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

TRABAJO DE TITULACIÓN

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Dedication

I devote this work to all my family who has supported me during this process.

To my husband for his attention and dedication.

To my lovely daughter who has always been my support and my inspiration
to accomplish all my life's goals.

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Abstract

The theme of this research is about the influence of large classes in the English teaching- learning process in Ecuadorian high schools. To find out the instructional, social and psychological implications that these kinds of classes have on the teaching - learning process is the main objective of this research. The field investigation took place in a Catholic private high school in the Chillos Valley, Quito. The selected sample was made of 5 teachers and 175 students between the ages of 12 and 18. The group size was composed of 35 students per class.

During the process, the qualitative and quantitative methods were used. The qualitative research was used for gathering the scientific information during the whole process and the quantitative research was used for the numerical data. The instruments for data collection were students' and teachers' questionnaires and observation sheets.

This research reveals that large classes affect the English teaching - learning process, because class activities to practice the four skills through group and individual activities personalized feedback, and role play was not accomplished most of the time.

Key words: teaching – learning process, class size, large class, educational, social and physiological implications.

Resumen

El presente estudio es acerca de la influencia que tienen las clases numerosas en el proceso de enseñanza y aprendizaje del inglés en las secundarias de Ecuador. El principal objetivo de esta investigación es descubrir las implicaciones educacionales, sociales y psicológicas que tienen este tipo de clases en el proceso de enseñanza y aprendizaje. La investigación de campo tuvo lugar en un colegio católico privado, en el Valle de Los Chillos, Quito. La muestra seleccionada estuvo compuesta por 5 profesores y 175 estudiantes con edades entre 12 y 18 años. Los grupos de clases estaban compuesto por 35 estudiantes.

Durante el proceso, fueron utilizados los métodos cualitativo y cuantitativo. La investigación cualitativa fue utilizada para recopilar la información en todo el proceso, mientras que la investigación cuantitativa fue utilizada para los datos numéricos. Los instrumentos para la recopilación de datos fueron los cuestionarios realizados a estudiantes y profesores así como las hojas de observación.

Este estudio revela que las clases numerosas afectan el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje del inglés, porque las actividades de clase para practicar las cuatro habilidades, a través de actividades grupales y los juegos de rol, no se cumple la mayor parte del tiempo.

Palabras claves: proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje, tamaño de la clase, clases numerosas, implicaciones educacionales, sociales y fisiológicas.

Introduction

English is a widely spoken language and it is the most commonly used language around the world at present. Therefore it ought to have the highest regard in the educational system everywhere.

That is why today more than ever, learning English proves to be indispensable in the near future. There will be a world full of work opportunities for English-speakers on an international level marked by the need of communication in several areas: commercial, industrial, tourism and in general every kind of international relationship.

It has been assumed that the knowledge of a foreign language can provide a requirement to one's curriculum in the work force. However, to have English as a foreign language in comparison to any other language is considered to be far more significant in all concerning areas (professional, social and personal growth).

It is seen that, the Spanish-speaking population fails to see the importance in this aspect, and Ecuador is not exempt from it. However, Ecuadorian government is growing in consciousness of the importance of learning English. Thus, Ecuador has initiated a teaching-learning process in both private and public schools. As a result of this process, some schools have increased the number of hours dedicated to the acquisition of a foreign language; moreover, they are applying new didactic methods and techniques to improve the teaching-learning process. Although the results of all the efforts made by the government have not been accomplished, students still finish their education without having developed a satisfactory level in their listening, writing and speaking skills.

The main motivation of this research is due to the need of an in-depth and detailed analysis on the general factors and specifically, the size of the class, that interfere in the teaching – learning process of the English language in the Ecuadorian high schools.

Class size has been analyzed thoroughly all over the world, with the aim of understanding the positive and negative effects that class size has, and its influence on the quality behind the process of teaching and learning English.

The purpose of this study was to carry out an analysis on how large classes influence learning, it is necessary to focus this research on the impact of class size and the outcome it has on high school education. The aim of the present research is to find out the educational, social and psychological implications that large classes have on the teaching and learning process.

In order to analyze the different implications that large classes have on the educational establishments, it is vital to review previous scientific research. The previous research takes into consideration large classes and the influence of class size in the teaching – learning process around the world.

First of all, Bahanshal (2013) conducted a study on Saudi Arabian students which illustrated the effect of large classes on teaching and learning English. In this study six Saudi Arabian English teachers from two public schools were interviewed and it illustrated a significant aspect in classes in public schools: they vary in terms of size as the average number of students is from 30 to 45. The aim of this study is twofold: to ascertain the impact of large classes on the teaching and learning outcomes and suggesting appropriate strategies

for Saudi Arabian secondary teachers to utilize in their large classes to facilitate English teaching and learning.

Research results show that all participants find it daunting to teach large classes. The study findings shed light on some useful and effective methods to be applied in large classes which may facilitate language teaching and learning processes. The small number of participants in this study (6 teachers) constitutes a limitation as the represented data generated from their interviews may not be enough.

Secondly, Galton and Pell (2012) performed a study on primary schools in Hong Kong. The purpose of this study focuses on the difference between various classroom practices. It has been noted that the success in teaching is not based on the size of the classroom, but it has been suggested that the success actually depends on the strategies used by the teachers during their lessons. The findings exposed that classroom size has no particular influence on the learning process but it affects the style of interaction between teachers and students.

Finally, the third research carried out by Rocha (2005) intended to show the way some teachers handled task-based learning to encourage a large group of seventh graders to improve their oral interaction. The participants were students of the seventh grade; their ages were between 11 and 13 years old. There were 21 boys and 30 girls, considered to be the youngest students of seventh grade and were characterized by their active and enthusiastic attitude. This research presented that task-based learning was an appropriate method employed to improve oral interaction in large groups.

This research principally benefits the author, high schools, universities and teachers interested in these research results. Students on their part will benefit from this study too.

Some limitations found in this study were the time restraint for gathering the information and learners may have not answered questionnaires honestly. However, these obstacles did not constitute a limitation for carrying out this study.

Literature Review

Although many authors and teachers have their studies focused on the connotations that big classes have in the English teaching - learning process as a foreign language, the aim of this thesis is to continue the analyses in the present-day context taking into account the behavior of this phenomenon. Also, to consider its relevance in Ecuadorian high schools and specifically in a high school in the Chillos Valley, Quito.

In this section, the purpose is to provide scientific information about class size, methods and approaches in the teaching-learning process, managing of the language in large classes, the proposal of activities to work in large classes, arrangement of the classroom, crucial aspects to give more effect to the teaching and learning process in large classes.

Teaching approaches and methods

In this segment, some methods and approaches included in the English teaching – learning process are going to consider.

Total physical response

One of the most important approaches to teaching is The Total Physical Response method (TPR). It is based on the movement and development of motor abilities, which is understood as a language teaching method built around the coordination of speech and action. Furthermore, it attempts to teach language through physical activity. This method was developed by Asher. James Asher was a psychology professor at San Jose State University in California, Richards and Theodore (1986). In the same way, Celce-Murcia, Brinton, Snow, et al. (2014), mention that Asher states that most of the grammatical structure of the target language and hundreds of vocabulary items can be learned from the skillful use of the imperative by the instructor.

TPR can be also linked to the “trace theory” of memory in psychology (Celce-Murcia, Brinton, Snow, et al. 2014; Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011; Nunan, 2003), which states that if the content is repeated several times a memory connection is traced. The stronger the memory association the more likely it will be recalled. The more intense a memory connection is traced and how many times the action is done; the stronger association will be in the brain of a learner so that the information will be correctly saved for the proper use in people’s life.

The two main objectives of TPR are: to teach oral expertise at a beginner level which would allow students to use the language to communicate effectively and to learn basic speaking skills. A TPR course aims to produce learners who are capable of an uninhibited communication that is intelligible to a native speaker. Specific instructional objectives are not elaborated, as these will depend on the particular needs of the learners. However, goals are set for this to be possible through the use of action-based drills in the imperative form (Richards & Rodgers, 2001; Nunan, 2003).

Imperative drills are the most important classroom activities in TPR. They are typically used to cause physical reactions and activity on the learners. Celce-Murcia, Brinton, Snow, et al. (2014) said: ‘Asher's rationale for this is that everyday conversations are highly abstract and disconnected; therefore, to understand them requires a rather advanced internalization of the target language. Other class activities include role plays and slide presentations. Role play concentrates on everyday situations, such as at the restaurant, supermarket, or gas station.’

In addition, Celce-Murcia, Brinton, Snow, et al. (2014) implies that a teacher who is using this method needs to be well trained by an experienced senior who has already learned all the implications this method presents. It is necessary to know the kinesthetic activities to

be taught to the class; they must be combined with information, so that the student can assimilate knowledge and develop his/her skills at a fast rate.

Natural approach method

This method of language teaching was developed by Stephen Krashen and Tracy Terrell in the late 1970s and early 1980s. It aims to foster naturalistic language acquisition in a classroom setting, and it emphasizes communication, and places less importance on conscious grammar study and explicit correction of student mistakes (Rhalmi, 2009; Nunan, 2003; Krashen & Terrell, 1983).

The natural approach has become closely associated with Krashen's monitor model, and it is often seen as an application of the theory to language teaching. Despite this perception, there are some differences, particularly Terrell's view that some degree of conscious grammar study can be beneficial. The syllabus focuses on activities which Terrell sees as promoting subconscious language acquisition. He divides these activities into four main areas: content activities, such as learning a new subject in the target language; activities which focus on personalizing language, such as students sharing their favorite music; games and problem-solving activities (Richards & Rodgers, 2001; Mejía, 2008; Krashen & Terrell, 1983).

On the other hand, this approach shares a lot with Total Physical Response, due to the fact that both approaches advocate the need of a silent phase before going into the speaking phase. This approach also makes learners feel more relaxed and secure, because learners are told in advance what they should expect from the learning process. Therefore, students will feel more comfortable and be able to communicate better (Nunan, 2003; Krashen & Terrell, 1983).

Communicative language teaching

Changes in British education in the 1960s created the appropriate environment for Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) to take place. It was necessary to base the learning of a foreign language on communicative proficiency rather than only in structures as it was done before when the British used Situational Language teaching, which is based on structures (Brown, 2007; Celce-Murcia; Brinton; Snow; et al., 2014).

Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2011) state that one of the most characteristic features of communicative language teaching is that it pays systematic attention to functional as well as structural aspects of language at the same time. For instance, it is a great method to learn because it mixes two important factors to improve the teaching process. One of them is that a person learning another language works place best in a relationship of trust, support, and cooperation between teacher and students and among students. The other method implies that learning is a living and developmental process.

