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MENCIÓN INGLÉS

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

TRABAJO DE TITULACIÓN

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APROBACIÓN DEL DIRECTOR DEL TRABAJO DE TITULACIÓN

Doctora.

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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 Sánchez Amanta Tania Gissela, ha sido orientado y revisado durante su ejecución, por cuanto se aprueba la presentación del mismo.

Loja, Junio de 2016

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DECLARACIÓN DE AUTORÍA Y CESIÓN DE DERECHOS

“Yo, Sánchez Amanta Tania Gissela 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 la Dra. Ana Lucía Quiñónez Beltrán 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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DEDICATION

I dedicate this research to God, who blesses me to achieve my goals; to my children, Sebastian, Gabriela and Carlitos, they are my life: To my beloved husband Carlos, for his patience and help.

I would also dedicate this thesis to my dear parents, who were always supporting me during my studies. Finally, I want to offer this project to my dearest friend and mom Judith, for her unconditional friendship and love.

Tania

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ABSTRACT

The study “The influence of large classes in the English language teaching-learning process in Ecuadorian high schools” is focused to establish the factors that affect the teaching-learning process in classrooms with a high number of students in secondary schools in Ecuador.

The sample was taken at 4 schools in the city of Quito, being selected 183 students belonging to 5 English classes: Eighth, ninth, tenth of general basic education as well as students coursing first and second years of high school. The learners’ age ranged between 12-17 years old.

The quantitative and qualitative methods were applied in order to describe and analyze the data collected; for what aspects such as instructional, psychological and social were considered.

The study concludes that large classes do not significantly affect the process of teaching and learning English in high schools, since the results show that teachers are able to apply appropriate pedagogical methods and suitable strategies to make that students get involved in interesting activities which take them to acquire the four skills of the target language.

Key words: English language, teaching-learning process, large classes.

RESUMEN

El estudio "La influencia de las clases grandes en el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje del idioma Inglés en las escuelas secundarias del Ecuador" está enfocado a establecer los factores que afectan el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje en las aulas con un alto número de estudiantes en colegios secundarios del país.

La muestra fue tomada en cuatro escuelas secundarias en la ciudad de Quito, siendo seleccionados 183 estudiantes pertenecientes a 5 aulas de inglés: Octavo, noveno, décimo de educación general básica así como estudiantes que cursan primer y segundo año de la escuela secundaria. La edad de los estudiantes osciló entre los 12 y 17 años de edad.

Los métodos cuantitativo y cualitativo se aplicaron con el fin de describir y analizar los datos recopilados; para lo cual los aspectos: instructivo, psicológico y social fueron considerados.

Este estudio concluye que las clases numerosas no afectan de manera significativa el proceso de enseñanza y aprendizaje del idioma Inglés en las escuelas secundarias, ya que los resultados muestran que los profesores son capaces de aplicar métodos y estrategias adecuadas para hacer que los estudiantes se involucren en actividades interesantes a fin de adquirir las cuatro habilidades del idioma meta.

Palabras claves: Idioma Inglés, proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje, clases numerosas.

INTRODUCTION

In today's globalized world, English language has become an essential element for the development of the nations. Nowadays, most of the scientific information that people upload on the internet is written in English. On the other hand, some of the government scholarships programs to study abroad require the sufficiency in the English language.

In our country, a great number of school graduate students have not acquired the proficiency level to participate in studentships plans. Due to this situation the Ministry of Education of Ecuador has implemented some programs to improve the curriculum by taking into account international principles. At this time, English teachers are immersed in training platforms which lead them to improve strategies and techniques that will redound in benefits during the teaching-learning process into the classroom.

The present research aims at determining the influence of large classes in the English language teaching-learning process in Ecuadorian high schools through the following research questions: What instructional effects do large classes have during the teaching-learning process? What social implications do large classes have on the teaching-learning process? What psychological implications do large classes have on the teaching-learning process?

