and does not really help them to learn the language itself. (Harmer, 2005).

Likewise, it is important to mention an approach as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in which the primary function of language is to allow interaction and communication through a system for expression of meaning. But, the primary units of language are categories of functional and communicative meaning as exemplified in discourse.

Also, Harmer (2005) argues that CLT has a beneficial effect because students know and communicate the language giving it aspects of style and appropriacy and they also have opportunities to try out real language such as inviting, agreeing and disagreeing, suggesting, etc., also if the students get enough exposure to language, then language learning will take care of itself and becoming in activation. In addition, CLT has a beneficial effect because people learn languages not just for knowing them, but also to communicate their ideas a good way.

On the other hand, Content-Based Instruction (CBI) is an approach organized around the content or information that students will acquire, rather than around a linguistic or another type of syllabus. With this approach, people learn a second language using it as a mean of acquiring information and through content-based programs that better reflect learners' needs. That means that content-based programs prepare students for academic studies. In addition, the activities of CBI are specific and stimulate students to think and learn through the use of the target language. Also, it employs authentic reading materials which require students interpret and evaluate it as well. Likewise, CBI permits for the integration of the sound through

project integration of sounds to assessment, cooperative work, scaffolding learning, and the use of graphic organizers (Richard & Renandya, 2002).

Another approach is Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) which is based on the use of tasks as the core unit of planning and instruction in language teaching. According to this approach, the basis for second language acquisition is motivated by a theory of learning and the majority of tasks involve conversation. Also, Richard & Renandya (2002) state that TBLT uses the tasks in order for teachers and students to know whether or not the communication has been successful. For this reason, it is necessary that the teacher creates contexts in which the learner's natural language learning capacity can be nurtured rather than making a systematic attempt to teach the language bit by bit

According to Richards & Rodgers (2001), Whole Language Approach (WLA) has a focus on communication through an interactive relationship between readers and writers. Also, whole language is a vehicle for internal interaction for egocentric speech. This approach has characteristics such as to be authentic personalized, self-directed collaborative, and pluralistic that focus learner attention and motivate mastery these characteristics focus learner attention and to motivate mastery and constructivist learners creates meaning, learn by doing, and work collaboratively in mixed groups on common projects. Moreover, Larsen-Freeman & Anderson (2001, p. 141) state that:

The whole language approach, as the name suggests, calls for language to be regarded holistically, rather than as pieces, i.e. the vocabulary words, grammar structures, and pronunciation points, in other words, students work from the top-down, attempting to

understand the meaning of the text before they work on the linguistic forms.

Class Size

Harmer (2007) mentions different size of class, for example students that opt for private lessons, when the teacher only teaches one students, and when the teacher has classes with many students. According to this author, one to one lessons have considerable advantages over classes with two or more students in the group because both teacher and student can tailor the course to exactly what is appropriate for that student. On the other hand, large classes permit to get interaction among students because there is a rich variety for human resources.

Additionally, Miller & Cunningham (2009) state that students in the small classes are less bored and stressed and are more frequently on-task with fewer reported behavior problems that students in large classes. With this group the teacher spend more class time on administrative tasks. Also, students do not engage with the class and off tasks. On the contrary, large schools and large class size have problems because in neurological terms, the student is bored and needs to call attention to his or her unstimulated brain growth.

Managing Learning

Managing learning is important to determine the quality and performance of the teaching process and the correct acquisition of knowledge by learners. Nolasco & Arthur (1995), state some aspects for managing learning. First of all, instruction is the aspect in which poor instructions are a problem in large classes because, it is very difficult to rectify any misunderstandings when the students have embarked on a task. If you try and repair the misunderstandings group by group the last group will be totally lost and confused by the time you reach them. Next, in feedback, teachers

and students are concerned about the tasks such as project works, they also worry about errors and how to correct them. But, on oral performance, feedback is difficult to organize in a large class because students need to accept that on the spot correction is neither necessary nor desirable. Thirdly, discipline is considered as sanctions that should be brought into play after a breach of discipline in the creation of an atmosphere of motivation and cooperation. Finally, timing limits each activity during the lesson and avoids letting activities carry on until the students are bored.

In addition, Geysler (2010) suggests that it is important to plan the instruction. This will ensure that teachers provide the students with instructions that they need for immediate task at hand. Also, it is essential for the teacher to get feedback from the students. “This will provide the teacher with a clear idea as to whether the students have understood the language item and whether further explanation and practice is required. (p. 22)” When faced with a question in class it is important to give students time to prepare a response and do not feel awkward by long periods of silence.

Managing Large Classes

Byram (2000) indicates that some teachers manage large classes effectively although these are considered to be problematic for language learning. Some problems that can be reduced using seating plans and giving individual attention, regulating activities by quick responses, using clear signals and instructions. Another issue is student involvement in activities especially for oral skills, something that can be managed by using short, purposeful activities with pre-organized pairs.

Likewise, how to assess all individual learners is an issue that can be reduced by making notes on oral presentations and written tasks. The last issue is effective consequences of large classes where the teacher should establish rapport with learners and to know them as individuals.

In addition, an adequate time management is necessary when working with large class because it is an essential part of the development of it, for this reason the teacher should arrive early to each class. Also, the teacher should use additional resources such as microphones, and audiovisual aids that permit an effective communication between the instructor and the students. Likewise, all assignments must be written on the board, explained orally, and written on a handout. The teacher must use strategies for distributing and collecting handouts, exams, homework, etc. so it does not take all class session (Chadha, 2008).