It does a lot to create a real communicative competence compared to the methods used before.

As a matter of fact, grammar does not cover everything, neither does speaking. Thus this approach is a mix of structure and practice; that is why it uses different activities such as pair work and problem solving tasks. These activities allow learners to communicate using the target language (Lin, 2008; Omaggio, 2001).

Teachers have an important responsibility in this approach; they must facilitate the communicative process during the class. Many activities are done through applying this

approach. Therefore, teachers have to be sure that students are performing the tasks according to what they are required to do (Richards, 2006; Savignon, 1997).

This approach is centered in the belief that the structure of language reflects its functional and communicative uses. All of these beliefs show how this approach emphasizes its success in communication.

Grammar translation method

As its name suggests, teaching is based on translating directly into the target language, where little attention is given to speaking or listening activities; that is why all of the classes are focused on reading and writing. Johann Scidentuker, Karl Plotz, H.S. Ollendorf and Johann Meidinger think that this method is focused on knowing everything about something, rather than the thing itself. This method has been criticized as it can be tedious, frustrating and boring, and is also a reason for a student's desertion (Bowen, 2012; Mejía, 2008).

The Grammar Translation Method (GTM) is an unsuccessful method nowadays; children tend to have a bad pronunciation because they read English in the same way as Spanish. It was not rare to see that even teachers could not have or understand conversations because of the way they have learnt the language. However, today this method has changed, especially in private classes, where teachers are definitely not allowed to use it (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

Celce-Murcia, Brinton, Snow, et al. (2014) state that students applied this method to know exactly what the activity says in their native language and they can be sure of what to do. The problem occurs when students need to translate everything even when they are speaking, as they cannot gain fluency and are hardly able to communicate. The point is that

they do not have to translate word for word because this way the whole learning process would not be complete. It is significant to mention that if the native language is used in class, it is better to understand it in the first language rather than in the target one.

As a conclusion, this method is not recommended for students at any level or in any activity, since it does not help them to think in the target language. Instead, it encourages students to translate everything they want to say and decreases the probability to speak fluently or worse, to use the language to communicate. This is one of the reasons this method can be mixed with other exercises or include different activities.

However, even this method and procedure is not good enough, it is still necessary to learn grammar and make students develop other skills.

Cooperative language learning

Cooperative Language Learning (CLL) is part of a more general instructional approach also known as Collaborative Learning (CL). It is an approach that makes maximum use of cooperative activities involving pairs and small groups of learners, heterogeneous groups to complete a problem, project, or other instructional goal, while teachers act as guides or facilitators in the classroom (Schul, 2012; Zhang, January, 2010; Seifert & Sutton, 2009)

This method works to reinforce a student's own learning as well as the learning of his or her fellow group members (Johnson, 2009; Johnson & Johnson, 1996; Johnson, Johnson & Holubec, 1994; Slavin, 1980).

It has been defined as follows:

Cooperative learning is group learning activity organized so that learning is dependent on the socially structured exchange of information between learners in groups and in which

each learner is held accountable for his or her own learning and is motivated to increase the learning of others (Schul, 2012; Kagan, 1990).

Class size

The size of the class is an important factor when teaching foreign languages. Depending on this factor, students can advance fast or slow as the size of the class directly affects the teaching and learning process of a language.

Watson (2012) tried to find out if there is any relation between class size and learning, and, if so, what are these threshold levels. He introduced two variables: class size and learning. One conclusion of this research was that grades and class size show a relevant correlation in that students in large classes get lower grades.

However, Bahanshal (2013, p. 51) said “The effectiveness of class size on students’ achievement and motivation, and its synchronous relation to teaching process and teachers’ workload, attitudes and motivation, is probably the most written about, however least explored topic in the educational field”.

However, in literature revision and in the opinion of various researchers, there is no consensus as to what constitutes a large class or a small class.

There are different opinions about large and small classes. In some countries classes of 35 students are considered large while in others lessons of at least 110 students are considered large. The same happens in the case of small classes; some teachers believe that up to 30 students is considered a small class while others believe that more than 5 students per class is not small anymore (Bahanshal, 2013; Abioye, 2010).

Therefore, in order to determine whether a class is large or small, the place and circumstances in which the class is being carried out as well as the teacher's beliefs should be analyzed. It will also depend on whether the school is public or private (Galton & Pell, 2012; Blatchford, Basset and Brown, 2011).

To the effects of this investigation and taking the case study into account, the researcher defines a large class as one that has 35 students.

Managing learning

To be able to manage a class effectively, different variables have to be taken into account: the way instructions are given, the feedback that is provided during the lessons, the time given to build up the written and discipline.

Regarding instructions, Harmer (2007) and Tsui (2003) establish that this issue of how to talk to students becomes crucial when they are given instructions. The best activity in the world is a waste of time if students do not understand what they are supposed to do.

That is why it is necessary that teachers give instructions clearly; all words must be well pronounced and professors must be sure students understand what they are supposed to do. This can be achieved either by asking a student to explain the activity in front of the class or by getting someone to do the exercise as an example for the rest of the students. If instructions are well understood the class will get the required objectives. Additionally, orders must be as simple as possible to facilitate activity development and to have a good class environment (Longman, 2008).

In contrast, attention and willingness from the students are also important aspects that must be generated by teachers. In this regard a teacher's physical appearance, their tone of

voice and the ability that they have to interact with students are essential to get the mentioned aspects.

Feedback given during the lesson is another variable. Regarding this aspect Rocha (2005) argues that, providing feedback to learners on their performance is another important aspect of teaching. Feedback can be either positive or negative and may serve not only to let learners know how well they have performed but also to increase motivation and build a supportive classroom climate.

Undoubtedly, providing feedback can be positive because it allows the students to have more confidence to learn the new lessons. Also the doubts or topics that were not well understood become clearer through feedback. On the other hand, feedback may be seen as negative because it can take a lot of time which otherwise can be used to move forward with the new lesson.

The third variable analyzed in managing learning is the teacher's and student's time used to accomplish the activities during the lessons. Within the organization of the time appointed for each lesson, the time that teachers use to talk during the class, must be taken into consideration. This is called Teacher's Talking Time (TTT) and it refers to certain occasions that tutors use too much time to talk instead of letting students practice the language action that is known as Student Talking Time (STT) or also to practice the contents of the lesson, due to students who are the ones who need to advance in the language. Teachers' talking time might also reduce students' time to practice other activities such as reading and writing, and the class can become boring making students lose interest and motivation (Harmer, 2007).

In conclusion, it is important that teachers use less time talking, in this way they will contribute to their students` language development and tutors can have control in managing the class.

Talking about time, it must be well organized; it means that there must be enough time for the planned activities that is why teachers must follow their teaching plans carefully in order to achieve the expected activities. In contrast, students should also be aware of the mechanism that teachers apply during the lessons and work at the required time (Harmer, 2007).

The last essential variable considered in the managing learning process is discipline. It can be perfectly managed when teachers set rules clearly and let students know the specific roles they have to accomplish during the lessons. Students also have to understand that teachers are the only authority in the class. In this way, discipline would be easy to control and consequently to have effective learning. In addition, if teachers have the ability to maintain discipline and get agreements with students, the learning process would be totally successful (Harmer, 2007).

In spite of the importance to control these variables during the teaching - learning process, there are other variables that stand out. There is not enough time when managing a large class to execute activities, efficient arrangement of space, and classroom organization, as well as the different levels that the students have, must be taken into consideration.

Managing large classes

Having closer contact with students and giving them individual attention can be a hard issue to handle in large classes. That is why the teacher`s ingenuity to direct the planned

activities play a key role in the development of the class. Consequently, if the lessons are conducted with appropriate strategies and the right set of skills; the class may be a total success (Longman, 2008; Rocha, 2005; Gedalof, March - May, 1999).

Additionally, some difficulties in managing classes may be: students' interests and discipline. Therefore, teachers have to consider all of these aspects to accomplish the class objectives and to deal with a good teaching and learning process (Longman, 2008; Rocha, 2005; Gedalof, March - May, 1999).

In the case of discipline, this can have both positive and negative aspects when managing large classes. Discipline would be considered a negative aspect when it cannot be controlled and it interferes with class performance. On the contrary, discipline benefits the teaching and learning process (Longman, 2008; Rocha, 2005; Hayes, w.d; Gedalof, March - May, 1999).

On the other hand, Harmer (2007) establishes that in big classes, it is difficult for the teacher to make contact with the students at the back and it is difficult for the students to ask for and receive individual attention. It may seem impossible to organize dynamic and creative teaching and learning sessions. Frequently, big classes mean that it is not easy to have students walking around and changing partners. Most importantly, big classes can be quite intimidating for inexperienced teachers.

Finally, there are other factors that may affect managing large classes: students' age, their background knowledge and teachers' abilities to create interesting tasks according to their ages. But if a teacher is capable of handling all those factors, students will be motivated and anxious to learn.

Activities to work with large classes

Activities presented in large classes must be clearly organized and structured; they must have the purpose to develop the four basic skills: listening, reading, writing and speaking, it is hard work because of the number of students (Harmer, 2007).

Working in large classes requires a lot of teachers' effort as well as creativity. Students' characteristics and varying levels are important to consider when preparing activities for the class.

Some possible activities suggested by Longman, 2008; Harmer, 2007 and Rocha, 2005 are:

- Contests: a spelling bee is an activity that improves students' writing skills. Vocabulary contests are activities that allow students to practice listening by hearing word definitions and then writing the definitions of the words on a sheet of paper. Speaking and poetry contests can also be applied. All these activities get the whole class involved.
- Competitions: There are many ways to create competitions. One way is to divide students into two groups. Two students from the two groups are in front of the board, they listen to the teacher's questions and write the answers. The first who finishes is the winner. Another idea to make a contest to paste some words on the class walls, and the students has to hear the teachers' questions and take the correct word from the walls. Many other ideas can be used to make competitions for example: ordering words, making sentences, classifying different words into nouns, verbs or adjectives and doing role play.

- Dividing students in groups: teachers should divide students in groups, name one coordinator for each group, so that he/she can control and monitor the group activities. In this kind of activity, teachers must choose the best way to organize seats, creating interactive situations.
- Working in pairs: during this activity, students can share different ideas, support one another and complete the team objectives. It is important to make instructions especially clear, to be in agreement of how and when to stop the activity.

Another useful activity in large classes is to use worksheets which are very helpful, not only to practice grammar and writing, but also for students to participate more individually. This material comes to bind pairs together in order to give a presentation or simply to practice some vocabulary. The teachers can succeed when doing this activity because they are able to advance in others tasks as well, like giving an oral test, or an oral exposition can take place during the class. Some students can be working on worksheets while others can be working on developing specific knacks (speaking, writing, listening and understanding), of course the ones they are behind on. In this way at least some students can advance in skills they are behind on and the lesson can be satisfactorily completed (Longman, 2008; Rocha, 2005).

