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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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APROBACIÓN DE LA DIRECTORA DEL TRABAJO DE TITULACIÓN

Magister.

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DOCENTE DE LA TITULACIÓN

De mi consideración:

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

Loja, enero de 2016

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DECLARACIÓN DE AUTORÍA Y CESIÓN DE DERECHOS

"Yo Encalada Vega Yadira Mercedes declaro ser autora del presente trabajo de titulación: The influence of large classes in the English language teaching-learning process in Ecuadorian high schools de la Titulación de Ciencias de la Educación mención Inglés, siendo Eliana Ivanova Pinza Tapia directora del presente trabajo; y eximo expresamente a la Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja y a sus representantes legales de posibles reclamos o acciones legales. Además certifico que las ideas, conceptos, procedimientos y resultados vertidos en el presente trabajo investigativo, son de mi exclusiva responsabilidad.

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Encalada Vega, Yadira Mercedes

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DEDICATION

The result of this study and effort is dedicated in first instance to God, who gave me the opportunity to live and has given me all the necessary instruments to reach this new goal.

To my family, especially my husband Gilbert Naranjo, my children Gilbert, Abigail and Paulina Naranjo Encalada, and my mother Mercedes Vega who have supported me in my university life, in every task I have made and every challenge I have achieved . They trusted in my capacity to get this important goal in my personal and professional life.

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CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

The topic presented in this research is "The influence of large classes in the English language teaching-learning process in Ecuadorian high schools", the purpose of this study is to determine whether or not the large classes affect the teaching and learning of the English language.

In this research a survey was utilized which has 3 questions considered academic, social and psychological aspects with a total of 21 statements to be answered by the students of Basic Education from high school of the city of Cañar. The survey was answered for 180 students chosen randomly; the data collected from the survey was used to fill out charts that helped in the quantitative analysis. In this way it was possible to identify advantages and disadvantages of the academic progress of students in large classes

The main conclusion from this research according to the established academic, social and psychological aspects is that although, there are some negative aspects in large class and they are challenging, for most students these aspects do not affect considerably their performance because they can practice English in a meaningful way. Keywords: large classes, teaching and learning, academic, social and psychological aspects.

RESUMEN

El tema que se presenta en esta investigación es "La influencia de las clases numerosas en el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje de la lengua Inglés en las escuelas secundarias ecuatorianas", el propósito de este estudio es determinar si las clases numerosas afectan al proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje de la lengua Inglés.

En esta investigación, se utilizo una encuesta la cual contenía tres aspectos académicos, sociales y psicológicos con un total de 21 enunciados que se aplicó a 180 estudiantes, escogidos al azar, de educación básica del Colegio de la ciudad de Cañar. La recolección de datos de la encuesta fue utilizada para llenar las tablas que ayudarían al análisis cuantitativo, con el fin de detectar ventajas y desventajas del progreso de los estudiantes en clases numerosos.

La conclusión principal de esta investigación es que a pesar que hay aspectos negativos en las clases numerosas y son un reto para los estudiantes, a la mayoría no les afecta considerablemente en su rendimiento pues ellos pueden practicar el inglés de una manera significativa.

Palabras claves: Clases numerosas, proceso de enseñanza y aprendizaje, aspectos académicos, sociales y psicológicos

INTRODUCTION

Even though, the Ministry of Education in Ecuador (2012) had designed a new system to be used in the Ecuadorian public schools, the teaching- learning process of English language has not got good results in Ecuador. It is the concern about why the high schools' students can not develop the basic language communicative competence, what are the reasons that after six years studying English the students cannot reach the goal to speak and write in English. That is why; the Ministry of Education is looking for different aspects that interfere with the students' development. One of these aspects is the overcrowded classes and its influence in the English language teaching-learning process in Ecuadorian high schools.

In order to answer these matters, the present study was developed with the purpose of answering three questions which are what instructional implications do large classes have on the teaching-learning process?, what social implications do large classes have on the teaching-learning process?, and what psychological implications do large classes have on the teaching-learning process?, which would help to find out the aspects that impede the students' improvement.

This study is very important for the Ecuadorian education community because it will help to improve the teaching-learning process; moreover, Ecuadorian teachers will be aware of the wrong procedures that they are using and how they could fix the mistakes.

There are many studies related to the present study, some of the most important are described below.

Byamugisha, Goretti, Masembe, Opol, & Samson (2008) conducted a research on some factors in relation to large class teaching, the purpose of this study was to analyze the level of experience of the teachers teaching in large classes. In this study the researchers did not find limitations.

Gower, Philips, & Walter (1995) carried out a study which purpose was to analyze the factors that influence in managing learning through the use of activities such as: feedback, discipline, instructions of teachers and timing, the authors did not find any limitation.

In order to give a scientific foundation about classroom conditions, a study was carried out by Saraswathi (2004), the aim of this study was to show the factors and standards that determine the size of the class. The author did not find any limitation.

The main beneficiaries of this study are the people who belong to schools, in this case the students from the high school in Cañar. In addition, beneficiaries are every person whom is related with education and wants to improve in order to get success from their students.

In this study there were not limitations, during the process of recollection of data the students and authorities at the institution were very collaborative.

The results of this study will help to succeed in the teaching–learning process of large classes. So teachers and students will be involved actively in getting this objective by using some new strategies and doing their best in this complex but interesting process.

METHOD

Setting and Participants

This research was carried out in five courses of a High School in Cañar city. The participants of this study were 180 students of the ninth and tenth years of Basic Education. The courses have five English periods per week. All of the visited courses there were many students whose ages were between 13 and 15 years old. Their socioeconomic background is middle class. The participants were both male and female, being the majority male students.

Procedures

The first part of this research was the collection of information for the literature review about the topic of this study which was mainly through books, journal articles and the Internet. This section was focused on the description of the major themes such as: teaching approaches and methods, class size, managing learning, managing large classes, activities for working with large classes, seating arrangement and classroom space and different levels of proficiency which helped to acquire the necessary knowledge for this study. In addition, five previous studies related to the topic were investigated and the most relevant information from each study was taken.

The method used in this research was quantitative. The data collection for the research was done through a survey which had three sections about academic, social and psychological issues. Each section of the survey contains different statements; twenty one in total with four criteria for the answers totally agree, agree, partially agree and disagree. Before the students took the survey the researcher explained the purpose of the investigation and proceeded to deliver the survey and the students completed it.

The survey helped to understand the students' point of view about the different issues investigated. Once the data collection finished, it was necessary to classify the statements in the results chart these information can be seen in table number one, two and three.

Finally, the analysis answers the questions made for the present study; the results presented in each table was described and analyzed. The first question has nine statements which are related to the instructional aspects; each statement was described according with the numbers of students' answers and the corresponding rating scale and a final analysis was made identifying the instructional aspects that might affect the teaching-learning process in large classes. In the same way, the second and third questions' statements were described and analyzed.

DISCUSSION

Literature Review

It is well known that class size has an effect on the teaching-learning process and it is an engagement element for students to get meaningful learning and most of the time this element is often lost in large classes, becoming an issue that teachers and students should encounter daily. It is important to get knowledge about it, this section presents a summary on a set of topics such as teaching approaches and methods, class size, managing learning, activities to work with large classes, seating arrangement, classroom space and different levels of proficiency as well as a summary on some previous studies about the issue.