Activities for Working with Large Classes

In large classes the students learn best through activities in which they all can interact. For this reason, Nolasco & Arthur (1995) suggest some activities. “Guess what?”, permits students to ask questions to determine what is the picture that the teacher has selected previously. It is important to limit the number of questions and increase the details on the picture to make the activity more challenging.

Next activity is “ask and draw”, it consists in drawing and hide objects. Then, they have to ask questions to draw, the same picture in their notebooks. Finally, the students show their pictures to compare them with the one of the teacher.

“Spot the difference” is another important activity where the teacher shows one picture and hides the other. Next, the class is divided into two so that one half can see one picture and the other half the other. Then, students ask questions to discover the differences. The last activity is “jigsaw pieces” that consists in putting the texts on opposite walls and giving students a few minutes to process the text, after they should complete the task with their partners

Hess (2001) offers other activities that permit students to express their ideas and opinions both in speaking and in writing. These are important in large classes.

“Guess Who?” is an activity in which students write letters and practice information questions, then they mingle the answers and when they find a person, should ask for that person’s signature next to the statement that identifies to the student. Likewise, an activity as “mutual interviews” is useful because the students can know what an interview is. Also, students can work in pairs and take turns to interviewing each other, for example, each pair joins another pair and introduces his/her partner to the foursome. In addition, the “quick-write” consists in dictating the sentence and the students cannot stop. When they cannot think, they may continue writing loops or write I do not know what to write, until the teacher stops them. Finally, in the groups, students choose and read the most interesting piece of writing. The last activity is names and adjectives in which the students form rows and they think of an adjective that describes them and that begins with the same letter of their names. After that, students say their names preceded by the adjective and all students will do the same in each row repeating the first students’ names and adjectives.

Classroom Space and Seating Arrangement

It is said by Woolfolk (2007) that “Spaces for learning should invite and support the activities you plan in your classroom and they should respect the inhabitants of the space.” Also, she argues that the classroom should offer unobtrusive reading, group collaboration, and the students can use the resource easily. Also, she proposes some seating arrangements such as horizontal rows that permits students to work in pairs. However, this does not permit large-group discussion. Another seating arrangement is clusters of four, where students can help each other and work in group tasks. Likewise, circle arrangements permits interaction among students through discussion activities. Seating arrangements on

the other hand, are difficult for class management. Fishbowl or stack special formation is a seating arrangement, where students are not comfortable because they sit close together and can create discipline problems, although, the fishbowl is helpful when the teacher wants students to interact with demonstrations or see a small visual aids.

In addition, Ming-Fak & Wai-Shing (2008) say that when the space is limited in the classroom, the teacher should make a good use of it if is possible. For this, it is necessary a good seating arrangement to facilitate specific learning tasks and activities. Moreover, teachers should aim to provide a secure welcoming context for learning which facilitates social contact among teachers and students.

For this reason, Harmer (2005) suggests some forms to arrange furniture in the classroom, for example orderly rows imply teachers working the whole class. In a horseshoe the teacher is often located in a central position, and circle where there is a far greater feeling of quality than when the teacher stays out the front. In the same way, Savage & Savage (2010) argue that the dimension of the classroom should permit the location of the doors and windows, and the movement of students in each activity considering student characteristics and the teacher ability to maintain classroom control. Likewise, they suggest the three basic seating arrangement viewed previously such as rows, clusters, and circular patterns.

Different Levels of Proficiency

A very significant factor involved in language proficiency is the level of English students. There are different levels such as beginning, intermediate and advanced. According to Duran (2006), the students are at beginning level when they are not familiar with sounds, rhythms and patters of English. Also, the students cannot express their ideas and they are in a silent period. Intermediate students can

understand complete structures using newly acquired vocabulary in context; they can also understand language structures in the text. On the other hand, students with advanced level are able to understand idiomatic and figurative language. This means that they use varied grammatical structures and vocabulary. Also, they can recognize meanings in texts with English language development.

In addition, Vogt & Echeverria (2008) argue that teachers need to determine the English language acquisition levels of their students to understand their language needs. They should also provide activities and opportunities to students' proficiency this will allow teachers to know students' progress and how they might respond to each classroom instruction. On the other hand, these authors state some levels of proficiency such as beginning (pre-production) where the student has little comprehension of oral and written English and the teacher should provide different ways to convey meaning like gestures, listening, and contexts of reading and writing. Another level is beginning (early production); in which the students can give one or two word oral responses and the teacher should encourage them to label and manipulate pictures, cloze sentences, etc.

Likewise, beginning (early speech emergence) is one level where the students can comprehend and speak using simple sentences here teacher should provide activities that require reading, writing, listening, and speaking. In intermediate (early) level, students can communicate and comprehend contextualized information, the teachers should develop vocabulary so students can generate and communicate ideas. Another level is intermediate where the students make predictions using text features to read a book, also they can participate in generative activities to promote higher level of thinking.

Moreover, early advanced is a level where the students have an adequate vocabulary that is used to communicate well and the teachers should provide a variety of realistic writing and speaking opportunities. Finally, advanced level permits students to communicate with fluency and they expand vocabulary to achieve academically and they can lead group discussion and produce oral and written forms of communication.

Some previous studies about the influence of large classes in the English language teaching-learning process are presented to have a clear perspective about those aspects and know if researchers have reached their objectives or purposes. Ping & Zhinhong (2012) conducted a study to know if individualized instruction improves the students' participation learning outcomes and how teacher-centered, one-for-all lecturing model and individualized instruction model compare in terms of their relative popularity in the eyes of the students. This study used data from pre test and post test, questionnaires and interviews. The pre tests were a city-wide placement test and a model CET-4 test. The post tests were a final exam of College English and the CET-4 exam. The questionnaires were designed to analyze students' motivations for learning English. Interviews were made to eight students. Thus, to analyze the scores of pretests and posttest and the answers of the questionnaires a descriptive analysis was used.