Additionally, some studies related to the theme of the present research were included. One of them is the one conducted by Bahanshal (2013) which main purpose was to find out the influence that large classes have on the teaching-learning process. Among the limitations it was encountered that the number of participants in the study was not enough (6 English teachers) to give objective results and the approaches and methods used were only through the application of surveys but it was not considered the observations of English classes.

A second study that was taken into account was the one directed by Watson (2012) aimed to test the relation between class size and English language learning. No limitations were found at the moment of developing the research.

Another research that was considered was the one conducted by Cakmak (2009). Its principal objective was to establish students and teachers' insights regarding the impact that class size has during the teaching-learning process.

Among the limitations it was found that the research project presented some limitations, the study was based only in 41 student-teacher surveys taken from three different areas in one educational institution. Besides, the investigation was limited to obtain student teachers' point of view about the effect of class size into the classroom but not to establish a general background of the theme.

The present project has the intention of being a base for future investigations regarding the same topic or similar. It also can be a source of research for people involving in English language teaching and learning in order to know about the advantages of disadvantages of teaching in large classes.

Among the limitations, the present study collected information through some the questionnaires applied to students in five English classes, but it was not taken into account direct class observations to gather more details.

METHOD

Setting and Participants

The current research was conducted in two private and two public high schools located in the urban southern of Quito. The sample consisted of 183 students who were selected randomly. Some of them were enrolled in eighth, ninth, and tenth year of general basic education, while others attended first and second year of high school. Students' age oscillated between 12 and 17 years old and belonged to a middle social and economic status.

Procedures

The process of investigation started with the revision of literature from different sources such as: books and the Internet. In addition, it was researched 5 precious studies related to the influence that large classes have on the teaching-learning process. All the gathered information was set in the Literature Review section which supported the analysis of the results.

Parallel to the literature research, it was applied questionnaires to the selected sample which contained statements about educational, social and psychological aspects. The data was tabulated and placed in tables and graphs to facilitate the analysis.

A quantitative approach was used in order to have a statistical and numerical analysis as well as a qualitative method to describe, analyze and interpret the data collection. Finally, after analyzing the information, several conclusions and recommendations were drawn.

DISCUSSION

Literature Review

This section includes data related to the teaching-learning process of English in large classes. The study is focused on the influence that classes with a high number of students have on the teaching-learning process in English classes. This segment also contains information about some previous studies related to the theme of the present study.

Teaching approaches and methods.

It refers to the fundamental concepts and theories under what the English language teaching-learning process takes place. Each method is distinguished by their particular features.

Harley (2001) affirms that the use of adequate teaching approaches and methods allow learners to acquire a foreign language in order to communicate effectively inside and outside the classroom.

Grammar-Translation Method.

It is one of the earliest approaches. Byram and Hu (2013) imply that this method emphasizes the teaching-learning process in a deep study of grammar rules; the memorization of vocabulary and the translation of written material into the first language. Besides, they infer that the application of Grammar-Translation method into the classroom reduces notably the oral practice during English lessons.

On the other hand, Richards and Rodgers (2001) asseverates that Grammar-Translation Method focuses on the study of grammar structures and the application of it to translate texts into the aim language.

They say that the use of this method evidences that the first language is preserved as a reference during the learning of a second language. The practice of reading and writing skills are more important than speaking or listening.

The Direct Method.

Elizabeth (2010) mentions that this method involves a restriction in the use of the first language during the learning of a second one. She implies that the application of this method assures that students use the target language naturally and unconsciously.

Likewise, Mukalel (2005) states that this method underlines the importance of performing activities which involve a direct use of the language, taking into account environmental aspects such as people, objects, events and experience.

Communicative Language Teaching.

Larsen (2000) infers that communicative competence is the aim of the teaching-learning process. She states that communicative skills imply more than linguistic structures competence, it requires to go from a linguistic-centered approach to a communicative approach. The research implies that the use of authentic language in a real life context makes that learners find out what the interlocutor intends to transmit which becomes them more competent at speaking abilities. Similarly, Richards and Rodgers (2001) suggest that language learning is learning to communicate and the linguistic structures must be learned during the process of striving to communicate something. Students interact with each other as well in pairs, in groups, and during the application of this method, teachers act as guides inside the class, allowing the students to use their own words in order to communicate among them without taking into account learners' mistakes.