Teaching Approaches and Methods

Different teaching approaches and methods are considered by teachers to apply to teach English as second language in large classes, facilitating the teaching and learning process and making this not boring. There are many methods applied by teachers, being one of them Communicative language teaching.

As stated by Richards and Rodgers (2001) communicative language teaching is an approach rather than a method. It can be used to have many classroom procedures, that lead the communication and when it is authentic becomes one of the major goals of the classroom activities. To have a successful communicative language teaching, it is important to consider the fluency and also the integration of different language skills. Besides, the learning should be considered as creative process of trial and error.

Beltran et al. (2011) also pointed that Communicative language teaching is an overall approach rather than a method, and the communication is the goal of classroom activities.

Richards and Rodgers (2001) present an important approach that is the Natural approach which is naturalistic principle is favorable in the second language acquisition. It has an emphasis on exposure or input of the language, rather than practice, improving emotional awareness for learning an extensive period of attention for language learners it is producing language and agreement to use written and other materials as result of comprehensible input. Likewise, Stryke and Leaver (1997) point that Natural approach gives the naturalistic principles found in an effective second language acquisition. The approach leads to the learners may be able to develop adequately in target situations.

There is another approach based on content instruction, according to Richards and Rodgers (2001). It refers to teach a second language where this is prepared by the content of information that students will acquire. The authors (2001, p. 204) state, "It is the teaching of content of information in the language being learned with little or no direct or explicit effort to teach the language itself separately from the content being taught".

This method mentioned above is based on two central principles. The students learn quickly the second language when it is used as a mean to acquire information rather than learn itself, and this method reflects best the students' needs to learn a second language, based in contents of information.

In the same way Salim (2001) argues that this approach is the total integration of language leaning and content learning. In other words, this method is based on a subject

matter core, to detect the needs of students with specific characteristics, through of an authentic language and texts, thus the students can learn this second language.

The Total Physical Response is another method that is built by the speech and action. It means that this is the motor for the physical activity. Therefore, this method consists of commands, the same help to respond physically before to produce verbal responses. Beltran et at.(2011) argue that the students respond to teachers commands. However, they use the objective of this method to reduce the stress of the students and confidence in the period of comprehension before the production stage.

Finally, there is a method called Grammar Translation that Richards and Rodgers (2001) manifest the use of grammar rules, after the translation sentences in text into and out the target language, considering for this method the four skills: Reading, writing, listening and speaking. Also, they point that for the vocabulary, the students have to use reading texts, bilingual words list, dictionary study and memorization, and the sentence is the key of teaching and language practice, considering grammar as deductive teaching.

Beltran et at. (2011, p. 30) argue "Students translate whole texts and memorize grammatical rules and exceptions for deductive application, as well as bilingual vocabulary lists with isolated words and their native language equivalent". According to this author, the four skills are applied in this method.

These authors agree with the same opinion about these methods. Each one of these opinions is important to support both of students and teachers to   improve the learning - teaching of English as a second language.

Class Size

Another point in education is the size of the class and it is an important factor to consider about the school´s effectiveness. It is important to remember that the class size refers to the numbers of students in the classroom.

The correct idea of large classes is not the same around the world because it depends on the school's policies. Large classes represent a serious problem in education, especially when teaching a foreign language. For this reason, teaching- learning process of the English language is not effective.

When people refer to large classes, they relate them with some factors that do not let to work in class for getting a good level of English in the students. These factors should be analyzed in a detailed form according to Saraswathi (2004). The first factor is indiscipline because of the number of students in the classroom and teachers have control it in the classrooms. However, it should not be generalized because there is indiscipline in small classes.

The second factor mentioned by the author is the study of the management of large classes which refers to the students' attention in classroom, because they must speak aloud to calm the students; but the teacher cannot be sure whether this action is positive with students.

However, the teacher could have a relaxing experience whether the students are willing to follow teachers' suggestions and their attitude will be passive.

The third factor relates about the individual attention for students that is impossible in large classes. The reason is that the teacher cannot remember all students'

names. However, individual attention is a way to include students and it can be reached in a large class.

In the large classes, it is very uncomfortable to give a personalized approach of teaching of the English language. Many teachers are concerned that they are neglecting the needs of their students as individuals. When a teacher has many students in a class, it becomes difficult to know each student on a personal basis. Learning disabilities or special needs are less likely to be identified because teachers do not have enough time to focus on the individual needs of each student. They are especially vulnerable to the problems that come about due to large class sizes, such as poor-quality instruction, disciplinary distractions and lower test scores.

In contrast, Blatchford (2003) found out that small classes lead to better teaching and more effective learning. The general atmosphere in small classes is more motivated and the teacher spends more time with individual students. In smaller classes, the teaching-learning process is better but large classes present more challenges for classroom management, pupil control, marking, planning and assessment. It can be easier for teachers to spot problems and give feedback, identify specific needs and gear teaching to meet them, and set individual targets for students.

Moreover, classroom management could be observed because in a small class it is not necessary the control to give tasks to the students for controlling them. However, the control in a large class is obligatory in order to give students tasks to maintain order and they will remain busy. The teacher may seem too severe, therefore the students could have negative attitude.

A similar characteristic with the author above mentioned, is that   in small classes the teacher knows all the students' name and in an individually form. At the same time, the teacher was able to know some information about their students such as: capabilities, weaknesses, strengths, sadness, and happiness.

The author previously mentioned says that in small classes, there is a support for reading with the students in daily sessions. There was a stress at crucial time in learners' reading development but this situation does not happen in large classes. So, it is easier to control a small class than a large class because with few students, they can interact in a better way. So the teaching and learning of second language can be improved too.

Managing Learning

As stated by Gower, Phillips and Walter (1995), it is necessary to attract the students' attention by using visual or writing clues where it is possible. Additionally, the use of simple language and short expressions are important too while the students accept the authority of the teacher. In visual or writing clues, the students can mention real objects, pictures, gesture and mime, being easier the use of cards or pieces of paper to vary the activities that they do in class.

The authors believe that it is important to give feedback by congratulating, correcting, setting regular test, discussions as groups and individual tutorials to reinforce the students knowledge that it is one of the teachers' responsibilities. This helps achieve a positive learning of the language.

They state that maintaining a good discipline involves many factors such as: the age of the students, the adults are more disciplined than children. The motivation and the learning of the students may be obligated or volunteer. For these reasons, the class

size is a factor that generates problems for keeping the discipline in large class than in a small one. Therefore, the respect between the teacher and students is very important to maintain a good discipline in the classroom. The teacher gets students' respect if he or she is on time for classes, prepares the lesson, returns tasks promptly, say them what they will do, and treating his or her students in a consistent and reasonable way. An important point is that the teacher's personal problems do not interfere with his or her job.

Gower, Phillips and Walter (1995) mention that some factors such as: timing and organization of the lesson affect the learning process. Many students find some tasks easy or difficult to do and they can develop them in short or long time. On the other hand, there are students that complete tasks before their classmates who need extra time. To manage the process of learning English language in large classes, it is essential that the students receive instructions from teachers, their success and progress should be gotten by feedback. Maintaining discipline which is the respect for the teacher should be a necessary part in the learning stage and this situation will affect the developing of the lesson. The teachers should take into account these factors about discipline in order to teach the target language in better conditions to get good results.