Finally, the authors concluded that individualized instruction could be a feasible way to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of large classes of Integrated English. Therefore, CALL environments have been improved to language knowledge and language skills through good questions and immediate feedback mechanism.

Thaher (2005) based his research on several questions. He wanted to know what are the instructional, psychological, and social effects of large classes on non-English major EFL students. Also, if there are any significant differences at ($\alpha=0,05$) in students' responses toward large classes due to the students' gender, level of study, college, and placement exam marks, and if there are any significant differences at ($\alpha=0,05$) between the three different effects of large classes on non-English major EFL students.

This study used a questionnaire to determine the effects of large classes on non-major EFL students, it also included dependent variables with the students' responses and the independent variables were gender, study level, college, and placement exam marks. The reliability of the study was calculated by the Cronbach Alpha formula. The data was analyzed through techniques such as means, standard deviations, percentages, independent T-test, one way ANOVA, MANOVA Test with Wilk's Lambda Statistics, Sidek Post Hoc Test, and Cronbach Alpha formula to determine the reliability coefficient of the questionnaires.

In this study, the author concluded that teachers should take into consideration the social and the psychological effect in the classroom interactions because students demonstrated negative and positive responses towards large classes. In short, teachers of large classes should encourage students interaction either by pair or group work and provide opportunities for students with meaningful feedback.

Al-Jarf (2006) led carried out a study to know what is the female freshman student enrollment status at COLT and what is the student rate and what are female freshman students and instructors' attitudes towards learning in and teaching in large classes. They also want to know what is the effect of the annual increase about female freshman student enrollment at COLT on students' academic achievement

level, in freshman students' enrollment at COLT on program staffing and faculty teaching load, in freshman students' enrollment at COLT on classroom instruction, management and assessment as perceived by the students and their instructors, and in freshman students' enrollment at COLT on resources and facilities utilization. Finally, they wanted to know what are the causes of the dramatic annual increase in female freshman student enrollment at COLT.

The methodology applied in the study was through statistics at COLT from six semesters that used the same grammatical structures, grammar textbook, pretest and final exam. The questionnaire consisted of open-ended and was applied to 125 students, instructors and administrators. Analysis was calculated using the final exam scores and the correction will result in the adjustment of group means for pre-existing differences caused sampling error and reduction of the size of the error variance of the analysis. To find out the effect of large freshman student enrollment on attitudes, students and instructors' responses were sorted out and analyzed.

Concluding, the author to accommodate the larger number of freshman students, technology can be used in the recruiting process such as having an online job center, using e-mail in correspondence, and using videoconferencing in job interviews. The author also concluded that to reduce the number of freshman enrollment at COLT, an admission test should be given prior to admission. Likewise, classroom assignment should be based on section size not tradition or coordinator convenience.

Another study was conducted by Raj Khati (2010) in order to determine how this find out the very common expectations of students in a large English class where students have different levels. The method used a questionnaire that was applied to sixty students of tenth grade where six different areas such as classroom

management, establishing collaboration, range of tasks, giving feedback, classroom English and home assignment were focused. The population was sampled using purposive non-random sampling procedure. Students also were asked to tick the both nominal and ordinal alternatives from nineteen closed ended questions.

In this study, the author had several conclusions. For example, that some teachers prefer to give lectures because these are more comfortable than organizing group work or pair work. This study also supported 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 revealed 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.

In the last study, Jimakorn & Singhasiri (2006) directed a study to investigate teacher's beliefs in terms of perceptions, options and attitudes towards teaching English in large classes. They used a questionnaire that was piloted with the teaching staff of the Department of Language, School of Liberal Arts, and were distributed to English departments in the universities around 100 copies, where seventy-five questionnaires were returned.

The questionnaire was divided into three sections such as closed-ended, rating scales, and closed-ended questions that are concerned in general and physical

conditions of their current classrooms, teaching and learning conditions in large classes, degrees of difficulty of teaching in large classes, and opinions towards teaching in large and ideal classes. To analyze the participants' responses it was used a descriptive method by calculating percentages and average scores to determine teachers' attitudes and perceptions towards learning and teaching in large classes.

Finally, the authors concluded that Thai teacher's belief that teaching in large classes was difficult in aspects such as the relationships of teachers and students, monitoring and giving feedback and assessment. Also, they thought that teaching in large classes should use receptive skills such as reading and listening. In conclusion, it is essential for the executive administrators to understand teachers' attitudes and their beliefs and they should train teachers in how to teach and manage large classes.

Description, Analysis, and Interpretation of Results

This section includes a qualitative and quantitative analysis and aims to establish the influence of large classes in the English language teaching-learning process in Ecuadorian high schools.

The tables and graphs below analyze the instructional, psychological, and social implications on large classes according to the responses of the students' questionnaires.