In addition to activities mentioned above not only the writing activity is being developed but also the speaking ability. Firstly, speaking activities provide rehearsal opportunities-chances to practice real-life speaking in the safety of the classroom. Secondly, speaking tasks in which students try to use any or all of the languages they know provide feedback for both teacher and students. And finally, the more students have opportunities to activate the various elements of language they have stored in their brains, the more automatic their use of these elements becomes (Longman, 2008; Harmer, 2007; Rocha, 2005).

In fact, all of these activities should be emphasized to improve skills. Regarding this aspect, Harmer (2007) mentions that reading is useful for language acquisition. Provided that students more or less understand what they read, the more they read, the better they get at it. Reading also has a positive effect on students' vocabulary, on their spelling and on their writing which encourages students to focus on vocabulary, grammar or punctuation.

Harmer (2007) also explains that listening is good for our students' pronunciation too, in that the more they hear and understand what is being spoken, the more they absorb appropriate pitch and intonation, stress and the sounds of both individual words and those which blend together in connected speech. It is worth remembering that successful spoken communication depends not just on our ability to speak, but also on the effectiveness of the way we listen.

In this sense, activities such as: listening to the lyrics of songs and then writing these lyrics on a sheet of paper, also listening and reproducing some conversations would help pronunciation.

So, to make students participate and be involved in the class teachers can choose helpers to do different actions in the class, such as: giving notebooks, checking their classmates' work, and carrying out an activity before changing the topic. These helpers can be the most active students, in this way they do not have time to bother others, and instead they have work to do. The helper can be chosen according to his/her behavior; it can be considered a reward for all the effort in the class.

Consequently, English language teaching does not necessarily have to be locked-up in a classroom. It is beneficial to make good use of the surrounding environment to accomplish activities in a more attractive way.

Obviously students' feelings may change when working in and out of the class; in terms of their self-confidence, self – esteem, etc. Some of them will totally agree with this idea because they enjoy a change in the environment while others will not.

Classroom space and seating arrangement

The classroom arrangement is very important for the quality of learning and the teaching process. In regard to this, Zoltan and Murphy (2003) establish the flow of interaction and communication is greatly influenced by the spatial organization in which we operate daily. While teachers may have little choice as to the shape of the room, the available furniture and size and location of the windows, they usually have more options concerning the arrangement of the desks and chairs.

It means that teachers must arrange students in places where they can flourish, as well as improving their needs and weaknesses. Teachers should consider the size of the class before arranging it; when the classroom is big enough, it can contribute to the students' interaction with teachers and partners, if the classroom is too small, members may feel crowded and confined and avoid interaction.

In addition, choosing the right place where students will be sitting can also create a great link with teachers, allowing them to have contact and interact more with each other. Being in the right place can also encourage students to show leadership abilities or aptitudes that in other places they cannot show easily (Zoltan & Murphy, 2003).

A good seating arrangement is a great strategy to get students to rotate and move all around. Students can do physical activities as well which is great for learning. When all students rotate in the class, they can be benefited by the teaching and learning process.

Zoltan and Murphy (2003) suggest that there are many ways to arrange the classroom to consider:

- Orderly rows: seemingly not a good option, but it still has some advantages. One of them is that teachers are able to work with the whole class. Another is that the teacher has a good overview of the class.
- Circle and horseshoes: in a horseshoe the teacher will probably be near the board or the computer. In the circle the teacher will be at the board position.
- Separate tables: when the group is not too big, students can be sitting in separate tables and the teacher can be checking the activities one by one while the others keep working.
- Whole class: the objective of this arrangement is to create a sense of belonging to the group. On the other hand, this arrangement should not be used if individual contributions are needed to improve, because it can be quite difficult for the students to speak in front of a large class rather than exposing their ideas in a small class.

Taking into account the aspects explained previously, it can be concluded that depending on the conditions in which the class develops, it is vitally important to make the best use of space and organizing desks insofar, it allows the students to interact with the professor and to get the best benefit from the process of teaching – learning in large classes.

Different levels of proficiency

Teaching students of different levels sounds very hard, whether in small or large classes because working with this sort of heterogeneous groups demands a lot of preparation. In large classes, activities must be well organized taking into account a variety of learning styles and levels of knowledge. Additionally, students can get bored or tired if they feel that they are not advancing towards their goal (Leaver & Shekhtman, 2002; William, 1998).

Teaching different levels of proficiency has advantages and disadvantages. One advantage is that advanced students can be chosen as helpers or leaders to assist beginners; in this way, the objective of the class would be easily achieved.

Furthermore, advanced students work as a guide, helping the rest and correcting their mistakes. Teachers have the possibility to work first with the advanced students as an example for the beginners (Leaver & Shekhtman, 2002; William, 1998).

Another advantage for the tutor is that time is not misspent, higher-level students usually get information and instructions first, and then they can transmit it to the lower ones. It will permit teachers to continue with the class (Leaver & Shekhtman, 2002; William, 1998).

On the other hand, one disadvantage is the waste of learning time, while students who have a high level have already understood the contents of the lessons, and the others will need more time to get information (Leaver & Shekhtman, 2002; William, 1998).

Consequently, boredom and tiredness can show up with the students who have more knowledge and on the other side, it would be difficult for the students who know less; in this

case more time would be spent trying to make all the students understand (Leaver & Shekhtman, 2002; William, 1998).

The last disadvantage is the failure in the advance of teachers' planning. It occurs because the difference between student's levels and the teachers will not be able to achieve all their classroom objectives (Leaver & Shekhtman, 2002; William, 1998).

All the approaches discussed above are relevant aspects in the development of the learning and teaching process.

Finally, working with different levels of proficiency in large classes is a great challenge for teachers, not all of them have the ability to do it. It is important that teachers have a good predisposition and a lot of training in these types of classes to achieve any advance in students' learning, if not it would be really difficult and frustrating for both sides.

For instance, Rocha (2005) mentions that the purpose of this study was to know if task-based learning can be used to improve oral interaction among students, and how effective this method could be. Additionally, he tries to find out which way teachers can manage oral interaction in large groups while at the same time maximizing the opportunities for all students to have more learning that is effective.

This study was conducted in Isabella II School in Bogotá city, with seventh grade students and two teachers. There were seven steps followed within this research: to analyze the state of the art identifying the possible weaknesses found in the state of the art stage and some data collected in the different classes, becoming aware of a problem, the lack of oral interaction and the huge amount of students per class, formulating the problem, choosing a solution, it was to use task-based learning, planning, to make a plan and to consider the

methods to get data, finally, analyzing and reflecting on data collection in order to get the findings.

In this study, students had the opportunity to change their attitudes towards English language learning; at the beginning they were more interested in doing individual tasks such as writing compositions and reading after the task-based method application. They preferred to develop group and pair work activities. Finally, it should be pointed out that students became more interested in the foreign language and participated actively in the different stages of the tasks.

On the other hand, the main point of the second research Galton and Pell (2012) was to investigate if the reduction in classes helped to improve the quality of English teaching in the local context of Hong Kong. The government stated that most of the teachers' direct instruction was to get pupils to participate better, because participation is necessary to learn a new language.

This study was carried out over the course of three years, in which 37 voluntary primary schools and 720 teachers participated. Observation was the main method used during the time that the study took place, after the researcher followed the different grades that were involved in the process.

Moreover, parents were also involved in this study because they were asked about the kind of out of school learning support that they provided for their children and they were asked to fill out a questionnaire which also helped to ascertain the parents' economic situation.

One of the conclusions that they got after three years of observation was that students of small classes do not get more attention from the teacher than students in larger classes, and the most important reason to these findings is the use of group and pair work. The other reason was that students in smaller classes get more attention when they are representing a whole group; in large size classes, students have the teachers' attention as a part of the class.

According to their study, the quality of learning does not depend on the size of the class; it depends on how the lessons are taught, or how teachers carry out the class. Also, students can have different behavior depending on who is in charge of the class, because they react to their teachers' behavior as well.

For instance, Watson (2012) tried to find out if there is any relation between class size and learning, and, if so, what are these threshold levels. The purpose of this study was to understand the relationship between individual students' grades on formal courses and the size of the class for the courses.

His study examined the relationship between class size and learning for 984 classes of students ranging in size from 10 to 103 students for four fundamental English courses at a Thai university. The findings showed significant negative correlations between class sizes and grades, both for all students on all courses and for those who studied in very differently sized classes on different courses.

Furthermore, Blatchford, Bassett, Brown (2011) in their study aimed to clarify any possible effect on the larger term age during primary and secondary school and to see if low attaining pupils experienced more teaching in smaller classes. Systematic observations were carried out on 686 pupils in 49 schools. Multilevel regression methods were used to examine

relationships between class size and observation measures, controlling potentially confounding factors like pupil attainment. At primary and secondary levels smaller classes led to pupils receiving more individual attention from teachers, and having more active interactions with them.

As the most important conclusion of their study was that the size of the class affected the learning process, for example, in small classes students can learn more and gain confidence in what they are learning, since questions can be asked as many times as necessary, because teachers have enough time to emphasize one student's needs.

The purpose of the last analyzed study, Abioye (2010) was to find the difficulty to apply tests to large English classes and ways to interpret their results. It also emphasized the activities that should be done in the case when students get bad grades on their tests and it tried to find the proficiency of teachers in creating correct tests.

The study suggested methods of improving language testing in large classes through pragmatic techniques. It tasked the proficiency levels of English Language teachers especially in the area of testing and points out new paradigms in language testing particularly in large classes from the two perspectives of human and infrastructural development, and teacher empowerment and initiatives.

Teachers usually test the knowledge that has been taught; it is important to reflect strategies, methods and approaches in order that teachers and students benefit from these.

Method

Setting and participants

The selected sample consisted of 5 teachers and 175 students between 12 and 18 years old, these students are the ones that receive more hours of English classes. The field research took place in a Catholic private high school in the Chillos Valley, Quito. Classes in this private school vary in terms of size as the average number of students is from 30 to 35.

This study was characterized by male and female teenagers whose mother tongue was Spanish and who learned English as a foreign language.

Procedures

For the achievement of this study, several phases were carried out. The first phase involved the literature review. The bibliographic information contained topics such as class size, methods and approaches in the teaching-learning process.

Afterwards, in the review of the literature, it was required to write a letter to authorities of the high school in order to get permission for using a questionnaire for both teachers and students.

The questionnaire consisted of 21 questions related to instructional, social and physiological implications that large classes have on the teaching-learning process.