Besides, Hunt, Wiseman and Touzel (2009) say that routines, procedures, rules and establishing of a comprehensible opportunity for behavior, are positive points. They explain that it is necessary for an excellent instruction to create and maintain respect and obligation for their excellent work.

Good management of the classroom is critical. The teachers of high school students that are learning a second language have a difficult task to manage information

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and discipline. Therefore, good management of the classrooms lets the engagement of the students to obtain success on learning tasks when the rules and procedures are very clear.

Hunt, Wiseclman and Touzel (2009) claim that teachers should maximize the time the students use in classroom tasks. The teachers should minimize the time outs when some students behave badly or they sit with nothing to do. The respect and the self-knowledge are supported in the research literature, and feedback is the most effective way when the students have self-confidence. To get self-confidence, the students should have positive expectations and responsibilities that are important in the development of positive self-concepts that help teachers and students in social activities.

As a result, these authors mentioned that managing learning in a classroom requires instructions, feedback, discipline and time that are prerequisites for good instruction and to form a good atmosphere between teacher and students, giving a positive result and consistence to future teaching and learning.

Managing Large Classes

Bryan and Routledge (2000) express that large classes are considered to be difficult for language learning, but some teachers can control the students successfully. Class size does not have a negative impact in teaching and learning. Teachers' and students' perceptions and assumptions about large classes are important. Teachers' methods, interaction and attention to individual students should be effective to assess students' task; although high motivation depends on the teachers' experience.

Needs, attitudes, motivation and perception are results of learning. Also, they can reinforce the apparent difficulty about large classes and can be influenced by teaching

methods. Classroom control and management problems can be reduced by giving individual attention, reducing noise levels, regulating activities by fast responses to teachers' signals; therefore the class will be more motivated (Bryan and Routledge, 2000).

Many students participate in oral skills that facilitate to work in pairs or groups, and in which the students work on writing tasks, being this effect of assessment problems. Motivation and morale are important when the teacher tries to connect with students. It means to know them individually and teachers' sentiments of frustration self-doubt and culpability are used to led tasks and limit communicative participatory kinds of interaction. In fact, materials and feelings can be countered by using hard work and combination of methods that affect the students' motivation. Indeed, listening is essential to have an effective learning with close attention and giving their mind both to the teacher to each other. Learning and teaching methods can be key elements in successful teaching and learning of languages; even, the class numbers do not have importance for high efficiency level (Bryan and Routledge, 2000).

Besides, Kelly (2008) mentions that large classes are motivated and challenging in discussions and simulations. Before teachers plan their lessons, they should have careful limits in this type of activities that they have tried in class. Many teachers became careless when the students raise their hands to participate and this way they maintain the order. In other words, the teacher should give a break when it is necessary. Also, the teacher should avoid introducing intensive tasks consecutively because there is a difference to evaluate twenty-forty tests. Therefore, when teachers evaluate the time consuming assignments, they should use tools such as rubrics and peer grading,

considering that the best form to evaluate the students is giving them the task by format, making   the assessment easier. The author   gives suggestions that should be applied with large classes like methods, activities, motivations, assessments to obtain productive and positive results in teaching and learning of a second language, considering teachers should not tire the students, although they must be given breaks between tasks that they have designed to not discourage to the students.

Activities for Working with Large Classes

According to Baker and Westrup (2000), in many countries, teachers practice new vocabulary in diversity of word games. Within the activities for working with large classes, the game can be used in different manners. For example, cards in which students can match words and pictures or contest definitions of words. In different levels like in the lower level simple words are used and in higher levels more advanced words are used. In addition, phrasal verbs can be used in this level.

The authors add, to do the card activity with the students divide the class in groups to make a set of charts. The teachers and learners choose a set of words that are written on the board by the teacher, after the students choose two or three cards, and then the students write a word from words chosen by teacher. Next, the students can write nouns in each card and finally complete it. They play by matching the sets of spots on dominos. After that, students do and solve the crosswords where some students write the up or down clues. The rest of group exchange the crosswords with another group and they fill them with the half of the crossword.

Also, the alphabet list is another interesting activity the same author. This can be done in individual or groups competition. The students select a letter and fill a word in

each category like animals, colors or fruits. The first student who fills the twenty words in five minutes is the winner.

The authors Baker and Westrup (2000) mention that there are activities that can be used with large classes, these are nice and enjoyable and raise the interest of students in learning English as a second language.

Likewise Gower, Phillips and Walters (1995) give their opinion about activities for working with large classes such as group work, dividing the class in groups for having discussions where the students have chance to speak, considering that it is more difficult to monitor by the teacher. After that the students must write their conclusions and they should compare it and the conclusions could be presented in posters to inform their classmates.

The pyramid technique also can be used to establish discussion in large classes. In this technique, the students can list similar words like qualities of a person where the students form pairs between them. They agree in all qualities they have chosen before working in groups of four and they have to concord on their five things until there are few groups for a list until to be elicited from whole class to discuss the topic.

In conclusion, the authors recommend the use of techniques in large classes like word games which keep students entertained. Also, practicing some interesting activities motivate the students to participate in groups and in turn they can give feedback to each other.

Seating Arrangement and Classroom Space

Kay and Karna (2011) mention that physical environment can provide structure and support for self-management which depend on students´ physical energy or

difficulty, being the teachers who must prepare the classroom arrangement for the lesson.

Another factor in large classes is the physical space that the students have. In classrooms with high students' density their sits are together or next to their classmates. For this situation, students do not concentrate on their tasks because they are talking causing interruptions.

Consequently, there are different positions to place students in the class, helping that classes do not become boring. Students should be cooperative to maintain a positive attitude in teaching and learning; and the teachers can organize the class putting chairs, desks, tables to make changes in the physical space in order to improve their classes.

On the other hand, Haen, Johnsons and Buckwalter (2009, p. 52-53) manifest "seminar classes, advanced readings and class conversation are defined by their small size, having ten or twenty students". These classes require physical and social space to be comfortable for the students. The classroom should be organized in the way students can see between them and the teachers can guide the discussion. This style may reduce interactive atmosphere and the teacher is the center of the classroom. In seminars, the students should sit in a big square, circle o semicircle desks, being everyone the center of attention.

In an excellent seminar for seating arrangement taught by Haen, Johnsons and Buckwalter (2009) clearly explained that the teacher should have a method to stimulate discussion where the students feel confidence to discuss the material presented to them. For this reason the teacher can begin with some questions. For example,What do you think about the class or topic? Last, the teacher will give them blank paper to summarize

the main points. Thus, the teacher knows that the students understood the basic ideas and they can begin asking each other their opinions applying the concepts in different ways.

As a result, in a small class the students can ask their questions to the group; while the students who work in pairs or small groups in large class cannot. The authors recommend the strategies and procedures that should be used in a classroom and it should be cooperative, motivated, and comfortable to create a positive atmosphere in teaching and learning.

Different levels of proficiency

There is another important topic in which Sunal, Sunul and Wright (2010, p. 42-43) argument that "the teachers should know to teach English to Hispanic English Language Learners. There are indicators for the grade appropriate language, depending of students' language proficiency level".