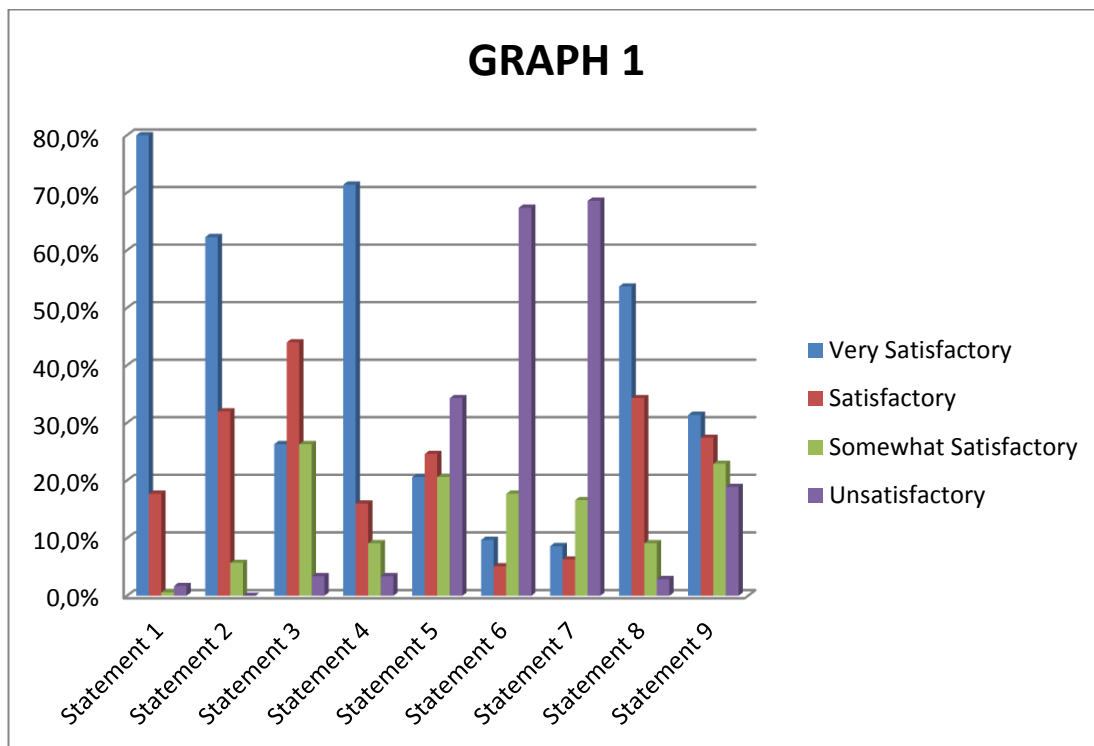
Instructional implications refer to the activities developed in class, the type of activities selected according to students skills, class participation, variety of activities, the distraction of the students with other assignments, etc.

On the other hand, social implications analyze the interaction of the students with others, the teacher, and classmates; also, if the teacher has problems at remembering the students' names, if students feel less stressed in large classes, and if they can use cell phones in class, too.

Finally, psychological implications refer to the participation of the students during the class and how they may feel when working in classes with a large number of classmates.

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

N°	In classes with a large number of students:	Very satisfactory		Satisfactory		Somewhat satisfactory		Unsatisfactory		TOTAL	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
1	The activities done in class help to apply what students learn in class.	140	80	31	17.7	1	0.6	3	1.7	175	100
2	The activities done allow to practice listening, speaking, reading and writing skills.	109	62.3	56	32	10	5.7	0	0	175	100
3	The students are attentive and participate in class activities, including those sitting at the back of the classroom.	46	26.3	77	44	46	26.3	6	3.4	175	100
4	Varied class activities are used such as group, individual, pair-work activities, etc.	125	71.4	28	16	16	9.14	6	3.4	175	100
5	Activities such as plays, competitions, debates, games, etc. are used in class.	36	20.6	43	24.6	36	20.6	60	34.3	175	100
6	Students can cheat during the test.	17	9.7	9	5.1	31	17.7	118	67.4	175	100
7	Students get distracted by doing assignments from other subjects.	15	8.6	11	6.3	29	16.6	120	68.6	175	100
8	The seating arrangement facilitates the tasks that are carried out in class.	94	53.7	60	34.3	16	9.1	5	2.9	175	100
9	Students cannot receive regular feedback from the teacher due to the large number of students.	54	31.4	48	27.4	40	22.9	33	18.9	175	100



Author: Maria Luisa Loayza

Source: Student's Questionnaire

The first table shows the obtained results respect to instructional implications that exist in large classes. For this reason, it is important to describe each statement according to the tabulation that was got through questionnaires applied to 175 students.

The first question aimed to know if the activities done in class help to apply what students learn in class, the 80 percent of the students indicate that they are very satisfied, the 17,7 percent of them are satisfied, the 0,6 percent are somewhat satisfied, and the 1,7 percent of them are unsatisfied. These results reveal that the majority of students can learn with the activities applied by the teacher. However, there are other students that are not very satisfied with the activities used by them.

Nolasco & Arthur (1995), Hess (2001), suggest that some activities such as Guess what?, ask and draw, spot the difference, Guess who?, mutual interviews, and the quick-write can facilitate the teaching- learning process of the English language.

The fact that a small but still significant percentage of students have problems at learning English could be because they need different ways to grasp the knowledge that is why the teacher has to plan according to students' needs. Thus, the options mentioned above will help much in this task.

Sometimes, the main reason why the teacher finds it difficult to make contact with students is because they seat at the back part of the classroom, so that, they cannot ask for the information they do not understand, or receive feedback on the theme that is being taught.

According to the second statement that aims to find if the activities developed in class allow to practice the four skills. The results revealed that most students, that is to say the 62.3 percent are very satisfied. On the other hand, 32 percent of them are satisfied, and the 5,7 percent are somewhat satisfied. Thus, it is essential to indicate that the students can apply all their skills during the class and that the learning is meaningful.