The qualitative and quantitative research methods were used. The qualitative research was used for the description of the data for the whole process. The quantitative method was used for numerical data concerning the teachers' and students' perception about teaching English in large classes.

In addition, interviews to teachers were carried out with the purpose to collect detailed information and experience in the process of teaching and learning English in large classes. Direct class observations were carried out too.

The last phase was the analysis, tabulating data and description of the results. Next, the information was triangulated, supported and contrasted with the information of the literature review, observation classes and interviews.

Discussion

Description, analysis, and interpretation of results

This section presents qualitative and quantitative analysis of the instructional, social and psychological inferences that large classes have on the teaching – learning process. For this study, a private Catholic high school was selected as a sample. The random sample was composed of 5 teachers and 175 students between 12 and 18 years old.

This section intends to analyze, interpret and describe the influence of large classes in the English teaching-learning process in a private school in The Chillos Valley-Quito.

Quantitative and qualitative analysis

Instructional Implications

What instructional implications do large classes have on the teaching-learning

process?

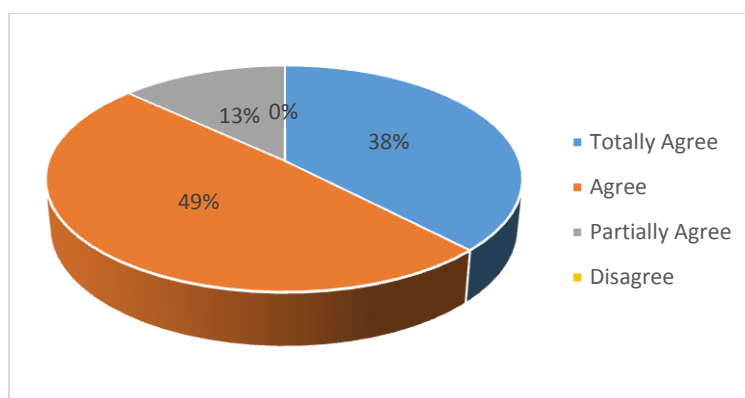
Table N° 1

No.	Instructional Implications	Totally agree		Agree		Partially agree		Disagree		Total	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Activities done to help students apply what they learn in class.	66	38	86	49	23	13	0	0	175	100
2	Activities done to allow the development of listening, speaking, reading and writing skills.	49	28	86	49	36	21	4	2	175	100
3	Students are attentive and participate in class activities, including those sitting at the back of the classroom.	14	8	65	37	84	48	12	7	175	100
4	Varied class activities are used, such as group, individual and pair-work.	91	52	69	39	14	8	1	1	175	100
5	Activities such as role	34	19	62	35	54	31	25	14	175	100

	play, competitions, debate and games are used in class.										
6	Students can cheat during the test.	30	17	25	14	60	34	60	34	175	100
7	Students can do assignments of other subjects.	13	7	33	19	61	35	68	39	175	100
8	The seating arrangement facilitates the tasks that are carried out in class.	79	45	68	39	24	14	4	2	175	100
9	Students cannot receive Regular feedback from the teacher due to the large number of students.	30	17	38	22	52	30	55	31	175	100

Question 1: The activities done in class help students apply what they learn in class.

Graph 1



Author: Diana Cevallos

Source: Student's questionnaire

Graph 1 shows that 87% of the students *totally agree* with the activities done in class while 49% of the students *agree*. Thirteen percent marked *partially agree* which represents 23 students. There were no students who marked the option *disagree*.

Taking into consideration the highest percentage, the students declared that the activities done in class are useful for the learning process and help them to apply their knowledge in actual linguistic exchange. Some of the observed activities, such as listening to music and role-playing, led pupils to practice some of the subject matter explained during class. These

activities help them to practice the skills of listening, speaking and writing in an enjoyable manner.

According to the students' point of view, they felt frustrated because they were unable to understand instructions well enough and could not use proper communication. Time and the pupil's frustration were disadvantages which did not allow them to achieve their full potential and they did not help teachers get students involved in the activities.

Regarding activities in class, some of the students featured a welcoming attitude towards the experience to practice more positive interactions with others, while the rest lost interest with ease. Shul (2012) and Kagan (1990) state that teachers should use group learning activities focused on dependent and in social exchange of information in order to increase motivation.

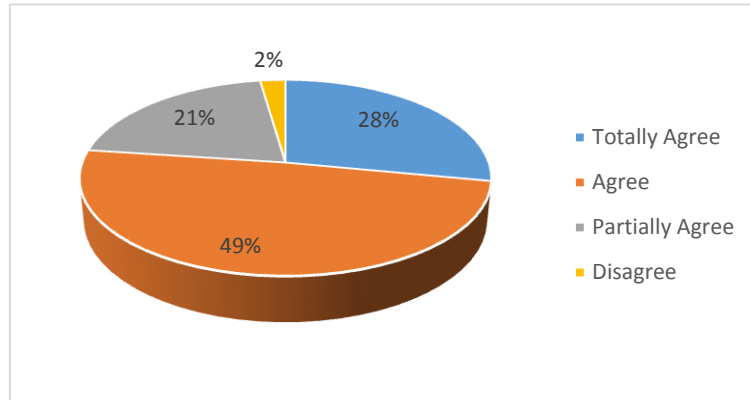
In the observed class, the cooperative learning method was used but when learners had to work in groups, there usually was a participant who knew better than their peers, and thus the group made sure that individual did most of the activities.

The group activities were clearly structured in such a way that allowed the practice of the four skills. However, there are other elements that work against the interaction of all students, such as: the short class period, the high number of students and the different levels of proficiencies. At the end, students practiced the content they were learning during the class, but this practice was not enough for them to use this knowledge as a foreign language.

Taking into consideration teachers' role, they used different methods and approaches in their classes, but they do not distinguish conceptually. Most of the time, they followed their planning according to the activities in the book.

Question 2: The activities done allow the development of listening, speaking, reading and writing skills.

Graph 2



Author: Diana Cevallos

Source: Student's questionnaire

The second question ponders if the activities done in class allow students to develop and practice all the skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Graph 2 reveals that 77% of students developed the four skills *agree* and *totally agree*; the 21% *partially agree*, while the 2% *disagree*.

This is a positive result since it states that over three fourths of the sample feels they are both learning and improving their skills. Consequently, all the observed activities done to improve the four skills were significant, but it was still difficult for the teacher to keep track and help all the students. Speaking was the most difficult skill to engage students in because as the teacher was checking pronunciation of one of the groups, the rest got easily distracted.

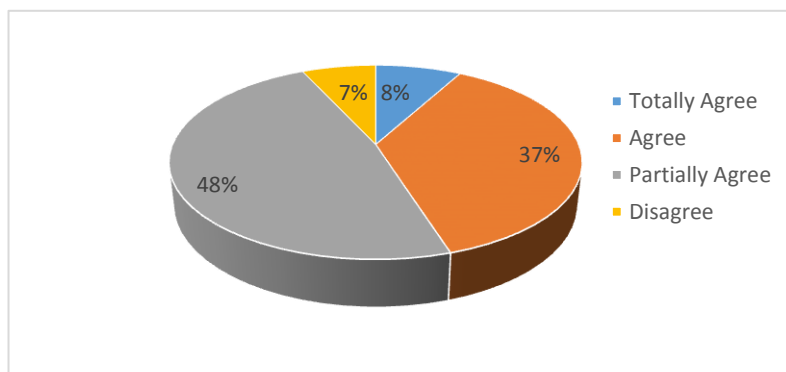
Regarding speaking activities in class, Savignon (1997) and Richards (2006) explain that students tend to use Spanish to communicate with each other while doing written tasks.

In contrast, it was found that teachers were interested and dedicated during the activities. They were sure to assist everyone as often they could, as soon as they could.

However, it was obvious that due to the high number of students, teachers were unable to keep track of them all and a few were left out during the writing and speaking projects thus not being able to receive feedback due, as well, to the shortness of the course.

Question 3: Students are attentive and participate in class activities, including those sitting at the back of the classroom.

Graph 3



Author: Diana Cevallos

Source: Student's questionnaire

The third question asks if students are attentive and participate in class activities, especially those sitting at the back of the classroom. For them, it is sometimes difficult to be attentive and participate.

Graph 3 shows that 45% of the students *agree* and *totally agree* with the statement, while the 48% *partially agree* and the 7% of them *disagree* in its entirety.

While observing the students, they were able to choose their seats everyday as they saw fit, and the teachers did not mind. This situation was not convenient for the learning process because if students are given the opportunity to choose their seats, they will prefer to be seated near their friends to jabber about everything except the content which does not contribute to their learning achievement. Even the students from High school knew that sitting

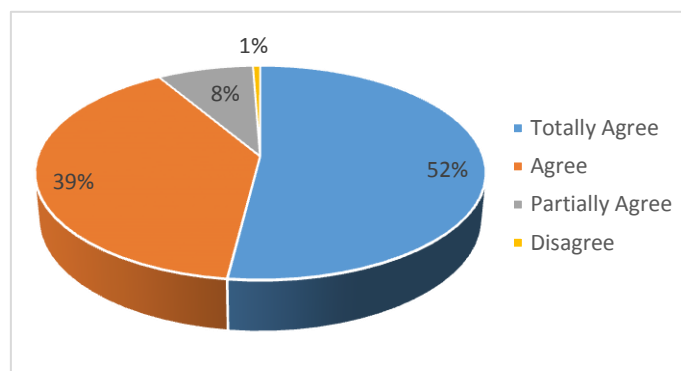
at the back was not beneficial for their learning they preferred to do it anyway. In fact, some of them looked comfortable and quiet, since they knew the teacher's attention was not going to be on them and as a result revealed poor participation.

Furthermore, it was very noticeable that students sitting at the back had problems such as an inability to distinguish words on the board and they took longer performing tasks. Also little assistance from teachers was seen for the students at the back; teachers tried to aid them, but since they didn't ask any questions, teachers were unable to realize they were struggling and continued class.

Regarding students participation in class activities, it is necessary that the teachers manage the seating arrangements because it is very difficult for the students at the back to ask for and receive individual attention as it may seem impossible to organize dynamic and creative teaching and learning sessions. Moreover, the placement of chairs and desks exerts significant influence upon the student who occupy them, the patterns of participation, various leadership opportunities and the affective potential of group members (Harmer, 2007; Zoltan & Murphey, 2003).

Question 4: Varied class activities are used, such as group, individual, pair-work, etc.

Graph 4



Author: Diana Cevallos

Source: Student's questionnaire

The fourth question was made to verify if activities such as group, individual, and pair-work activities were used; Graph 4 reveals that 91% of students use a type of these activities *agree* and *totally agree* manner, the 8% of them *partially agree* and just the 1% *disagree*.