Echeverria and Short (2004) state, that teachers have to consider the second language learners of a specific age or level because they do not have the same English language skills as a native English speaker.

The World Instructional Design and Assessment Consortium (WIDA) has developed specific performance content of indicators for grade level groups, determining what English language learners are able to do in listening, speaking, reading and writing, according to several language proficiency levels. Beginning level learners are able to point tasks on charts or answer little words. However, intermediate can compare or establish differences between charts or tasks, while high levels can discuss and summarize essays and explain information on charts.

In addition, Hickman and Pollards (2009) argument with respect to heterogeneous grouping that it has the advantage to expose learners to diverse levels of vocabulary where the students have the chance to participate at higher levels with classmates that are the same proficiency levels. It also allows higher students levels the opportunity to help their pairs through modeling the highly develop language skills. Although, ELLs are able to understand higher levels of a text if it forms part of the subject in which they are interested or have background knowledge.

In contrast, heterogeneous grouping has disadvantages such as the vocabulary and some comprehension of tasks can be easy or difficult for some students including their language proficiency levels. Advantages with heterogeneous grouping are that the students have the opportunity to participate with partner of the same proficiency level, and they can help to their partner to develop language skills (Hickman and Pollards, 2009).

All the described contents mentioned above are key elements to teach and learn English as a second language.

There is a large amount of researchers who have conducted a series of studies regarding the many aspects of learning and teaching the English language and perhaps even the factors that may affect it. Through reading the following studies have been found related to the present study.

Chowdhury and Shaila (2013) analyzed the methods to practice the speaking skills of the students in different Bangladesh 'universities. The purpose of this study was to focus on how English language teachers deal with large classes when they are conducting classes to practice and evaluate speaking skills of students.

The applied methodology was measured through simulating the role of a counselor job interview, storytelling, using movie clips, picture presentation, classroom debate and listening practice, the students were given worksheets to chose the topic and prepare their participation. The researchers observe that the students have the opportunity to overcome the nervousness, although there is an influence of the first language and other problems of social environment that obstruct to develop speaking skills. The authors concluded that speaking is one of the skills that consume more time to teach and practice in class requiring interaction and interchange between students and teachers and more sessions are needed.

Byamugisha, Goretti, Masembe, Opol, and Samson (2008) studied some factors in relation to large class teaching in resource-constrained contexts. The purpose of this study was to know the following factors: high expectations for learners, if the instruction is clear, the learning process is closely monitored, the strategies are re-taught when he learners do not understand, the classroom routine is highly efficient and if the teacher has good personal interaction with students. For this study surveys were applied in two phases to the teachers to probe their views on class size in their schools, also to know the challenges of their schools faced when teaching large classes, the institutional responses to large classes and their suggestions for improving teaching and learning in large classes.

The study showed that the factors studied were based on the challenges that the teachers experienced with the use of the strategies developed at individual and institutional levels to improve teaching and learning, considering the limited circumstances and the implications of teachers reflecting on their lessons to large class

teaching. The authors concluded that teachers do what they can do to facilitate teaching and learning, however, they need support by the institution and educational policies should be improved. In addition, to give quality teaching it is necessary to provide with basic infrastructure, increase the number of teachers and review the instructional time.

Thaher (2005) mentioned the effects of large classes with the purpose to know the instructional, social and psychological aspects in the negative and positive answers of students.

The researcher used a questionnaire as tool which contained open-ended questions that asked about the effect of large classes on the students, and their attitude toward learning in large classes. Their answers were classified in three aspects psychological, social and instructional. The researcher used the Likert scale to analyze the results.

The study showed that large classes are considered a double edged sword; besides the students responded positively thinking that there is a competition and a pleasant relation between the students inside and outside in the classroom. The disadvantage was that the students felt ignored and they do not have the opportunity to express, affecting of this way their psychological development. Therefore, it is recommended a friendly relationship between teachers and students.

Thaher concluded that the teachers need to be trained about effective teaching strategies; the teachers need more workshops, seminars to help them to cope with the problem related to teaching large classes. Finally, the author said that more English sessions are needed in order to help students to interact.

Akinsolu and Fadokun (2009) argument on teacher´s perception in teaching in large classes was measured and collected through an instrument for statistical analysis

with the purpose to know the differences between the old and young teachers´ perceptions teaching in large classes.

Two instruments were used in this study. The first tool was the class register to obtain the number of students' registered in the classroom. The first instrument was from junior secondary class, one to senior secondary class, one of all the sampled schools based on the assumption that most senior secondary class 3. The second instrument was "Teaching large class questionnaire" (TLCQ). It consists of two sections A and B. The first section asked about teachers' experience; and the second section involves fifteen items to determine the perceptions of teachers about teaching in large classes in Nigeria secondary schools. This questionnaire is based on two point Likert scale: Agree (A) and Disagree (D). The author concluded that teachers were not favorably disposed to teaching large with poorly resourced classes because the classes are overcrowded. Also there was no difference between male and female teachers' disposition, but there was a significant established difference between young and old teachers´ perceptions. In addition to this, the teachers used negative reinforcement, the lack of classrooms and teachers did not help to calm tension in an overcrowded classroom.

Hull and Singhasiri (2006) refer to teachers' beliefs about teaching in large classes. This study discusses that there are concerns about the appropriateness of existing teaching methods and staffing in the case of large classes. This study concerns behavior and indiscipline existing in schools that increasing the problems in the students of large classes. Therefore, there are signs that difficult behavior in schools is increasing.

In a survey of the views of teachers and others, reports that teachers believe larger classes adversely affect behavior in class. Student's behavior in relation to class size is considered in terms of two dimensions: attentiveness in class and relationship with classmates.

The purpose of this study was to investigate teachers´ beliefs in terms of perceptions, opinions and attitudes towards teaching English in large classes.

A survey was used to access the opinions and perceptions of teachers. It was composed by three parts: open ended questions, close ended questions and rating scales. This survey concerns the following sections: general and physical conditions of their current classrooms, teaching and learning conditions in larger classes, degrees of difficulty, and opinions towards teaching in larger classes and ideal classes.

The majority of participants responded that teaching in large classes is less effective and this situation generates more extra works for the teachers. The participants thought that when the classroom is large, teaching and learning are more difficult and thus less effective by the following reason: teaching and learning are not appropriate for teaching productive skills.

The researcher concluded that large class will be more appropriate with a teacher-center mode of teaching, reading-based context and grammar methods as good proposed communicative approaches. Large classes are more challenging for students because they can not develop their language and productive skills. There are students that do not like to participate in class called non-contributors in this case is very important that the teacher should assist them. In addition to that, the author said that the reading and listening skills should be planned and organized very well and speaking and writing

skills require more attention and interaction from teachers. More sessions need to be provided so students can practice in small groups and consult with their teachers. Finally, the teachers need to be trained in how to teach and manage large class.

Description, Analysis, and Interpretation of Results

This part of the study focuses on the presentation of the data obtained throught the instrument used for this research.The analysis for the present study will be quantitative and it is very important because it shows how some factors affect the English language teaching-learning process and the attitude of students toward large classes. The results will give teachers, authorities of the educational institutions some cues to find out solutions to work in a better way in large classes.