With regards to the application of the four skills in the lesson, it is worth to mention that most of the time, the teacher should try to involve students` practice of speaking, listening, reading and writing in the activities chosen, since the combination of them maximizes student's comprehension and interaction as well, especially with beginners.

To this Duran, (2006) states that beginners do not have a wide knowledge of oral and written English, and are not able to produce much, if any English. Also, he mentions that teachers should offer plentiful listening opportunities, use physical

body gestures and movements to express meaning, and include a great deal of context for sharing reading and writing.

On the other hand, Jimakorn & 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.

For the third item, that consists in knowing if students are attentive and participate in class activities, the 26,3 percent of the students are very satisfied and somewhat satisfied, while the 44 percent of them are satisfied, which represents the majority of the students and only the 3,4 percent are unsatisfied. According to the results the majority of students participate in class.

Nonetheless most students learn easily, there is some percentage that indicates that several students aren't attentive and even worse interact with others. Here, it is very important to say that not all people learn at the same rate, and that many have different levels of proficiency. Then, for some, it becomes more difficult the English language learning process, or at least takes more time than for others who learn faster.

What Woolfolk & Brooks, (1983) argue is that seat location seems to increase participation for students who are predisposed to participate in class. Although, a seat in the back will make it more difficult to share but easier to daydream.

Continuing with the idea, Weinstein and Mingano (2003) suggest that teachers move around the room when possible, establish eye contact with and direct questions to students seated far away, and change frequently the seating so the same students are not always consigned to the back.

From the 175 students who answered the fourth item in the questionnaire that ask if the class activities are varied as group, individual, or pair-work, the 71,4 percent said they are very satisfied, the 16 percent are satisfied, the 9,14 percent are somewhat satisfied, while the 3,4 percent are unsatisfied.

All of the interviewed students learn in class with diverse activities which allow them to get a better learning with respect to the lessons. However, it is necessary to comment that some classrooms in that high school are too small, so that it is not easy that teachers move around the furniture to group up students. Then, the learning process is influenced by the classroom space.

Harmer, (2005) agrees that the size and shape of the room are part of the spatial dimension of a classroom, thus, this dimension creates the setting where activities are carried out, and the setting influenced the types of activities that are possible as well as the behavior of those engaged in them.

With respect to the item 5 that search to know if activities such as plays, competitions, debates, games, etc. are used in class, the 20,6 percent of the students answered that are very and somewhat satisfied, the 24,6 percent of them are satisfied and the 34,3 percent are unsatisfied. These results reflect that the majority of the students in their classrooms do not use integrated activities that permit them to learn in a better way.

Harmer, (2007) states that there are numerous aids for teaching large classes, because there are always enough students to get interaction, and there is a rich variety for human resources. And he says that in the large classes should exist some key elements as be organized, establish routines, use a different pace for different activities, maximize individual work, use students, use worksheets, use pairwork and

groupwork, etc. So, if the teacher puts into practice, at least, the suggestions just mentioned, for sure he/she will support to change a potential disaster into success.

For item six item, that consists in knowing if students can cheat during the test, the 9,7 percent of the students are very satisfied, the 5,1 are somewhat satisfied, while the 17,7 percent of them are satisfied, and the 67,4 percent are unsatisfied which represents the majority of the students. According to the results the majority cheat while in tests.

There are various concepts of cheating. The main difference among these explanations is based on the concept of intent more than of action. Cheating is when a person misleads, deceives, or is dishonest. This fact may turn into a great moral problem in large classes, especially those with restricted or non-existent writing components, cheating is almost always perceived with some sort of deliberate intent.

According to statement seven, that aims to find if students get distracted by doing assignments from other subjects. The results revealed that most students, that is to say the 68,6 percent are unsatisfied. On the other hand, the 8,6 percent of them are very satisfied, the 6,3 percent are satisfied. And the 16,6 percent of students are somewhat satisfied.

Teaching a large class involves many complications. In the classroom, large enrollments can stimulate student disengagement and feelings of hostility, which could decrease students' sense of responsibility and carry them to do activities that both indicate and promote lack of participation and distraction. When it occurs, students get distracted with activities related to tasks from other subjects.

As regard the statement eight, which is used to know if seating arrangement facilitates the tasks that are carried out in class, the results showed that most students, that is to say the 53,7 percent are very satisfied. On the other hand, 34,3 percent of

them are satisfied, the 9,1 percent are somewhat satisfied, and the 2,9 percent are unsatisfied.

Harmer, (2005) thinks that an appropriate seating arrangement facilitates the teaching process specific learning activities and it also permits 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.

On the other hand, Ming-Fak, & Wai-Shing, (2008) agree that a worthy sitting agreement is one which facilitates particular learning projects and tasks. Therefore, in my opinion the arrangement of the class influences the behavior in different ways because students can interact each other and the teacher will have a major control of the lesson.

There is no best way to arrange desks. Instead, the teacher should consider the teaching approach he/she uses, the type of interaction he/she desires, the student characteristics, and his/her ability to maintain classroom control.

Another item covered by the survey applied to the participants is to know if, students cannot receive regular feedback from the teacher due to the large number of students, fifty four students are very satisfied, which makes up the 31.4 percent of the sample; 27,4 percent are satisfied, the 22,9 percent are somewhat satisfied, and the 18,9 percent are unsatisfied.