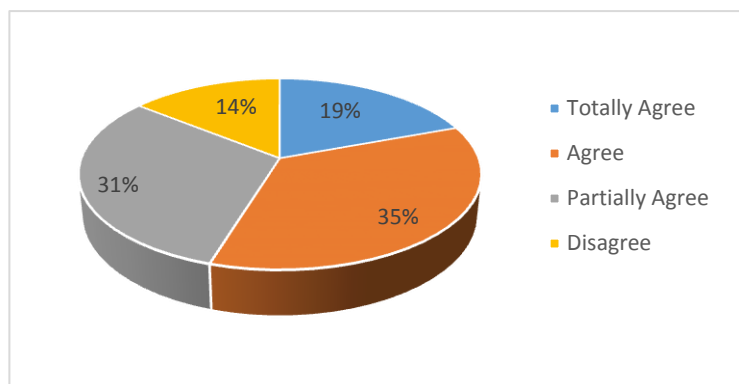
Therefore, in large classes such as the ones being analyzed, it is necessary to perform these activities in order to take full advantage of student participation. In these classes teachers were actively applying both activities to improve language level and academic performance from the students. The mentioned activities were also applied to facilitate the teacher's work and optimize the time of the lesson. Teachers divided the class in 5 groups of 7 students; usually the best learner was the one leading the group, teachers walked around the class controlling everybody's work and assisting learners in any problem or doubt they had.

According to the experiences, in large classes, pair work and group work play an important role, because they maximize pupils' participation. When using these kinds of activities, the teacher must give clear instructions, and agree how to stop the activity. Pair work and group work were significant tools as it was clearly seen that students felt comfortable and enjoyed the tasks (Schul, 2012; Harmer, 2007).

Although the teachers were involved in various class activities and gave their best effort, the results were poor, ineffective, and the students' progress was disappointing because they lacked participation. Since they were only able to form few ideas and words, they doubted their ability to render their tasks appropriately.

Question 5: Activities such as role play, competitions, debates, games, etc., are used in class.

Graph 5



Author: Diana Cevallos

Source: Student's questionnaire

In the fifth question, concerning the use of role-play, competitions, debates and games in class, Graph 5 shows that 54% of students *agree* and *totally agree*, the 31% of them *partially agree* and just the 14% *disagree*.

It was very noticeable that these activities were developed in class because the students knew certain procedures and rules related. In addition, they identified the abilities of acting and mime that some of them showed during role-play.

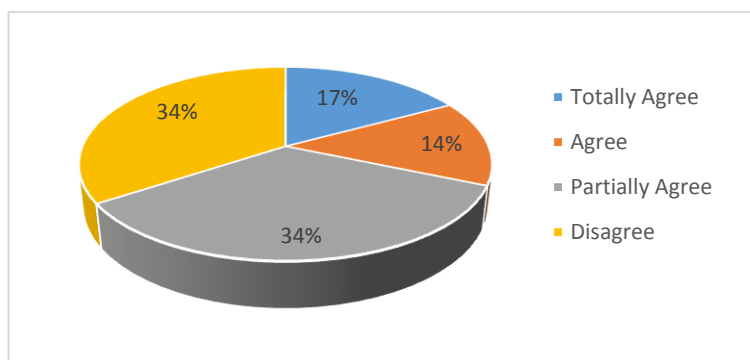
Referring to the competitions, they were made by some teachers at the beginning of classes. Unfortunately, competitions did not last long and poor intervention for all students was observed. The competitions were not performed as often as necessary to strengthen and

consolidate the knowledge in the students because some factors such as the limited time, and the teaching plans which must be fulfilled in the educational system (Johnson, 2009; Rocha, 2005).

Cooperative learning principles and techniques are tools that teachers must use to encourage mutual helpfulness in groups and the active participation of all members. These useful techniques help students to improve their accomplishment in the class (Schul, 2012; Johnson, 2009; Harmer, 2007; Johnson and Johnson, 1996).

Question 6: Students can cheat during the test.

Graph 6



Author: Diana Cevallos

Source: Student's questionnaire

Graph 6 shows that most of the students answered *partially agree* and *disagree* to the assumption that in large classes cheating is allowed during tests.

Meanwhile this graph reflects that 31% of students considered it was quite possible to cheat in class.

The classes analyzed were made up of thirty-five students, a quantity that makes this class to be considered a large one. Anyways the students could not easily cheat because the

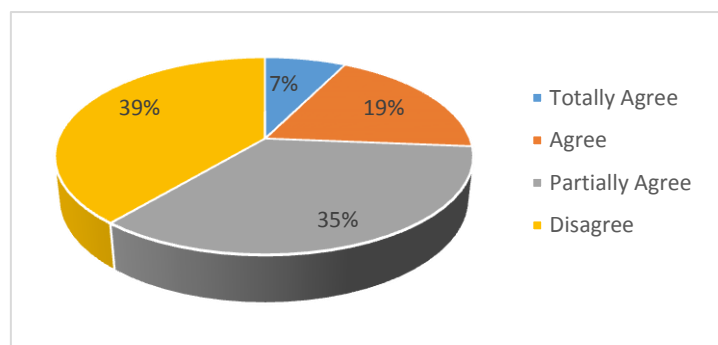
space between tables was big enough and teachers could move around checking what students were doing during a test or a task.

On the other hand, students have established principles and moral values which have been developed during the time they have been in this place since it is a Catholic school; the authorities were very interested in inculcating students with some moral values. This refers to the character and temperament of the students, having been formed under other items in the disciplinary issue, so they were more respectful in class.

Finally, the researcher can establish that cheating is not only a matter of principle-moral values, it also refers to the teachers' support and control to students every single day.

Question 7: Students can do assignments of other subjects.

Graph 7



Author: Diana Cevallos

Source: Student's questionnaire

The seventh question aims to find out if students can get distracted doing assignments of other subjects during English lessons. Graph 7 shows that only the 26% of students *totally agree* and *agree* that it was possible to work on other tasks from different subjects during the English classes, the 35% of the students *partially agree* and the highest percentage (39%) of them *disagree*.

This question shows that most of the students are conscious about the importance of the English contents for their life and for their academic report, thus they respect the rules and avoid working on a different task during their English classes.

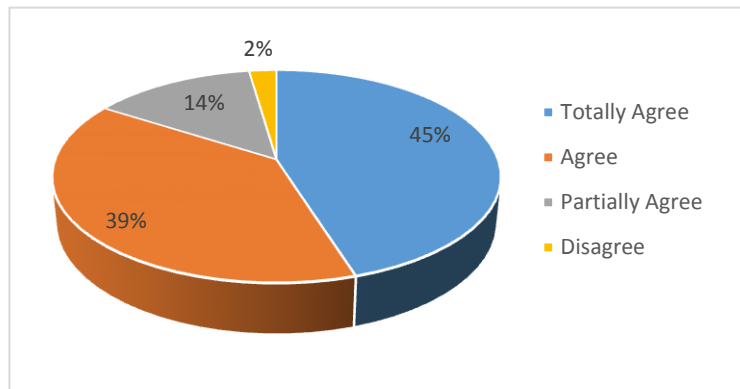
Furthermore, students will not be distracted by developing activities other than English, since at some point of the lesson the teacher asks them to continue with the activities that are being conducted which can be: continuing reading, going to the board, or answering a question. Thus students are forced to concentrate only on their English lessons.

Besides, in this high school, there are some specific classrooms only for the English subjects so students must move from one room to another and they only take their required materials. Another reason that impedes the realization of different tasks during the English lessons is that the classrooms are big and have enough space for the teachers to walk around and control their pupils.

It is worth mentioning that teachers consider when they have time, they check whether the materials that are brought to the class belong to the English subject. In addition, they think that when materials are not checked out it is more difficult for the students to perform the activities in class.

Question 8: The seating arrangement facilitates the tasks that are carried out in class.

Graph 8



Author: Diana Cevallos

Source: Student's questionnaire

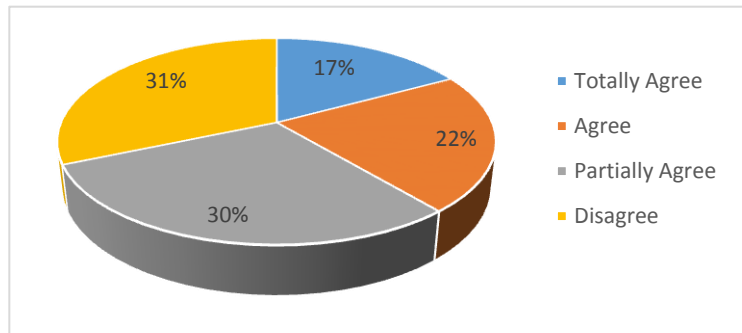
The question about seating arrangements of the class and if it facilitates the tasks that are carried out in class (Graph 8) shows these results: 84% of students *totally agree* and *agree* because they expressed that seating arrangements facilitates assignments, while 14% of them *partially agree* and the lowest percentage (2%) *disagree*.

Although at high school there was ample space to organize the seating arrangement as the teachers preferred, the chairs were placed in rows. Teachers have the faculty to arrange the classrooms, but they don't usually change it.

Therefore, the place where a student sits and the arrangement are important factors which contribute to the learning process, because the placement of chairs and desks exerts significant influence upon the status of the student, the patterns of participation, various leadership opportunities and the effective potential of group members (Zoltan and Murphey, 2003).

Question 9: Students cannot receive regular feedback from the teacher due to the large number of students.

Graph 9



Author: Diana Cevallos

Source: Student's questionnaire

The last question of this section was used to find out if students cannot receive regular feedback from the teacher due to the large class. Graph 9 shows that 39% of students *totally agree* and *agree*, 30% of them *partially agree* and that a major percentage (31%) *disagree*.

A major difficulty in teaching large classes is finding ways to provide feedback. Moreover, to give a significant feedback to all the students in the lessons teachers have to consider some class features like: the context of their learning style, interest, family's support, background of students and the intended learning outcomes of the course. Only in this way they might provide the appropriate feedback.

Probably a factor that directly affects the provision of feedback is the limited time teachers have to do it because the activities presented in the lesson plan must be performed as they were established.

Therefore, in high school feedback was not the main issue in the class, during the observed classes it was clearly evident that students lacked good feedback even though they think they had.

Due to the number of classes teachers are teaching, 3 to 5 per day, which have big numbers of students up to 35, teachers have less opportunity to assess and evaluate their students' work and achievement, discuss their problems or provide any useful and constructive feedback.