However, implementing this method seems to be a challenge for teachers, Benati (2009) asseverates that the application of this method involves very dynamic educators or even more, teachers providing a lot of motivation to encourage students' participation in communicative assignments. It also implies that when using this method the teachers' role is limited to be guiders while the students become in actors during the learning process.

Task based language teaching.

Lee, Ma, Pang, Walker, Chow and Li (2008) assert that Task based language teaching involves getting students' motivation by making the process of learning meaningful,

contextualized, interesting and challenging through activities. They consider the tasks as the fundamental elements not only for planning but also during the teaching-learning process.

Moreover, Richards and Rodgers (2001) infer that there are some principles under which Task based language teaching is applied: the different tasks that comprise real communication are vital during the learning process; the different assignments created by the teacher where the language is used to develop important issues, foster the language learning; language that makes sense to the learners help the learning process.

According to Said and Zhang (2013) to acquire a second language successfully does not depend only on a particular method or on a specific methodology the educators use to teach the content, but also on many factors, such as the teachers' experience, background and knowledge, the materials teachers use to impart the lessons, the socio cultural context, the students' needs and interest and of course the class size.

Class size.

There is a large debate about the optimum number of students in a class. Ehrenberg, Brewer, Gamoran, and Willms (2001) focused their goal to determine if there is a close relation between class size and academic achievement. They mention that class size is a decisive factor in the way students learn and it could also affect in the learners' social interaction.

Accordingly, Gibbs and Jenkins (2014) affirm that there is a connection between class size and teachers and students' attitudes. They state that teaching to small classes entail a better educational environment due to teachers can provide individualized instruction to the learners.

In this regard, Blatchford (2003) affirms that small classes not only foster a more comfortable classroom atmosphere but also teachers can exert a good classroom control; more sustained students' attention; and consequently language acquisition.

On the other hand, regarding large classes, Chadha (2004) as well as Thompson (2010) suggest that although large classes seem to be a problem, they can be successfully

managed by those teachers who are able to create positive and pleasant classroom environment.

Managing learning.

To this concern, Frino, Putcha, Gerngross and Lewis-Jones (2012) affirm that the key element for classroom management is clear instructions due to students get distracted easily, especially if attending a large class.

Dixie (2007) insists on the importance of simple and clear instructions not only to encourage the students to actively participate in the proposed assignments inside the class, but also to fulfill successfully the tasks the teachers have set. The study emphasizes on the need of speaking aloud when giving instructions to make sure that everyone in the class listen and comprehend them.

To complement this assertion, it is important to note what West (2010) finds relevant about instructions. She emphasizes that checking the students' body language and facial expressions assure that the information given has been understood.

With regard to feedback as other essential element of managing learning, Boud and Molloy (2013) consider it as a process that looks for students' improvement through the most helpful information provided by the teacher.

Likewise, Harmer (2011) defines feedback as the way to embrace not only correcting learners' mistakes but to assess students' performance as well. He also says that feedbacks the students in oral activities can be very helpful but depends on the type of tasks students are developing and the kind of student that receive the correction since it can result self-defeating to interrupt learners oral performance. Besides, the study suggests that it is more difficult to give feedback to large classes than to small ones.

Concerning *timing*, Savage and Savage (2009) state that learning is possible when students are provided with enough time to reach the academic goals. In this regard, Freeman and Richards (1996) assert that when classes are not productive teachers have made an improper time management.

Likewise, Felix (2011) reveals that a correct time management leads to a positive discipline as students keep engaged on their class activities. The author also emphasizes that a correct application of timing guarantee a successful learning achievement.

According to Walters and Frei (2007), discipline is the correct way to manage learners' behavior through the application of effective behavior strategies into the classroom. A similar point of view was stated by Purkey and Strahan (2002) and Carbone (1998) who claim that positive discipline is obtained when teachers get the students engaged in the classroom rules so they do not only follow the guidelines but make of them part of their daily activities, and the most important thing, learners become aware of the consequences in case of breaking these directions.