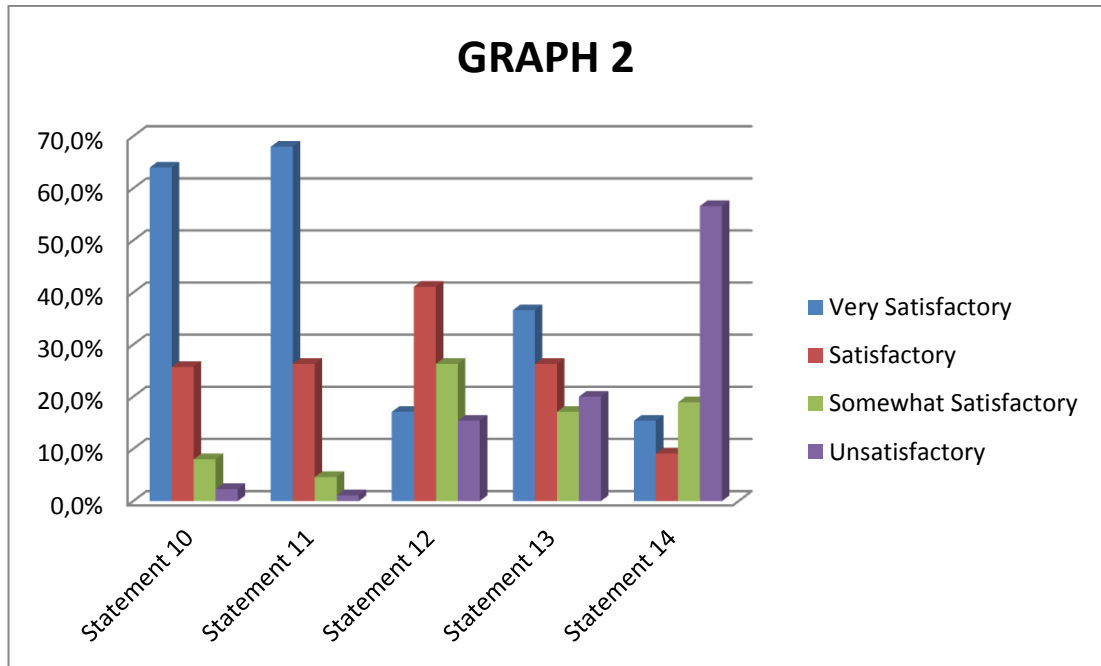
According to my point of view, feedback is the most important source of motivation in any form of learning, and that doing it verbally can be particularly

challenging to establish in a large class. So that students need to be educated to accept that on the spot correction is neither a need nor a desire.

Geysler, (2010) states that for the instructor it is important to get feedback from the learners after each assignment has been set. So, this situation will offer him/her with a key as to whether the learners have recognized the language result and whether further explanation and practice is needed.

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

N°	In classes with a large number of students:	Very satisfactory		Satisfactory		Somewhat satisfactory		Unsatisfactory		TOTAL	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
10	There is a proper balance of student-student and teacher-student interaction.	112	64	45	25.7	14	8	4	2.3	175	100
11	Students have the opportunity to build relationships with their classmates.	119	68	46	26.3	8	4.6	2	1.1	175	100
12	The teacher has problems remembering all the students' names.	30	17.1	72	41.1	46	26.3	27	15.4	175	100
13	The atmosphere is less stressful since the teacher does not ask several questions to the same student.	64	36.6	46	26.3	30	17.1	35	20	175	100
14	It is easier for students to use their cellphone or any other mobile device without being seen by the teacher.	27	15.4	16	9.1	33	18.9	99	56.6	175	100



Author: Maria Luisa Loayza

Source: Student's Questionnaire

According to the 175 students surveyed about the item 10 that consists in knowing if there is a proper balance of student-student and teacher-student interaction, one hundred twelve are very satisfied, which represents the 64 percent of the sample; forty-five students are satisfied, which corresponds to the 25,7 percent; fourteen students are somewhat satisfied, which is the remaining 8 percent of the population sample; and four of them are unsatisfied, which makes up the 2,3 percent of the sample.

Burns & Cunningham (2009) mention that some studies say that the size of a class impacts students and instructor actions. They say that in general, smaller classes are associated with learners who are less pressured and are more frequently on-task with less revealed actions problems than learners in larger classes.

Although, teachers tend to use similar educational techniques whether educating big or small classes, there is some proof which recommends that more

class time is invested on management projects for bigger larger classes, making the period of classes shorter for training.

Taking the responses expressed here, it can be said that as the chart and the statistical graph show the majority of the students are very satisfied because there is interaction among student-student and teacher-student, even though fifty-six students responded with the other options, which means that in large classes it cannot always exist a true interaction among students and the teacher.

Another item covered by the survey applied to the participants is to know if students have the opportunity to build relationships with their classmates, one hundred nineteen students are very satisfied, which makes up the 68 percent of the sample; 26,3 percent are satisfied, the 4,6 percent are somewhat satisfied, and the 1,1 percent are unsatisfied.

Byram (2000) argues that affective consequences of large classes are the student's feeling of frustration when they cannot communicate with their classmates. An excellent activity to build good relationships among students is the interview. By means of this, students get along better with the rest of the class.

In the first place, the teacher must be sure to talk with his/her students about when and why interviews are used. Then the teacher can develop activities such as: students sing in pairs facing each other, they take turns interviewing each other, each pair joins another pair, and interviewer introduces his/her partner to others, or volunteers introduce partners to the entire class.

From the 175 students who answered the item 12 that search to know if the teacher has problems remembering all the students' names, the 17,1 percent of the participants answered that are very satisfied; the 41,1 percent says that they are

satisfied; the 26,3 percent of them are somewhat satisfied; while the 15,4 percent are unsatisfied.