Students in large classes receive less individual attention and that leads to dissatisfaction among them especially the weak ones. Providing feedback to learners on their performance is a very important aspect of teaching, it can be either positive or negative and may serve not only to let learners know how well they have performed but also to increase motivation and build a supportive classroom climate (Watson, 2012; Rocha, 2005).

Social Implications

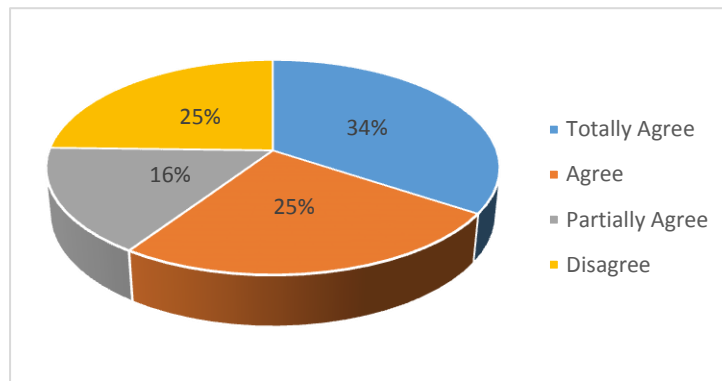
What social implications do large classes have on the teaching-learning process?

Table N° 2

No.	Social implications	Totally agree		Agree		Partially agree		Disagree		Total	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
10	There is an interaction between students and also between teachers and students in class.	60	34	44	25	28	16	43	25	175	100
11	Students have the opportunities to interact with others.	77	44	68	39	26	15	4	2	175	100
12	The teacher does not remember the name of all of the students.	33	19	48	27	42	24	52	30	175	100
13	The environment in the class is less stressful because there is less probability that the teacher asks the same pupil more than once.	48	27	70	40	36	21	21	12	175	100
14	Students can use cell phones or any other technological supply without the teacher realizing it.	10	6	37	21	55	31	73	42	175	100

Question 10: There is an interaction between teachers and students in class.

Graph 10



Author: Diana Cevallos

Source: Student's questionnaire

This question regarding interaction among students and also between teachers and pupils, Graph 10 shows that 59% of students *totally agree and agree*, 16% of them *partially agree* while the 25% *disagree*.

Therefore, the highest result showed that students believe there is interaction between teachers and students. During observation, it was seen that students were able to make questions and ask for explanations.

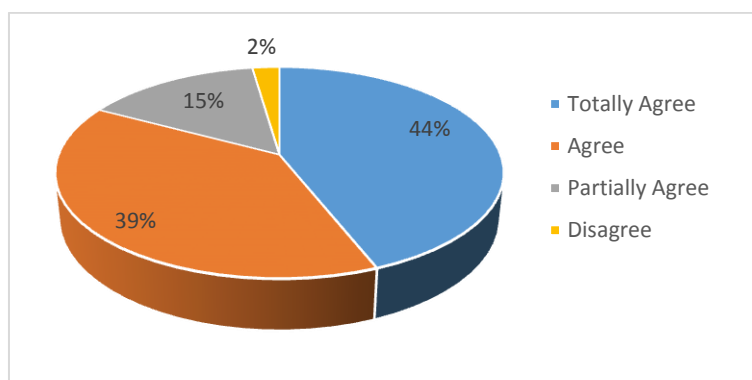
Besides that, interaction is such an important point when carrying out a class, so a teacher's attitude and character are significant factors to get students attention and promote an interactive class.

As a matter of fact, in the observed classes, the Communicative Learning Teaching method was applied; students did not feel as they were treated as clients and teachers were treated as counselors. This evidence allows students to trust teachers and let a good interaction flow (Mejia, 2008; Richards, 2006; Savignon, 1997).

In the observed classes, interaction between the teacher and the students grow naturally; teachers from high school said that they sometimes reward students because of any effort that they show during lessons. They believe that rewards can be granted according to the number of students and the activities done in class, in this way, students will feel motivated to continue interacting during the lessons.

Question 11: Students have the opportunities to interact with others.

Graph 11



Author: Diana Cevallos

Source: Student's questionnaire

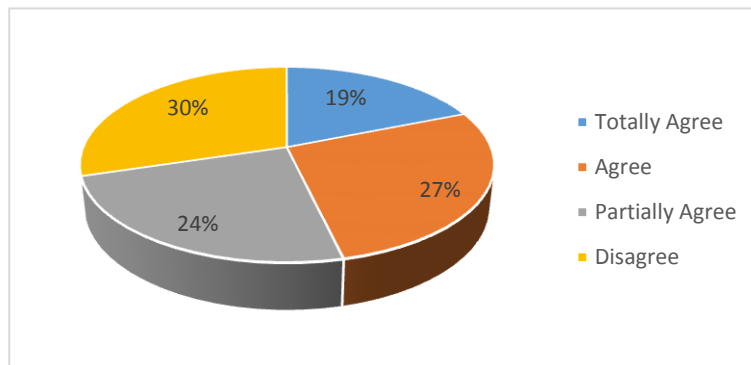
Analyzing question eleven, that describes the opportunity students have to meet or interact with other peers, Graph 11 shows that 83% of students *totally agree* and *agree*, 15% of them *partially agree* and 2% of students believe that they do not have any opportunity to share with other peers.

The biggest group of students state that it is easy to get good relationships when working in pairs or small groups during the lessons. These groups of students felt they had many ways to interact with each other, but there were some shy students who preferred to remain silent and not interact like other peers. Also, it was observed that in some cases, students who got a higher level helped the ones who had lower levels to produce the language.

It can be said that interaction among students would be one of the best activity developed in large classes, and a great help for the teachers to advance in the lessons, as well as the students' speaking skills.

Question 12: The teacher does not remember the name of all of the students.

Graph 12



Author: Diana Cevallos

Source: Student's questionnaire

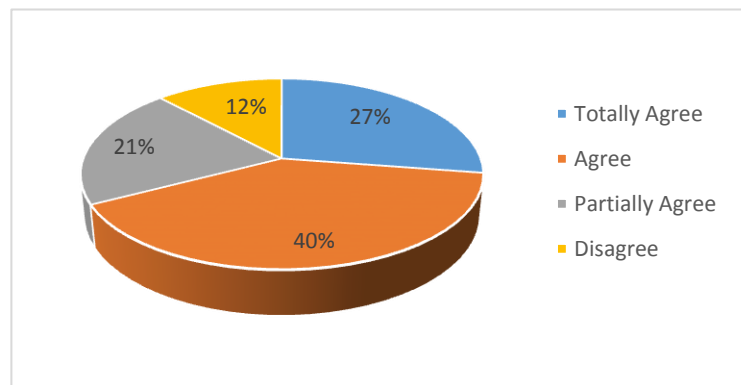
In large classes, it is difficult for teachers to remember all of students' names, so Graph 12 shows these results: 46% of students *totally agree* and *agree*, the 24% of students *partially agree* and 30% of them *disagree*.

As the research showed, most of the students said that it was hard for their teachers to remember their names; teachers could remember the easiest names; the ones that were not difficult to pronounce and the most common. The names that were remembered belonged to the students who participated more in class because they were the ones who raised their hands several times to express their ideas or give some answers.

The researcher recommends applying a technique that consists of elaborate cards with the students' names and putting them in each table, so the teacher can see these cards at the time to manage the class activities.

Question 13: The environment in the class is less stressful because there is less probability that the teacher questions the same pupil more than once.

Graph 13



Author: Diana Cevallos

Source: Student's questionnaire

On question thirteen regarding the environment, it is less stressful because there are fewer possibilities that the teacher would ask the same student several times, Graph 13 shows: 67% of students *totally agree* and *agree*; the 21% of them *partially agree*, while just the 12% *disagree*.

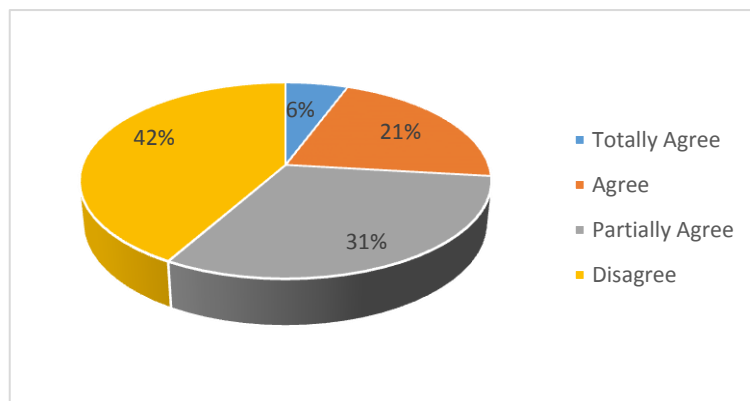
It was observed that students felt calm because they believed it was not possible to be asked multiple times but they also knew that the teacher usually emphasize their attention on the ones that managed the language better and it made the environment of the class less stressful.

Therefore, teachers motivated all the students to participate and work during the lessons by asking them at different times, but tutors could not stop to make everybody participate, most of the time learners were writing, or working on their books.

Finally, time was used wisely and most of the students could develop their tasks, so when teachers were asking questions, different pupils gave the answers. The educators realized which of the learners were not participating and so asked them questions on purpose.

Question 14: *Students can use the cell phone or any other technological supply without the teacher realizing it.*

Graph 14



Author: Diana Cevallos

Source: Student's questionnaire

Respecting this question, Graph 14 shows that 27% of students said that they can use the cellphone without teachers realizing it and that it is possible to use a device; 31% of the pupils *agree* that it was impossible to use any device without the teacher realizing it, and 42% of the class mentioned that it was not possible to use any device.

Another important fact to mention is about using technology in class. Today, technology is part of a student's life; therefore, they would like to use their cell phones or any other technological supplies in class because these advanced technologies are great tools to aid them in class.

The largest percentage of the students were conscientious that in class, they hardly ever used their cell phones or any other electronic device without the teacher noticing it because

the school policies were valued and shown by the them, as they knew that using technological gadgets were not allowed.

Technology is quite important as long as teachers control its usage and depending on the way the students do it; although they take advantage of it by improving their knowledge, it is important not to abuse the practice of this advanced equipment. So, teachers have to control the use of cell phones, laptops, tablets, television and Internet.