In this analysis, three questions will be answered as well as the students' responses to the questionnaire with 21 statements, each one will be analized. The charts were based on the data obtained from the students' answers to show the quantitative results of the research.

Quantitative Analysis

What instructional implications do large classes have on the teaching-learning process?
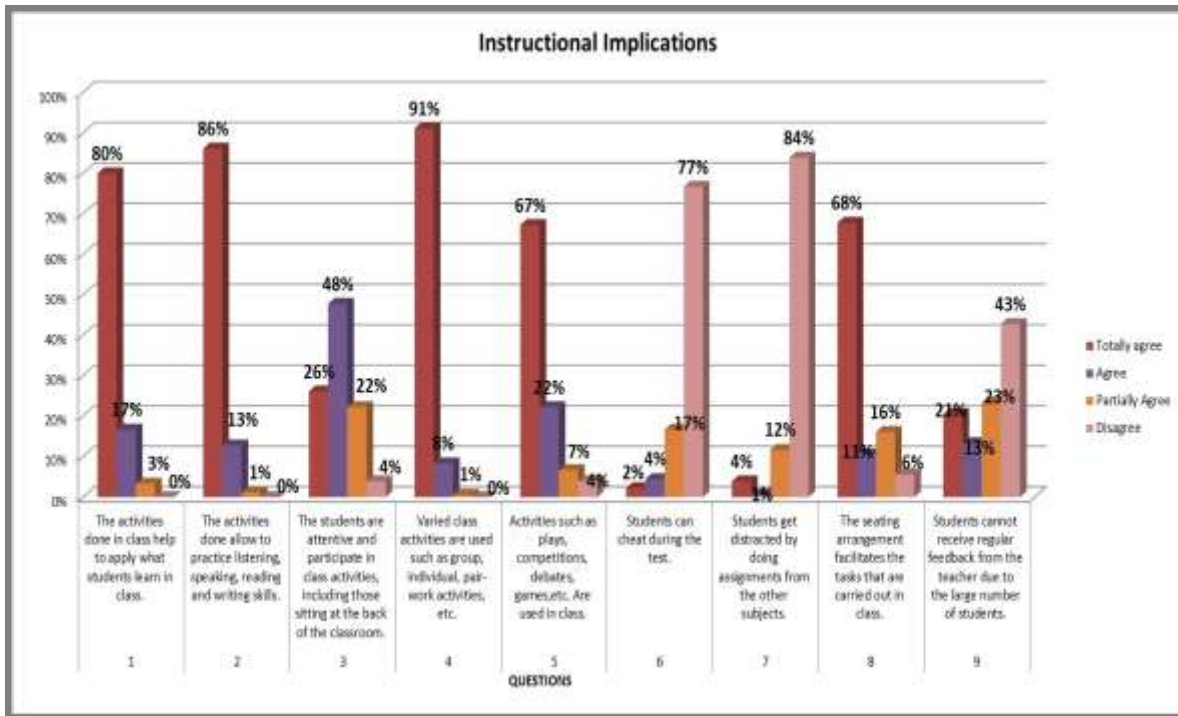
Table Nº 1

N°	In classes with a large number of students:	Totally agree		Agree		Partially agree		Disagree		TOTAL	
		f	%	f	%	F	%	f	%	f	%
1.	The activities done in class help to apply what students learn in class.	144	80%	30	17%	6	3%	0	0%	180	100%
2.	The activities done allow to practice listening, speaking, reading and writing skills.	155	86%	23	13%	2	1%	0	0%	180	100%
3.	The students are attentive and participate in class activities, including those sitting at the back of the classroom.	47	26%	86	48%	40	22%	7	4%	180	100%
4.	Varied class activities are used such as group, individual, pair-work activities, etc.	164	91%	15	8%	1	1%	0	0%	180	100%

5.	Activities such as plays, competitions, debates, games, etc. are used in class.	121	67%	40	22%	12	7%	7	4%	180	100%
6.	Students can cheat during the test.	4	2%	8	4%	30	17%	138	77%	180	100%
7.	Students get distracted by doing assignments from other subjects.	7	4%	1	1%	21	12%	151	84%	180	100%
8.	The seating arrangement facilitates the tasks that are carried out in class.	122	68%	19	11%	29	16%	10	6%	180	100%
9.	Students cannot receive regular feedback from the teacher due to the large number of students.	37	21%	24	13%	42	23%	17	43%	180	100%

Author: Yadira Mercedes Encalada Vega

Source: Student`s questionnaire

Graph Nº 1

Author: Yadira Mercedes Encalada Vega

Source: Student`s questionnaire

The first implication that might affect the teaching-learning process is the instructional; these are the results of table number one.

In the statement number one, from the 180 surveyed students of this study, 80% that corresponds to 144 students who answered that they totally agree, while 17% which corresponds to 30 students manifest that they agree. A small percentage 3% that corresponds to 6 students answered partially agree. This means that the students have a better learning experience in class and that the activities done in class helped them to apply what they learn in class. It is the teachers' responsibility to choose the most suitable activities that promote students learning in class.

According to the obtained results about statement number two in table 1 reveals that most of the students can develop activities in large classes in a good way. They practice listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. This was confirmed by 86% which corresponds to 155 students who answered that the activities done help them to practice those skills; 13% represents to 2 students said that they agree and 1% corresponds to one student partially agree that the activities help them to practice the skills. This means that in spite of the number of students in the classroom, a high percentage of students believe that the activities done help to practice the English skills.

According to Nunan (1999) the teacher should present the students activities that require comprehending, producing, manipulating or interacting in the target language so they can practice the four skills depending on the demand that the task required to complete it.

The answers for statement number three revel that forty seven students that correspond to 26% of the surveyed group express that in their large classes; they are

attentive and participative including those who are sitting at the back of the classroom. While 86 students that correspond to 48% pointed out that they agree. On the other hand, 22% that corresponds to 40 students said that they partially agree and seven students which are the 4% that corresponds to seven students say that they do not pay attention and participate. Even though, the class has many students most of them are attentive and participative. This could be possible if the activities are interesting and it is important the teacher's ability to attract the students' attention by using visual aids, writing clues, using simple language and short expressions (Gover, Phillips and Walter, 1995). It is also important that the teacher gives extra help to those who do not pay attention and participate.

In the statement four, there are 164 students that represent 91% who said that they totally agree, the teacher use a variety of class activities such as group, individual, pair-work activities, etc. fifteen students that represent 8% said that they agree and only one student that represents the 1% said that he partially agree. According with the data obtained this means that the majority of students are satisfied with different activities that the teacher presents to them.

According to Woodward (2001) using only one teaching technique leads students to get bored, varied tasks is important because teachers are not teaching just one learning style, classrooms are multiple learning styles so activities should be suitable to reach everybody in the class. This is beneficial to get students engaged.

According with the results, in the statement five, 121 answers that represent 67% of the students said that they totally agree about activities used by the teacher in class such as plays, competitions, debates, games, etc., 22% that corresponds to 40 students

who said they agree, 12 students that correspond to 7% said that partially agree and finally 7 students that is 4% said that they disagree. This means that mostly of students like the activities such as plays, competitions, debates, games, and so on presented to them.