In spite of the majority of students are satisfied, during the survey, the teacher did not know the name of some students. Maybe, this problem occurs when the period of class starts. For this reason, Byram (2000) suggests that the teacher can reduce the problem using seating plans and giving individual attention.

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, sixty-four students are very satisfied, which makes up the 36,6 percent of the sample; forty-six students are satisfied, which makes up the 26,3 percent of the sample percent are satisfied, the 17,1 percent are somewhat satisfied, and the 20 percent are unsatisfied.

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.

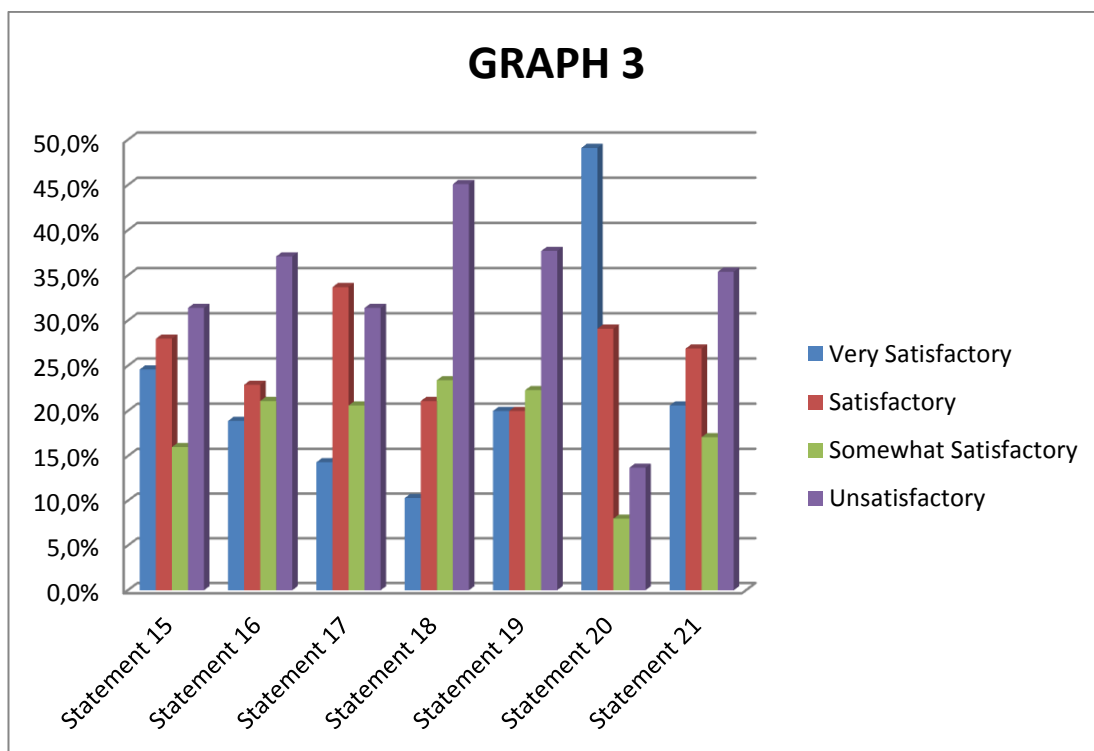
Regardless of the purpose of a question, it can be said that the fact of asking questions is a wonderful tool to turn a student from a passive observer in the classroom into an active learner. Whereas this situation can change when the teacher asks several questions to the same student. This circumstance 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 most students, that is to say the 56,6 percent are unsatisfied. On the other hand, 15,4 percent of them are very satisfied, the 9,1 percent are satisfied, and the 18,9 percent are somewhat satisfied.

Recently, the Education Minister of our country said that students can use cell phones in high school, thus they will not be social excluded from the technological era. But, cell phones can easily act as a distraction to other students and instructors during a period of class. The rippling vibrations and blaring ring tones make both teaching and learning hard. This situation causes nuisance because the teacher tries to avoid students' texting under desks and behind books, because students tend to pay more attention to their cell phones or any other device than lessons. Also, students that generally are seating on the back have more facility to use the cell phone because the teacher cannot control all students.

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

N°	In classes with a large number of students:	Very satisfactory		Satisfactory		Somewhat satisfactory		Unsatisfactory		TOTAL	
		f	%	f	%	F	%	f	%	f	%
15	The atmosphere is stressful.	43	24.6	49	28	28	16	55	31.4	175	100
16	Students feel inhibited when speaking in front of the rest.	33	18.9	40	22.9	37	21.1	65	37.1	175	100
17	Students do not have the opportunity to express their opinions.	25	14.3	59	33.7	36	20.6	55	31.4	175	100
18	Students do not like to participate because they feel afraid.	18	10.3	37	21.1	41	23.4	79	45.1	175	100
19	The teacher does not pay equal attention to all his/her students.	35	20	35	20	39	22.3	66	37.7	175	100
20	Students feel they can act competitively with other students.	86	49.1	51	29.1	14	8	24	13.7	175	100
21	Students feel relaxed because they can go unnoticed.	36	20.6	47	26.9	30	17.1	62	35.4	175	100



Author: Maria Luisa Loayza

Source: Student's Questionnaire

Another item covered by the survey applied to the participants is to know if the atmosphere is stressful, forty-three students are very satisfied, which makes up the 24,6 percent of the sample; 28 percent are satisfied, the 16 percent are somewhat satisfied, and the 31,4 percent are unsatisfied.

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 an instructor 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. Language interaction between the instructor and students and peer work among the learners become difficult due to

visual and physical challenges. Consequently, classroom may even be out of control in some occasions.