Physiological Implications

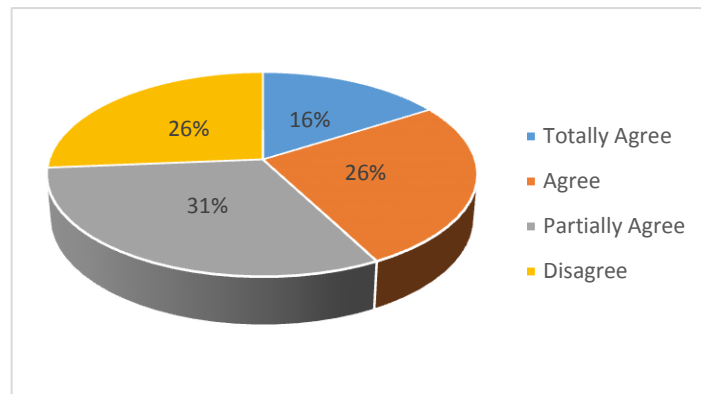
What physiological implications do large classes have on the teaching -learning process?

Table N° 3

No.	Psychological Implications	Totally agree		Agree		Partially agree		Disagree		Total	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
15	The environment is stressful.	28	16	46	26	55	31	46	26	175	100
16	Students do not feel good when they have to talk in front of their classmates.	26	15	51	29	60	34	38	22	175	100
17	Students have fewer opportunities to express themselves in class.	18	10	49	28	54	31	54	31	175	100
18	Students do not like to participate in class because they feel shy.	91	52	69	39	14	8	1	1	175	100
19	The teacher does not pay attention in the same way to all of the students.	24	14	57	33	39	22	55	31	175	100
20	Students feel they can compete fairly with the others.	71	41	72	41	28	16	4	2	175	100
21	Students feel relaxed because they can be unnoticed.	35	20	56	32	58	33	26	15	175	100

Question 15: The environment is stressful.

Graph 15



Author: Diana Cevallos

Source: Student's questionnaire

This question is about if the environment was stressful. Graph 15 shows that 43% of students *totally agree* and *agree*, 31% *partially agree* because they expressed that the environment sometimes was stressful and just 26% of them *disagree* because they said that environment was stressful.

A big group of students believed that the environment was not stressful because they felt kind of comfortable in the classroom. Interaction, participation and willingness to work, were some of the attitudes perceived by them. Even though these were large classes, the environment did not seem to be totally stressful.

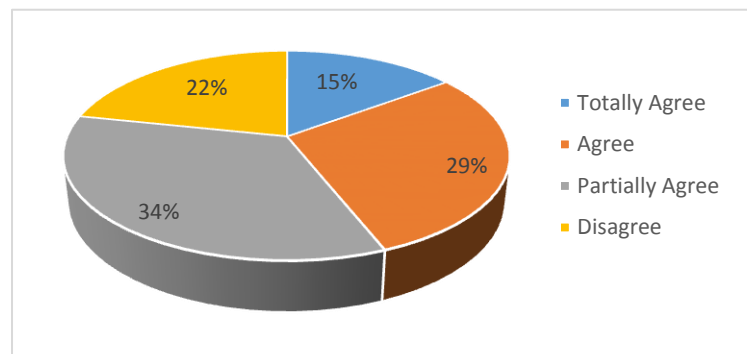
The students that felt stressed explained that it was produced because of the way the teacher handles the class, the activities they do and also because of the space and seating arrangement. When teachers are able to control all of these aspects, the class is carried out in a natural way or at least it is less stressful.

During direct class observations, teachers from the high school applied a motivated activity which is why the periods were not too stressful. Teachers were aware that pupils felt stressed when they had to do a difficult activity because they were uncomfortable throughout the activity. Large classes can cause the same effect on students who do not like to stay in crowded groups; the noise and the pressure are aspects that can increase the stress level of students.

Regarding the environment in the classroom, Merino (2012) says that a correct warm up in the class can help students not only to get involved in the subject, but also to feel comfortable and to attract students' attention in the lessons. Anyway, teachers from high school admitted that making students exercise like moving their bodies would be an excellent activity to decrease stress, but in this high school this action did not happen very often.

Question 16: Students do not feel good when they have to talk in front of others.

Graph 16



Author: Diana Cevallos

Source: Student's questionnaire

Question sixteen regarding if the students do not feel good when they have to talk in front of others. Graph 16 shows these results: 44% *totally agree* and *agree*; 34% of them *partially agree* and 22% *disagree*. Consequently, practicing public speaking during the class can be very embarrassing for most of the students.

In fact, it was observed that, students seemed to be shy, and only a few of them made some questions related to the interview. The teachers explained that making students speak in front of their peers is a challenge because they usually feel nervous and get speechless when they are asked to face these situations.

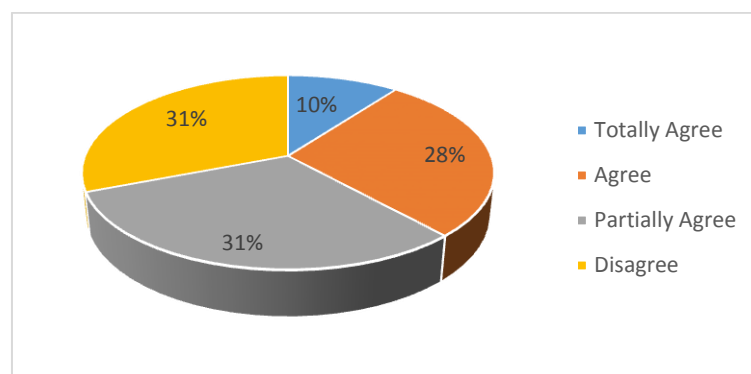
Additionally, teachers mentioned that they were conscious that learners who fear public speaking visualize their upcoming speaking opportunities as big failures. They see themselves feeling clumsy, becoming mute, turning red and possibly crying.

Professors also state that the most difficult task for their students to perform in large classes is oral presentations because they are usually shy.

Sometimes, when the students had to talk in front of others they felt unsure about words and they asked their partners for the meaning or pronunciation; they really felt stressful and nervous while speaking in public (Merino, 2012).

Question 17: Students have fewer opportunities to express in class.

Graph 17



Author: Diana Cevallos

Source: Student's questionnaire

Due to the number of the students in the class, it can be harder for everyone to express their ideas, as shown by the figures in this chart. Graph 17 shows that 38% of students *totally agree* and *agree*; 31% of them *partially agree* and 31% *disagree*.

One of the reasons that made it difficult for teachers to give all students the opportunities to express their ideas was that professors had a planning chronogram and a determinate time to follow in each class period.

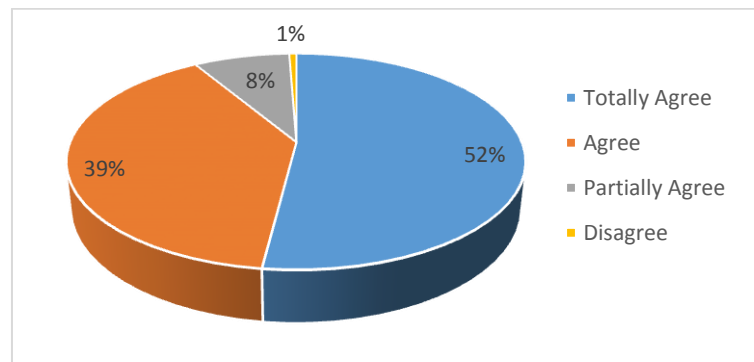
Also, it is very significant to mention that the environment of the class is a significant opportunity for talkative students because they take part in developing concepts and improving their knowledge showing more participation than the others. In contrast, students that hardly speak have few opportunities to participate, maybe because they feel unsure about their knowledge or they might feel shy.

Students' personality plays a significant role in participation in front of others. Learners that manage the language and trust themselves will not have much trouble to give a good speech or express their ideas easily but learners that do not manage the language well will not be able to face these kinds of situations.

The observation showed that teachers gave the opportunity to their pupils to speak and use the language properly, but it was quite difficult because not all of the students were capable of doing it. Students did not feel comfortable, in fact some of them felt clumsy so, they preferred to be silent.

Question 18: Students do not like to participate in class because they feel shy.

Graph 18



Author: Diana Cevallos

Source: Student's questionnaire

Question eighteen intended to find out if students do not like to participate because they feel shy. Graph 18 shows that 91% of students *totally agree* and *agree*; 8% of them *partially agree* and just 1% *disagrees*.

The investigated school counted that outgoing and talkative students in some situations, used English; but when they felt observed by a different person than their teacher, obviously, they did not feel confident and they preferred to look around the class and not to speak. When teachers asked them to express their ideas, few of them took the challenge. At least they tried to speak while the majority did not express themselves. They mixed English and Spanish words to show their ideas; they also spoke in their native language, but using an English intonation.

When students are shy, they feel pressured or are worried during social encounters their speaking skills can be affected in a negative way, thus these students try to avoid public speaking.

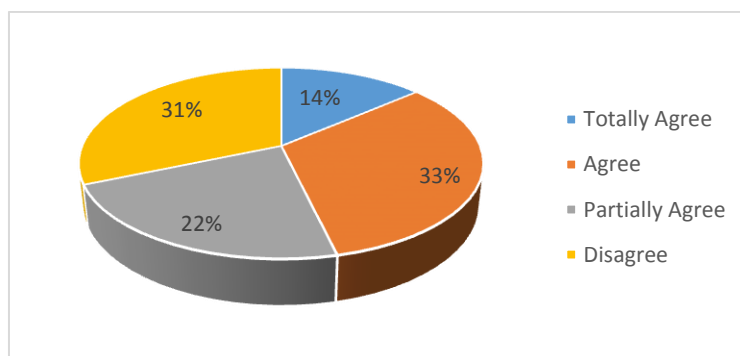
In reference to shyness, Merino (2012) argues that many learners may have physical symptoms like blushing, sweating, a beating heart or an upset stomach. When students are forced to practice public speaking, they fear or worry about how others would see them and the mistakes they will make, causing students to feel stress.

To confront the feeling of shyness, teachers must use significant tools to develop precise activities to improve students' confidence and express their ideas spontaneously in the class.

Regarding this topic, teachers said that sometimes they report to other professionals (physiologist, inspectors or tutors) about this issue in order to find more and different strategies to help their pupils reduce their shyness and prompt progress to a superior level.

Question 19: The teacher does not pay attention in the same way to all of the students.

Graph 19



Author: Diana Cevallos

Source: Student's questionnaire

Attention given to students by teachers depends on different factors; one of them is the large amount of students in a class. In question nineteen, this research tried to find out if the teacher does not pay attention in the same way to all the students; to this concern, Graph 19 shows that 47% of students *totally agree* and *agree*; 22% *partially agree* and 31% of them *disagree*.

It is difficult to specify if a teacher's attention is dedicated in the same way to all of the students, but more attention should be given to those who have problems and find learning the language difficult.