Managing large classes.

Regarding large classes management, Chadha (2004) declares that teaching overcrowded classes can become in teachers' panic. He admits that teaching to large classes requires that teachers make too much effort; perform an effective classroom management; and be involved in a constant academic preparation. He also mentions that another factor that needs to be considered by teachers is to be highly organized which result in an effective classroom control. The author admits that to manage large classes, teachers must take into account students' needs when planning the lessons as the only way to success and obtain positive behavior.

According to UNESCO (2006), teaching a large class means a big challenge for the participants since it offers them a lot of chances to make progress; enjoy the process; and getting rewards for both teachers and students. Teachers working with a big number of students per class encounter a diversity of students' learning style so educators can make use of a great variety of strategies based on a cumulative knowledge and students' experiences that can be used as interesting points to develop lesson plans.

On the other hand, Scrivener (2012) states that regardless of the number of students in the class, teachers can find creative ways to keep all the students engaged in the different

activities they have to perform inside the classroom. He asserts that even though students are trained to develop the same cognitive skills, teaching methods and approaches can slightly differ depending on the size of the class.

In the same way, Amini, Fremerey and Wesseler (2010) affirm that teaching to large groups seemed to be difficult but it is possible for teachers to surpass any problem through the implementation of innovative and creative activities that do not require more than teachers' determination inside the classroom, which can make that working with a high number of attendants per class become as rewarding as in small ones.

Activities for working in large classes.

Westphalen (2013) defines a large class as the "one in which I cannot make individual, protracted eye contact with each student in the room of a course of a standard 50-minute period, so a large class is more than 50 individuals".

Considering large classes and according to Vogt and Echavarria (2008), there are many effective activities to be worked in overcrowded classrooms. But these authors also asseverate that any activity must always promote proficient language learning. To achieve this goal, they propose activities that involve active participation and a high interaction level with each other and with the teacher.

In this regard, Westphalen (2013) affirms that group work is one of the most suitable strategies since this technique makes that part of the teaching responsibility lies on some students who act as tutors and who in some way support the teacher's role and when there is an appropriate monitoring, it allows feedback.

For instance: "gallery work" is an activity proposed by Vogt and Echavarria (2008) which consists of mixed-ability groups of four or five students with multiple charts posted around the room with a specific question or topic written on it.

Each group starts at one of the posters, with a specific color marker they answer the question. When they finish, the groups return to their original chart, read what the other groups have written and summarize all the information. Students can make some questions

to be answered by the chart group, points clarified and the teacher can lead into a whole class discussion.

About this topic, Killen (2006) asserts that whole class discussion is the activity that allows students to express their opinions in such a way that they can get to a consensus that allows them to reach a solution for a problem. The author insists on the practice of listening and speaking activities to develop discussion skills.

According to Richards and Renandya (2002), there are some other activities that work well in large classes. They asseverate that questioning, for example, is a valuable activity that not only fosters interaction among the participants but also helps teachers to assess students' interest and comprehension.

In the same way, the study advises on the use of role-play activities, which allow teachers to group students by creating a scenario where all the participants act. The authors insist on the implementation of this activity as a way to develop opportunities for both emotional and cognitive learning.

In addition, Ferris and Hedgcock (2004) suggest that some other important task to be developed in large classes consists of an appropriate, ordered and accurate production of as many words, phrases or ideas as fast as possible and which is known as "brainstorming". They ratify brainstorming as a primary activity to encourage students to think about the different aspects of a theme.

Besides, Snider and Schnurer (2002) show other activity that will fit the best when working with large classes: "debates", which is a useful tool to encourage students' participation in large classes. The authors suggest the application of this activity by making two groups of students who after having told the debate's topic, are supposed to express their thoughts in favor or against it. They asseverate that the practice of this strategy assures the improvement of speaking skill.

Finally, games and songs are interesting activities that lead to a successful language learning. Hicks and Littlejohn (2002) assert that through games and songs, the class is

provided with variety; social interaction; solid motivation; and a natural environment for using the language. The authors defend the idea that games and songs are not only a way for having fun inside the classroom, but also they are instruments for improving the learning process.