The statement sixteen aimed to know if students feel inhibited when speaking in front of the rest, the 18,9 percent of the students indicate that they are very satisfactory, the 22,9 of them are satisfactory, the 21,1 percent are somewhat satisfactory, and the 37,1 percent of them are unsatisfactory. These results reveal that the majority of students feel inhibited when speaking in front of the rest.

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 resulting feelings of cohesiveness are especially valuable because students who feel that connection are far less liable to contravene their classroom community's standards. Finally, be sure to balance student comments by not enabling any students to dominate discussions and by keeping them aside from interruption.

All of the approaches described above give students the opportunity to engage with class questions and challenges anonymously or in small groups instead of or prior to large class discussion. These tools can therefore reduce student fear and thereby promote participation.

The statement seventeen aimed to know if students do not have the opportunity to express their opinion, twenty five students are very satisfactory, which make up a percent of 14,3, on the other hand the 33,7 percent of the students indicate that they are satisfied, the 20,6 percent are somewhat satisfied, and the 37,1 percent of them are unsatisfied

Harmer, (2007), in his book “The practice of English language teaching” states that however, 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: 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 statement eighteen that aims to find if students do not like to participate because they feel afraid. The results revealed that most students, that is to say the 45,1 percent are unsatisfied. On the other hand, 10,3 percent of them are very satisfied, the 23,4 percent are somewhat satisfied, and the 21,1 are satisfied.

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. And 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 37,7 percent are unsatisfied. On the other hand, the 20 percent of them are very satisfied, the 22,3 percent are somewhat satisfied, and the 20 percent are satisfied.

According to Rryam, (2002) the difficulties experienced in large classes consist of matters about management and classroom organization, how to guarantee students' participation in interaction for effective learning, how to evaluate each student, and affective repercussions of numerous classes for teachers and students.

Classroom control and management problems can decrease by getting to know students' name as fast as possible, by reducing disturbance levels, by maintaining clear tasks, by ensuring that students know what to do and reducing changes from one process to another.

Students' participation in assignments, above all for oral skills, can be managed, despite the frequently experienced complications of lack of space and crowded set sitting, by using short, meaningful actions with pre-organized pairs.

Such activities may have a clear result and can be shown in advance by the teacher or planned with silent organization or through tasks to be developed at home. Assessment issues can be decreased by writing note about brief individual oral demonstration to the class and by maintaining writing process focus.

Affective consequences of large classes include the risk to both teachers' and learners' morale and inspiration, the complications for the instructor to establish relationships with students and to know them as individuals.

The results of the statement twenty that aims to find if students feel they can act competitively with other students showed that 49,1 percent are very satisfied, the 29,1 percent are satisfied. On the other hand, the 8 percent of them are somewhat satisfied, the 13,7 are unsatisfied.

Most students learn best when they are actively engaged with class material. While active engagement can be more of a challenge in large classes, many teachers should provide resources that permit students develop their skills independently and they can challenge with their partners.

When students feel comfortable, they can interact in a more meaningful way through the use of in-class exercises, they will be able to interact via formative assessment, which increases student learning by enabling instructors to get feedback about student learning during the teaching of a topic.

The statement twenty-first aimed to know if students feel relaxed because they can go unnoticed, the 20,6 percent of the students indicate that they are very satisfactory, the 26,9 of them are satisfactory, the 17,1 percent are somewhat satisfactory, and the 35,4 percent of them are unsatisfactory.

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

- The size of a class has great effects on the learning and teaching process of the English language in Ecuadorian high-schools. Learners of numerous classes suffer a lot in learning the four skills in the English language.
- Commonly, students are exposed to inadequate materials and show low commitment to the study of the language. Teachers who teach large classes find it complicated to show their efficiency in classes so that the result is a poor outcome on behalf of students and their work due to the excessive population of students in high-schools.
- Modifying the teaching-learning approaches of large classes is a social matter, that requires a change in attitude not only of teachers, to break with traditions and take the risk of implementing new strategies, but also of students and their responsibility for learning.
- Although the results show that students cannot use their cell phones in the classroom, the majority of them have a cell phone or another device in class. Therefore, students seated at back of the classroom can use them easily and as classes are large, teachers cannot keep an eye on all students.
- The results of the survey indicated that the success of the teaching-learning process will depend, in some part, on the psychology of the student, and on his/her understanding and acceptance of the concept that learning is a collaborative experience between both teacher and learner.
- This research reveals that in spite of large classes, teacher pays equal attention to all students which guarantees students' participation in interaction for effective learning by getting to know students' name, by reducing disturbance levels, by maintaining clear tasks, and by ensuring that students know what to do.

Recommendations

- The government should provide more language instructional materials, for example: language laboratory, favorable and peaceful learning environment, with the goal of improving teachers' and students' outcome of English language.
- Besides this, the government should organize workshops and seminars for instructors of English Language regularly. In this way, they can improve their teaching.
- The teachers that do not have a good English language proficiency level should be trained before moving on inside the class, since having knowledge of the language is the first condition for teaching.
- English teachers should not use only one particular teaching method because some students may admire it, and, some others might dislike it. Methodology must be used according to student's needs, and interests.
- School directors and government representatives should also check if classes with an exceeding number of students should be broken down. So, government should provide money for infrastructural and other necessary facilities.
- In those large classes that could not be broken down as a result of different situations which are beyond the administrators and teachers' control, the English teachers should go on board on grouping the students. This will give space for efficiency, monitoring students' participation in class, identifying the weakness of students, identifying students' individual changes and also make the instructional materials to circulate around the room.

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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 large 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	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 satisfac	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!