Baker and Westrup (2000) found that teachers practice new vocabulary in diversity of word game within the activities for working with large classes; likewise Gower, Fillips &Walters (1995) agree that different activities should be introduced in large classes to benefit students interaction.

Kelly (2008) mentioned that the debates, plays and competitions are interesting assignments more challenging in the large classes, though it is important to have a comprehensive physical space to perform them.

The statement number six asked the students about cheating during test; the results are the following: seven students which represent 4% said that they can cheat during the test, 8 students that represent 7 % said that they agree, 17% of students that are 30 answers said that partially agree and 138 that is 77% said that they disagree. According to these results, most of the students find it difficult to cheat during the test even thought they are in a large class. This is mostly because students are aware of the consequences of cheating. The teacher gives clear instructions and they must follow classroom policies.

In the statement number seven the following results were found. Four students that represent the 7% answered that they totally agree that they get distracted by doing assignments from other subjects. One student which represents 1% said that he agrees, 21 students that represent the 12% said that they partially agree and 151 that is 84% said

that they disagree. This means that most of the students are engaged in the English class and they are not distracted with assignments from other subjects.

The statement number eighth refers to seating arrangement. The results about this statement show that 122 students that is 68% said that they totally agreed that the seating arrangements facilitate the tasks that they were carrying out in class, 19 students who represent 11% said that they agree, 29 students representing 16% said that they partially agree and finally 10 students answered that they disagree. According with these results, the students are comfortable about how the teacher arranges their classroom, depending with their needs and type of activity and this facilitate to correctly perform it.

Kay and Karna (2011) believe that it is the teacher responsibility to arrange the classroom for the lesson in a way that it helps students not to get bored and to develop a positive environment.

In the statement number 9 there are the following results, 21% that corresponds to 37 students who said they did not receive feedback due to the large number of students. While 43% which corresponds to 37 students answered that they agree with the statement, and 23% that corresponds to 42 students answered that they partially agree and finally 17 students who represent the 43% answered that they disagree. The results indicate that it is too hard for the teacher to give a meaningful feedback and the students are not receiving feedback completely.

Gower, Phillips and Walter (1995) said that it is the teacher responsibility to provide with feedback to students to reinforce their knowledge and positive attitude about learning the language. Feedback is applied by measuring the student's progress so that the students are not left without being taken into account. The feedback is achieved

through giving praise and encouragement, correcting and giving individual tutorials. The students have the right to know if they are doing the correct thing, the more information the students gather about their progress the more they can make changes.

Therefore, in the previous studies mentioned above in the literature review Hunt, Wiseman and Touzel (2009) mentioned that feedback is very important for students. With the feedback, teachers can help students to give them confidence and a better comprehension of the target language.

In this study, it was stated that there are factors that affect the teaching- learning process. Instructional implication is a factor that is directly related to the students' progress because the students who are learning a foreign language have to go through different stages and if the formal instruction is not according with the students needs, it will affect the progress of language acquisition (Krashen and Terell, 1983). In this study the instructional implication that affects the students is associated to the statement number nine about feedback. This implies that the teacher does not have enough time to give individual feedback due to the number of students in the class. It is important for teachers to take this into account in order to solve this situation and fulfill with the goals that he wants to get with his students. Consequently, the teaching-learning process of the English language will have good results.

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

Table Nº 2

N°	In classes with a large number of students:	Totally agree		Agree		Partially Agree		Disagree		TOTAL	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
10.	There is a proper balance of student-student and teacher-student interaction.	167	93%	12	7%	1	1%	0	0%	180	100%
11.	Students have the opportunity to build relationships with their classmates.	147	82%	26	14%	3	2%	4	2%	180	100%
12.	The teacher has problems remembering all the students' names.	29	16%	46	26%	97	54%	8	4%	180	100%
13.	The atmosphere is less stressful since the teacher does not ask several questions to the same student.	31	17%	82	46%	53	29%	14	8%	180	100%
14.	It is easier for students to use their cellphone or any other mobile device without being seen by the teacher.	8	4%	8	4%	22	12%	142	79%	180	100%

Author: Yadira Mercedes Encalada Vega

Source: Student`s questionnaire

Graph Nº 2
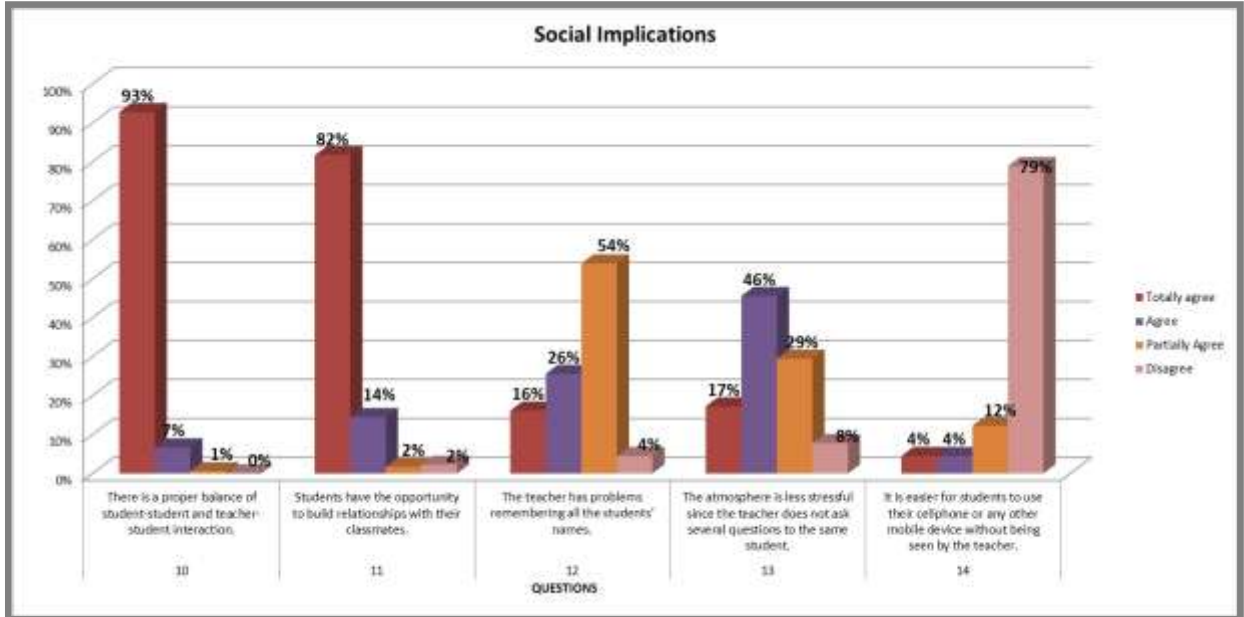
Author: Yadira Mercedes Encalada Vega

Source: Student`s questionnaire

The second question related to the factors that affect the teaching-learning process is the social implication; these are the results can be seen in table number two.

The statement ten is about balance between student-student and teacher-student interaction, the results revel that 93% which corresponds to 167 students answered that they totally agree with the statement, 12 students that represent 7% said that they agree and only one student corresponding to 1 % said partially agree. In sum, it can be said that the majority of the students are satisfied with the interaction among them and with the teacher.

Bryan and Routledge (2000) believe that in spite of class size some teachers have good learning management skills, this means that they are able to use good strategies to help students to interact between them and with the teacher; positive interaction promotes collaborative and cooperative learning.