Classroom space and seating arrangement.

Unger (2011) states that a correct use of the classroom space brings along some meaningful advantages that go from discipline control, time saving and appropriate storage options to distraction reduction, productivity promotion and students' performance improvement. Besides, the study assures that instruction is more effective not only by organizing space, but also by planning carefully the students' desk arrangements, although there is not a seat layout better than other as Shepherd and Linn (2014) affirm.

Besides, Unger (2011) suggests the desks placed in groups of four or six are good strategies to work in large classes since it promotes cooperatives learning; allow a good traffic flow through the room due to the free space left between the pods. Finally, the study infers that working with groups facilitates teachers' monitoring.

In like manner, Williams (2008) points out the importance of having some empty spaces inside the classroom that allows students to move freely so they can feel more comfortable.

About the same theme, West (2010) proposes the "horseshoe" as a good technique which let the students to see each other. Similarly, Unger and West coincide that this kind of seating arrangement works better in small groups.

On the other hand, Shepherd and Linn (2014) asseverate that there is a good seating arrangement that fit well for both small and large classes. They refer to the desks placed in rows and columns. This approach is especially effective when using projectors. The authors imply that this strategy does not work to develop speaking activities.

Different levels of proficiency.

Littlejohn and Hicks (1998) and Coppola and Primas (2009) coincide in the premise that in any class, teachers will find students with different personalities, interests and likes and even more, different level of knowledge. However, Coppola and Primas (2009) assure that grouping students according to their proficiency level is ideal when learning a different language.

Bastkowski (2010) supports what was stated above, but he also infers that students should be evaluated considering their proficiency levels. The author affirms that although heterogeneity seems to be a problem for teachers, since this situation can make them feeling overwhelmed, they can cope with it by preparing lessons that motivate high level learners and encourage low level ones.

On the other hand, Ur (1999) states that different levels of proficiency, bring along with advantages into a large class due to the cumulus of ideas, interests and opinions that increases the interaction among the participants which redound in benefits during the learning process.

In addition to the bibliographical material mentioned above, it was researched some previous studies related to the subject of the present thesis in order to give further support to the investigation. One of them is the one conducted by Bahanshal (2013) which main purposes were to find out the influence that large classes have on the teaching-learning outcomes.

To achieve the specific objectives of this investigation, the qualitative method was used in order to classify data obtained through interviews which were applied to English language teachers in six high schools in Saudi Arabia. The questionnaires contain inquiries to establish teachers' insights concerning teaching English in large classes and to establish the adequate techniques and strategies to teach the target language in that environment. On the other hand, it was performed direct class observations to corroborate the information that teachers fulfilled during the interviews.

The results conclude that working with a high number of students in large classes has a direct impact on learners' achievement since the interviewed educators claim that although the effort they make into the class students' English level is not satisfactory.

A second study was the one conducted by Harfitt (2012) which main purpose was to explore through students' viewpoint, if the reduction of class size might aid to low students' level of stress during the teaching-learning process since it is known that it is caused by the number of attendants in each classroom.

To develop the investigation four case studies were considered as well in reduced class size (21-25 students) as in large ones (38-41 learners). Besides, group and individual interviews were applied to 231 students belonging to four high schools in Hong Kong. Students' surveys contained questions about learners' experiences in both large and small classes. In addition, 78 direct class observations were performed. Once the data was analyzed, conclusions and recommendations emerged. The outcomes reveal that students attending to small classes feel secure and selves-confident about assessments since they feel comfortable to actively participate in English tasks. This information was evidenced during classroom observations.

A third study taken into consideration was the one addressed by Cakmak (2009) which principal aims were to find out the students and teachers' perceptions regarding the influence of class size during the teaching-learning procedures.

To collect information, a sample consisted of 41 students-teachers were chosen randomly. They fulfilled some questionnaires which contained open-ended inquiries concerning the effects of class size with regard to the teaching-learning process.