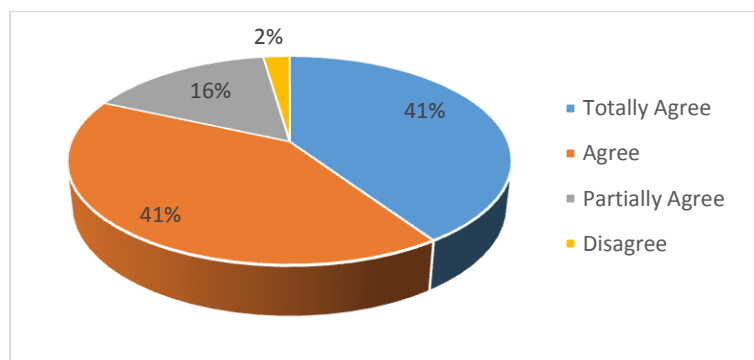
Teachers state that large classes hinder the learning process and make it boring and less productive because, as there is not enough time, they could not do what they would like to. They cannot answer all students' questions and it is difficult for them to make students interested in the contents. It also affects students because they feel frustrated when they cannot advance, so they are worried about their grades instead of their learning.

In the observed classes, attention and good disposition were exposed from teachers to students, questions and doubts were solved as fast as they could, these actions showed that the educators were compromised with their profession and with the students' progress.

The researcher recommends that the activities must be well organized and planned, even when the teachers understand the strengths and weaknesses of each students, good planning will help them and improve the teaching learning process (Longman, 2008).

Question 20: Students feel they can compete fairly with the others.

Graph 20



Author: Diana Cevallos

Source: Student's questionnaire

One of the advantages of studying in large classes is that competition takes place; but it depends on the teachers' rules and how these rules are carried out. This question refers to the competitiveness between the students, and the way they can compete fairly with others. Graph 20 shows the following results: the highest percentage (82%) reflected that students can compete fairly, respecting each other, while the two lowest percentages (16% and 2%) of pupils considered that competition was not so fair and not fair respectively.

Therefore, most of the students observed competed fairly and enjoyed these activities in class. Some principal values that were taught in primary school had helped them to learn what respect is and how to show their knowledge by competing. Some students said that other classmates had less trouble learning the language. Additionally, they said that the teachers were always advising to show correct behavior during the few competitions they proposed in class.

Obviously competitions were not a daily activity in fact; they were not a common practice during the class. Teachers commented that the authorities do not totally agree with struggles because they think students are not really improving any aspect of their learning.

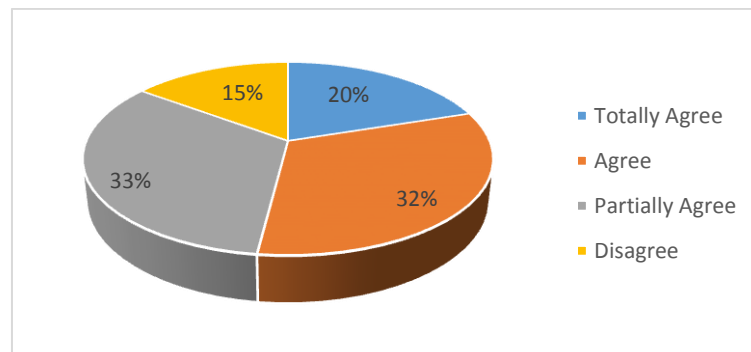
The authorities said that they were just wasting time and causing inconveniences to other classes by making too much noise, so the educators were trying to convince some authorities that it would be a great activity and a tool to encourage students' interest in learning the language, as well as managing discipline using different strategies.

Also, teachers said that they would like to establish a fun and fairly competitive atmosphere within the class, by dividing the class into two teams or more depending on the type of competition and the number of students. Changing the teams once in a while or

leaving them the same throughout the year. Teams can win points for certain accomplishments and lose points if noise and behavior causes problems, not only during the competition but also during the classes.

Question 21: Students feel relaxed because they can be unnoticed.

Graph 21



Author: Diana Cevallos

Source: Student's questionnaire

The last question finds out if students feel relaxed because they can go unnoticed, which happens a lot in large classes. Graph 21 shows that 52% of students *totally agree* and *agree*; 33% *partially agree* and 15% of them *disagree*.

Students could not go unnoticed, although the classes had a considerable number of students, because teachers made different activities for the interaction of all of them, at least one time during the lessons. Perhaps they felt unnoticed when working in groups because in most of the cases, only the one who represented them had the opportunity to explain in front of the class and talk directly to the teachers.

Undoubtedly, being unnoticed in a class can make some students feel relaxed; but they do not realize the disadvantages that it brings for their progress. In these situations, the researcher recommends combining the communicative and cooperative learning methods

(Richards, 2006; Nunan, 2003; Omaggio, 2001; Seifert and Sutton, 2009; Zhang and January, 2010) for giving all the students an opportunity to take part in the activities.

Conclusions

This research shows that a large class affects the teaching learning process, but not in a significant way because the majority of the students in this private high school could develop activities in which they had the opportunity to apply what they have learnt in class and put into practice the four skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Teachers considered that one limitation of working with large classes is the notion that most of the students did not have the opportunity to receive regular feedback because of these three principal factors: the large number of students, the lack of interest of students, and the time devoted to English classes.

In spite of the size of the class, this study shows that the environment created between teachers and students was beneficial for the teaching learning process, whereby there were no negative social inferences.

Although teachers worked on participation and interaction with students to get more self-confidence and interest from them in the target language, students still felt shy and awkward while speaking, this was the negative psychological implication demonstrated throughout this research.

Students from the observed classes thought that they could go unnoticed; however, the teachers believed that they were not unnoticed because they usually asked their pupils to participate at any moment. By doing this, the teacher forced them to pay attention during the complete lesson so that the students would not distract themselves.

Recommendations

Teachers must move students around the class, this way the ones from last rows are not always the same. That allows all pupils to take part in the different activities organized in the classroom.

Teachers must try to reduce boredom, inattention, tiredness and they have to make the class a wonderful place, applying class techniques such as: work based on role play, speaking games, competitions and debates more than other skills that allow students to be less shy.

In order to have good feedback, teachers must produce an interactive model of a teaching-learning process where there is a lot of interaction between teachers and students and among classmates in the form of pair and group work.

This research suggests that teachers are to be flexible and adventurous by using various teaching strategies, detecting problems created by large classes, identifying their students' needs and then gear (modeling) teaching to overcome the problem.

It also recommends using competitions properly in large classes because they are a great tactic to make students forget about their shyness allowing them to get confident with teachers and classmates.

Different activities related to speaking skills should be applied several times during the class; this way students would create a habit of speaking and would feel confident when speaking in front of other students, as language fluency memory connection would be established.

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Annex 2. Chart of Studies

Title of the study :		
Citation in APA format:		
Item	Information	Form N° _____
Research question(s), objectives, or hypothesis:		
Subject or participants:		
Setting or place:		
Methods:		
Results:		
Limitations identified by the author(s):		

Annex 3. Teachers' Interviews



UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA PARTICULAR DE LOJA

La Universidad Católica de Loja

MODALIDAD ABIERTA Y A DISTANCIA

TITULACIÓN DE INGLÉS

Estimado profesor:

Esta entrevista persigue conocer cómo influyen las clases numerosas en el proceso de enseñanza aprendizaje del inglés como lengua extranjera, de acuerdo a su experiencia educativa.

La información que usted brindará se usará únicamente con fines académicos-investigativos. Le rogamos nos responda fidedignamente.

I. Personal details:

- 1) Name
- 2) Qualifications
- 3) Teaching experience
- 4) School
- 5) Grade
- 6) No. of classes per term
- 7) No. of students in each class

II. Teaching methodology

- 1) What kind of teaching method do you employ in class?
- 2) As a teacher list some of your strengths and weaknesses (if any).
- 3) Do you perceive your class as very large, large, average or small? Justify!
- 4) What number of students makes the class large?
- 5) Do you prefer teaching large/small classes? Why?
- 6) What are the advantages of large/small classes?
- 7) In your opinion what are the disadvantages of large/small classes?
- 8) In your opinion what is the most difficult task for your students to perform in large classes?
- 9) In your opinion how do large classes constrain teachers, affect students and hinder the learning process?
- 10) What are your best methods to control any misbehaved actions?
- 11) What are the roles your students have in large classes?
- 12) In your opinion what is the ideal number of students that facilitates the learning process?
- 13) Throughout your years of teaching, what factors have influenced you the most?
- 14) What instructional techniques do you use to maximize the level of outcome in large class?
- 15) Do you use any sort of technology? If yes, how? If no, why?
- 16) Do you feel satisfied about what you have offered to your students? If yes, why? If no, why?

Annex 4. Students' Questionnaire



UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA PARTICULAR DE LOJA

La Universidad Católica de Loja

MODALIDAD ABIERTA Y A DISTANCIA

TITULACIÓN DE INGLÉS

Estimado estudiante:

Este cuestionario tiene como objetivo conocer la influencia de las clases numerosas en el proceso de enseñanza aprendizaje del inglés.

La información que usted brindará a continuación se usará únicamente con fines académicos-investigativos. Le rogamos contestar honestamente de acuerdo a la siguiente escala de referencia:

Muy satisfactorio	Totalmente de acuerdo
Satisfactorio	De acuerdo
Poco satisfactorio	Parcialmente de acuerdo
Nada satisfactorio	En desacuerdo

Datos informativos:

Nombre de la Institución: _____

Tipo de Institución: Pública () Privada ()

Curso: Octavo () Noveno () Décimo ()

Primero Bach. () Segundo Bach. () Tercero Bach. ()

Ciudad: _____

Instrucción: Marque con una X según su criterio.

No.	In classes with a large number of students:	Totally agree	Agree	Partially agree	Disagree
A. Instructional Implications					
1	The activities done in class help to apply what I learn in class.				
2	The activities done allow me 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	I can cheat during the test.				
7	I can do assignments of other subjects.				
8	The seating arrangement facilitate me the tasks that are carried out in class.				
9	I cannot receive regular feedback from the teacher due to the large number of students.				

B. Social Implications				
10	There is interaction between teachers and students in the class.			
11	I have opportunities to interact with others.			
12	The teacher does not remember the name of all of the students.			
13	The environment in the class is less stressful because there is a decreased probability that the teacher will ask questions to the same student.			
14	I can use my cell phone or any other technological supply without teachers realizes about it.			
C. Physiological Implications				
15	The environment is stressful.			
16	I do not feel good when I have to talk in front of my classmates.			
17	I have fewer opportunities to express myself in class.			
18	I don't like to participate in class because I feel shy.			
19	The teacher does not pay attention in the same way to all of the students.			
20	I feel I can compete fairly with the other students.			
21	I feel relaxed because I can go unnoticed.			