In the statement eleven these are the results, 82 % which corresponds to 147 students said they totally agree about having opportunities to build relationships with their classmates, 14% that represents 26 students said that they agree, 3 students which represent 2% said that they partially agree and 4 students that represent 2% said that they disagree. This means that most students think that the get chances to form good relationships with schoolmates.

According to Kirk (2006), fostering relationships in the classroom is very important because students with a sense of acceptance and if they feel that they are welcome, they perform much better. Good relationships among the students promote good behavior, motivation and learning. Teachers are called to foster positive social interaction because this depends largely on the success of learning in the classroom.

The statement twelve is about teacher's problem in remembering all the students' names. The 16% that corresponds to 29 students said that they totally agree with the statement, 46 students that correspond to the 26% students said that they agree, 54% of the students partially agree and 4% said they disagree. This shows that in this school the teacher has problems learning his students' names.

Learning students' names is always difficult even in small classes is a problem for some teachers. While it is difficult to learn students' names in large classes, an earnest attempt and even moderate success doing so, is extremely salient to students (Sleigh and Ritzer, 2001) some students experience frustration when a teacher does not learn their names because this means for them that the teacher is not interested in the student. In the same way, Thaher (2005) mentioned that students feel ignored affecting their psychological development. Learning the students' names is always to make a classroom more comfortable. Byram (2000) stated that classroom control and management problems can be reduced by getting to know the students' name rapidly (giving individual attention), reducing noise levels.

The statement thirteen is about the classroom atmosphere. According with the results, 31 students that is 17% totally agree with the statement, 82 students that represent the 46% said they agree, 53 students that represent the 29% said that they partially agree and 14 students that represent the 8% answered they disagree. This suggests that the atmosphere is less stressful when the teacher does not ask several questions to the same student making them feel comfortable.

Classroom atmosphere is crucial for quality learning, a friendly place motivate students to actively participate. When the teacher does not concentrate on one student but in all, the teacher is creating a good environment where all students are involved.

The statement fourteen is about using any mobile device. Eighth students represent 4% said that they totally agree that it is easier for them to use their cell phone without being seen by the teacher, 8 students that represent 4 % answered that they agree with statement, 12% of the students answered that they partially agree, and about 79% said that they disagree. The results demonstrate that the teacher has a good control on the class and it is not easy to fool the teacher.

Even though the technology is good, there should be policies about the use of it in the classroom. In the same way, the students interrogated had the clear idea in their minds that to use their cellphone or any other mobile device without being seen by the teacher is unsatisfactory in large classes, because if they use the cell, they will not pay attention in the class.

The second factor in the teaching-learning process is the social implication. The social implication that may affect the learning process is related to the statement number twelve which says that the teacher has problems remembering all the students' names. This is one of the realities of secondary education today in Ecuador; as overcrowded classrooms limit individual attention and teachers do not always learn their students' names or sometimes the teacher confuses the students' name.

What psychological implications do large classes have on the teaching-learning process?
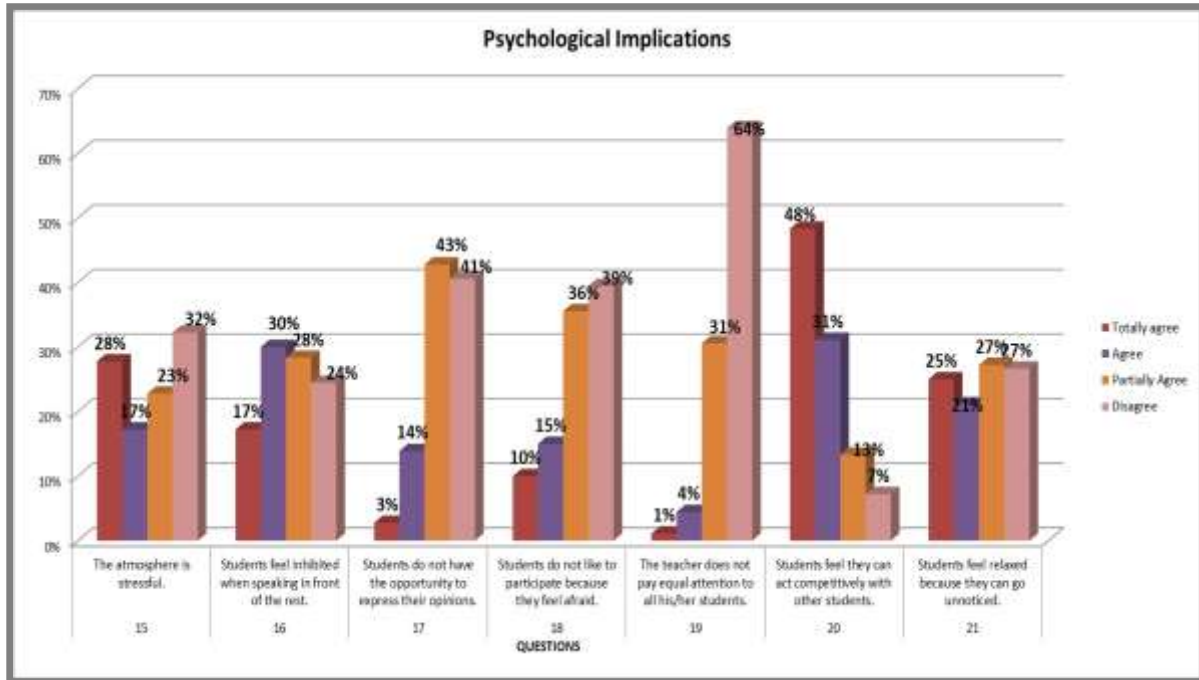
Table Nº 3

N°	In classes with a large number of students:	Totally agree		Agree		Partially agree		Disagree		TOTAL	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	f	%	f	%
15.	The atmosphere is stressful.	50	28%	31	17%	41	23%	58	32%	180	100%
16.	Students feel inhibited when speaking in front of the rest.	31	17%	54	30%	51	28%	44	24%	180	100%
17.	Students do not have the opportunity to express their opinions.	5	3%	25	14%	77	43%	73	41%	180	100%
18.	Students do not like to participate because they feel afraid.	18	10%	27	15%	64	36%	71	39%	180	100%
19.	The teacher does not pay equal attention to all his/her students.	2	1%	8	4%	55	31%	115	64%	180	100%
20.	Students feel they can act competitively with other students.	87	48%	56	31%	24	13%	13	7%	180	100%
21.	Students feel relaxed because they can go unnoticed.	45	25%	38	21%	49	27%	48	27%	180	100%

Author: Yadira Mercedes Encalada Vega

Source: Student`s questionnaire

Graph N° 3

Author: Yadira Mercedes Encalada Vega

Source: Student`s questionnaire

The third implication on the teaching-learning process is the psychological. The results can been in table number three.

In statement number fifteen show that 28% which corresponds to 50 students answered that they totally agree that the atmosphere is stressful in large classes, while 31 students which corresponds to 17% said that they agree, 41 students meaning the 23% who responded that they partially agree; finally, 58 students that represent the 32% responded that they disagree with the statement. These results indicate that most of the students feel stressed in large classes.