The study showed that there is a close relation among class size and students' achievement; motivation, teaching methods used; classroom management; and assessment.

The fourth research taken into account was the one directed by Watson (2012). The study is aimed to test the relation between class size and English language learning.

To gather information, it was considered two variables: class size and learning. Students' achievement is taken as a measure to explore the learning process; and the size of the class is examined through the number of attendants per class; 984 English classes with 10-103 attendants in each classroom were taken as a sample.

The outcomes show that overcrowded classes do not allow an effective students' learning. Based on the findings, Watson suggests twenty five to forty five attendants as the limit of students per class in order to ensure a successful learning as well as a minimum number of negative effects.

Finally, a fifth study was considered relevant in this section and was the one conducted by Din (1999). The study investigated the functions of class size from teachers' perspectives and the influence on both teachers and students inside the class. In order to gather some information, a randomly sample was taken from a rural high school in China. In this district, a class with 50 students or more is considered as large while a class with 30 pupils or less is considered small. Three elementary and two secondary schools were selected for the sample. A questionnaire was applied to 55 teachers with five or more years of teaching experience. The survey contains open-ended questions about the perceptions on class size that Chinese rural teachers have.

The findings of the research suggest that the vast majority of the surveyed teachers consider that a class with 45-50 attendants is small while a class with 50 and more students is ponder as large. When teachers were asked about what size of class they prefer to work in, most of them (54 of 55) answered that in small ones. According to their cultural standards, Chinese teachers prefer to teach small classes since they believe that in classes with a lower number of attendants they can provide individual feedback to the learners, can have an effective classroom management and it becomes the teaching-learning process more effective. On the other hand, there was not encountered a direct relationship among class size and students performance. However there were found enough evidences that make that teachers select small classes as a better environment to teach.

Description, Analysis, and Interpretation of Results

This study was conducted in order to determine the possible implications that teachers and students face during the teaching-learning process in large classes in secondary schools. To this concern it was considered three fundamental aspects: instructional, social, and psychological implications.

This segment contains the data collected which is presented in tables and graphs to make easier its description; interpretation, and analysis. The analysis of the results is supported on the most relevant bibliographic material stated in the Literature Review.

Besides, this section includes some conclusions and recommendations which were obtained after the analysis was completed.

Quantitative analysis

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

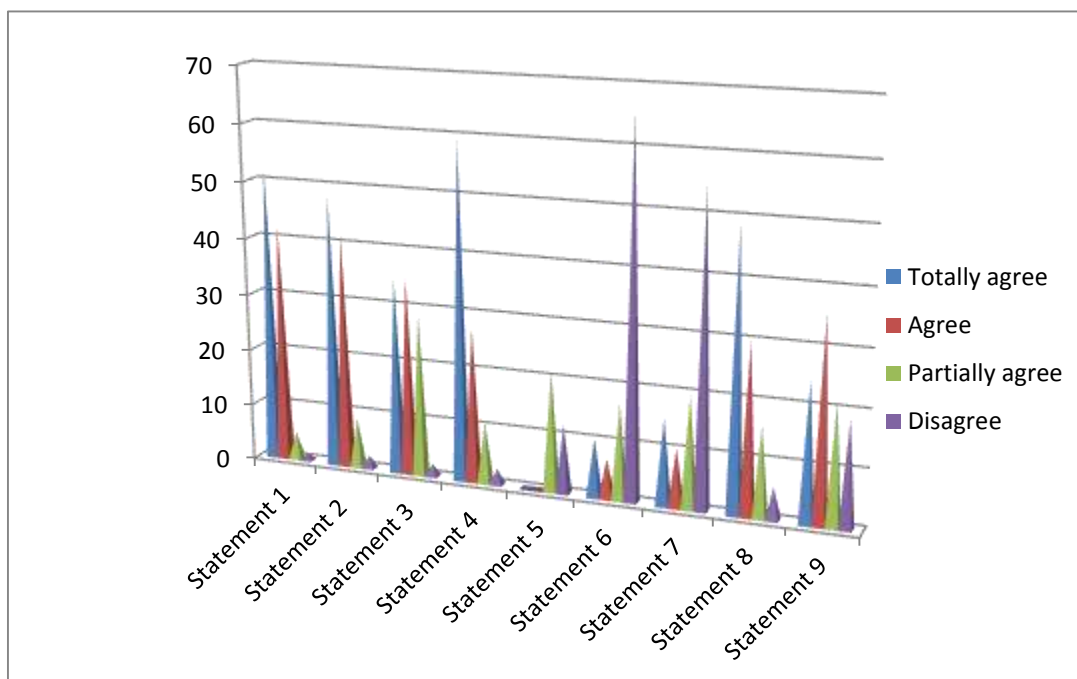
CHART 1

N°	In classes with a large number of students:	TOTALLY AGREE		AGREE		PARTIALLY AGREE		DISAGREE		TOTAL	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
1	The activities in class help to apply what students learn in class.	95	51,91	77	42,08	9	4,92	2	1,09	183	100
2	The activities done allow to practice listening, speaking, reading and writing skills.	87	47,54	76	41,53	16	8,74	4	2,19	183	100
3	The students are attentive and participate in class activities, including those sitting at the back of the classroom.	63	34,43	64	34,97	52	28,41	4	2,19	183	100
4	Varied class activities are used such as group, individual, pair-work activities, etc.	118	59,02	50	27,32	20	10,93	5	2,73	183	100
5	Activities such as plays, competitions, debates, games, etc. are used in class.	52	28,42	70	38,25	39	21,31	22	12,02	183	100
6	Students can cheat during the test.	19	10,38	13	7,10	31	16,94	120	65,58	183	100
7	Students get distracted by doing assignments from other subjects.	28	15,30	19	10,38	36	19,67	100	54,65	183	100
8	The seating arrangement facilitates the tasks that are carried out in class.	89	48,63	55	30,06	29	15,85	10	5,46	183	100
9	Students cannot receive regular feedback from the teacher due to the large number of students.	45	24,59	65	35,52	39	21,31	34	18,58	183	100

Source: Students' questionnaire

Author: Tania Sánchez

Graph 1



Source: Students' questionnaire

Author: Tania Sánchez

The results set in table 1, statement 1, demonstrate that according to most of the students' responses (93.99%) the activities carried out into the large class help the learners to apply what they have already learnt; on the contrary, only 6.01% of the surveyed students answered negatively.

UNESCO (2006) infers that teachers who work with a big number of students per class encounter a diversity of students' learning style so educators can make use of a great variety of strategies based on a cumulative knowledge and students' experiences that can be used as interesting points to develop lesson plans.

The answers to statement 2, concerning to the activities that allow students to practice of listening, speaking, reading and writing skills into the large class, show that the vast majority of the population of the sample (89.07%) thinks that the different assignments teachers implement into a large class are appropriate to enhance the four abilities, since a little percentage of the respondent students (10.93%) disagree.

The information stated above clearly shows that in large classes it is possible to perform activities to practice the four skills in order to foster the acquisition of the foreign language. In this regard, UNESCO (2006) infers that what really matters is not the class size but the quality of the teaching.

Statement 3 results show, there is a great percentage of surveyed learners (69.40%) who believes that in large classes it is possible to participate actively during the different assignments that teachers design. However there is another percentage (30.61%) who thinks that in classes with a large number of pupils, active participation is difficult.

Regarding participation in large classes, and according to Vogt and Echavarria (2008), there are many effective activities to be worked in overcrowded classrooms. But these authors also asseverate that any activity must always promote proficient language learning. To achieve this goal, they propose activities that involve active participation and a high interaction level with each other and with the teacher.

The results obtained for statement 4, show that a great amount of the respondents learners (86.34%) agree that the activities they develop inside a large class foster individual; pair group; and group work. A minimum percentage of the respondents (13.66%) disagree.