Teaching in large classes is not easy and keeping a positive atmosphere is always a challenge. Palmer (2009) stated that a positive classroom means quality learning; a pleasant place is more effective and motivated. It is the teacher responsibility to foment an atmosphere where the students feel secured.

In statement number sixteen, 31 students that represent 17% answered that they totally agree that they feel inhibited when speaking in front of the rest, 54 students corresponding 30% said that they agree, 51 students which represent 28% replied that they partially agree, 44 students represent 24% responded that they disagree. According with these results, most of the students are not comfortable speaking in front of their classmates. This could be because the students are experiencing fear and being afraid can seriously disrupt learning. The students get frustrated and of course their progress is in danger (Hoge, 2014).

The answers for the statement seventeen are the following, 5 students that represent 3 % said that they totally agree because they do not have the opportunity to express their opinions, 25 students that correspond 14% answered that they agree, 77

students that correspond 43% answered that they partially agree, and finally 73 students that correspond to 41% answered that they disagree. This demonstrates that most of the students are able to express their opinions. This is very important for the students psychological growth because they feel comfortable sharing their thoughts. Haen, Johnsons and Buckwalter (2009) said that teachers should have a method to stimulate discussion where the students feel confidence to discuss and give their opinions.

The statement eighteen is about students' fair to participate. 10% of the students said that they totally agree this implies that they do not like to participate because they feel afraid, 15% of the students said they agree, these two groups probably represent the shy ones who do not want to make mistakes and to be criticized, 36% of the students replied that they partially agree, and 39% of the students responded that they disagree. This means that the majority of students feel comfortable when they participate in activities during classes.

 Sulla (2009) stated that the students' participation is very important because it benefits the learning process; moreover, they learn from each other and contribute something to the lesson. It is the teacher responsibility to create a class without fear, a class where students can show their ability to learn and become successful.

The statement nineteen says the teacher does not play equal attention to the students. 1% of the students answered that they totally agree, 4% said that they agree, 55 students that represents 31% affirmed that they partially agree and finally, 64% that represents to 115 students stated that they disagree. According with these results most of the students have equal attention from the teacher, they feel comfortable about this

aspect. The students who seem not to receive enough attention need extra help from the teacher to motivate them to participate and therefore learn the foreign language.

The statement twenty is about whether or not the students feel they can act competitively with other students. The results said that 87 students which correspond to 48% answered that they totally agree, students can act competitively with other students in large classes, 56 students responded that they agree, 24 students manifested that they partially agree and only 13 students disagree. This implies that the majority of students feel complacent about this issue because there is more potential for each student, and everyone wants to be better than the other.

In the statement twenty one, there are 45 answers that correspond to the 25% said that the students totally agree about feeling relaxed because they can go unnoticed, 38 students manifested that they agree, 49 stated that they partially agree and finally 48 said that they disagree. This means that most of the students do not feel that they are not pay attention. The ones that feel this way probably are the shy ones.

The third factor in the teaching-learning process is the psychological implications. In this research the psychological implications found that may affect the process are related to the statements number fifteen and sixteen. The students feel that the atmosphere is stressful in large classes and they feel inhibited when they have to speak in front of the rest. These implications can really affect the way students learn because they need to feel confident and motivated to learn a new language.

Conclusions

The results of the study about the instructional implications demonstrate that in spite of the class size, students are able to practice the four skills, and participate in different activities.

The negative aspect related to the instructional implications is that the teacher does not have enough time to provide students with a quality feedback. Making this a negative factor that influences the teaching – learning process in large classes.

This study investigated the social implications in the teaching-learning process, the quantitative analysis showed that positive aspects were found in large classes such as teacher-students interaction are good as well as students have the opportunity to build a good relationship with their classmates as can be seen large classes do not affect social interaction.

Having large classes makes it difficult for the teacher to memorize all de students' names which makes a negative aspect of large classes.

This study examined the impact of the psychological implications in the teaching-learning process, the analysis also found that in large classes there are positive aspects such as students are able to give their opinion, they feel comfortable participating in the class activities, they receive equal attention by the teacher and they are capable to compete with their classmates as a result it makes learning more interesting.

The analysis also revealed that there are negative aspects associated to the psychological implication for instance the students feel that the classroom atmosphere is

stressful and they feel inhibited when they have to speak in front of the whole class, in fact, this is in large part because of the size of the class.

Recommendations

- Offering feedback is necessary for students, they need to know how they are doing. If the teacher can not speak with the student due to time, the teacher should write a note to the student. The teacher should provide a guide on the students' work this is writing down not just the score but writing a reminder so the student can make the corrections.

- With regard to names' remembering, it is important that the teacher should find a way to learn the students' names such as having students tell their names every time they speak, asking them to sit in the same place, and making a classroom diagram with students' sits and names.

- To improve students' self-confidence especially who are afraid of speaking in front of others and are uncomfortable in their class, it is important that the teacher help them by given more time to finish their tasks, switch partners with regularly during group activities and give clear instructions so the students know what they need to do.

- It is necessary to give workshops on teaching large classes to the teachers so they can use activities and strategies that enhance learning.

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ANNEXES

Annex Nº 1

INSTRUMENT

UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA PARTICULAR DE LOJA

La Universidad Católica de Loja

OPEN AND DISTANCE MODALITY

ENGLISH DEGREE

Dear student,

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

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

Informative data: Please fill in the information below

Name of institution: _____

Type of institution: Public ( )   Private ( )

Year of study:

          8th year. ( )   9th year ( )   10th year. ( )

          1st senior high   2nd senior high   3rd. senior high

          school . ( )   school. ( )   school. ( )

City:

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

A.   Academic issues

	In classes with a large number of students:	Very satisfactory	Satisfactory	Somewhat satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
1.	The activities done in class help to apply what students learn in class.				
2.	The activities done allow to practice listening, speaking, reading and writing skills.				

3.	The students are attentive and participate in class activities, including those sitting at the back of the classroom.				
4.	Varied class activities are used such as group, individual, pair-work activities, etc.				
5.	Activities such as plays, competitions, debates, games, etc. are used in class.				
6.	Students can cheat during the test				
7.	Students get distracted by doing assignments from other subjects.				
8.	The seating arrangement facilitates the tasks that are carried out in class.				
9.	Students cannot receive regular feedback from the teacher due to the large number of students.				

B.   Social issues

N°	In classes with a large number of students:	Very satisfactory	Satisfactory	Somewhat satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
10.	There is a proper balance of student-student and teacher-student interaction.				
11.	Students have the opportunity to build relationships with their classmates.				
12.	The teacher has problems remembering all the students' names.				
13.	The atmosphere is less stressful since the teacher does not ask several questions to the same student.				
14.	It is easier for students to use their cellphone or any other mobile device without being seen by the teacher.				

C.   Psychological issues:

	In classes with a large number of students:	Very satisfactory	Satisfactory	Somewhat satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
15.	The atmosphere is stressful.				

16.	Students feel inhibited when speaking in front of the rest.				
17.	Students do not have the opportunity to express their opinions.				
18.	Students do not like to participate because they feel afraid.				
19.	The teacher does not pay equal attention to all his/her students.				
20.	Students feel they can act competitively with other students.				
21.	Students feel relaxed because they can go unnoticed.				

Thank you for your collaboration!