Regarding this topic, UNESCO (2006) infers that to manage an effective learning in large classes and to get cooperative attitudes among the students, group exercises can be developed as well inside the class as outside of it. Group activities let students to work together to solve any problem which is called as cooperative learning. Also the study mentions that when students work in pairs, they can help each other and also learn from each other. Likewise, when pupils work in groups, they have more opportunities to create a sense of community (collaborative learning). Finally, it states that working in small groups encourages shy students to participate actively in a large class.

Statement 5 intends to get some information related to the use of activities such as: role plays, competitions, debates and games that students develop in large classes. The results show that two thirds of the answers (66.67%) confirm their application while only a

third part of it (33.33%) assures they do not practice this kind of activities into the large class, which means that some teachers do not make use of these important strategies during the lesson plan.

Richards and Renandya (2002) infer there are some activities that work well into large classes. They suggest that the application of role-play activities allows teachers to group students by creating a scenario where all the participants act. They say that to practice interactive assignments such as role plays, games, discussion and some others give the learners the opportunity to participate and interact with both partners and teachers as well.

Similarly, UNESCO (2006) asseverates that there are some strategies and techniques teachers can apply to lead the learners to participate actively in large classes but teachers have to select the accurate activity that fit better to get the lessons objectives. For instance, simulations and games or role plays are some of the activities teachers can apply inside the class in order to make that students be involved in situations of the real life which becomes them empathic.

The results stated for statement 6 referring to cheating on tests show that a few percentage of the students (17.48%) agree that there is a possibility of deceiving in an assessment activity. While, a vast majority of the surveyed learners (82.51%) points out that it is impossible to copy during a test in a large class. The results can be due to some teachers have a vast experience at managing large groups or the learners did not respond consciously during the surveys.

Regarding managing learning in large classes, Blatchford (2003) affirms that deceiving during tests without being noticed by the teacher is possible because of the lack of individual monitoring teachers face in large classes.

To the same theme, De la Mater, Myers and Collett (2014) imply that cheating on exams can occur on multiple-choice and true-false questions than on essay exams.

To continue with the analysis, the results for statement 7 infer that a minority group of students (25.68%) agree getting distracted by doing assignments of other subjects, while a

substantial majority (74.31%) does not. It means that teachers have a good control of the discipline into the large classroom. However, the negative responses evidence that there are a small group of learners that deceives the teacher doing other tasks because of the number of learners in a large class.

Regard to this topic, Seidel, Perencevich, and Kett (2006) consider that doing assignments from other subjects can be pondered as a way of distraction. They say that students who are exposed to this kind of distractors show a difference in achievement with those who do not. They asseverate that to prevent that students do other activities they should manage their large classes adequately.

Concerning to the results obtained for statement 8, which deals with getting to know if seating arrangement facilitates the tasks carried out in a large class. Students' answers show that a high percentage of the surveyed students (78.68%) perceive that how teachers place the seats during the class time benefit the development of tasks into the large class, while a small percentage of them (21.49%) disagree with the assertion.

To this concern, Shepherd and Linn (2014) asseverate that there is a good seating arrangement that fit well to work with large groups of students. They refer to the desks placed in rows and columns. This approach is especially effective when using projectors. The authors imply that this strategy does not work to develop speaking activities.

On the other hand, the learners' responses for statement 9 indicate that a little more than half of the participants (60.11%) think there is lack of feedback because of the large number of students into the class. Otherwise, almost a forty percent (39.89%) of the surveyed students affirms being provided with it. According to the results it can be said that most of the teachers who manage large classes face problems to give an adequate feedback to the whole class.

To this concern, Blatchford, (2003) states that in large classes, teachers have fewer opportunities for monitoring; checking students' understandings; and, offering an appropriate and immediate feedback than in small ones. Likewise, Fishman and O'Connor (2013) point

out that feedback can be implemented through the use of adequate strategies. One of them is peer interaction, not only to make that students express their knowledge but also to give individual aid in large classes.

The most outstanding implications of the instructional aspect in the teaching-learning process in large classes, point out that the surveyed students perceive that in this kind of classes it is possible to develop different activities such as group work, pair group and others which benefit the teaching-learning process of English in large classes. Something important to highlight is the teachers' ability to promote students' active participation including the ones who sit at the back of the class.

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

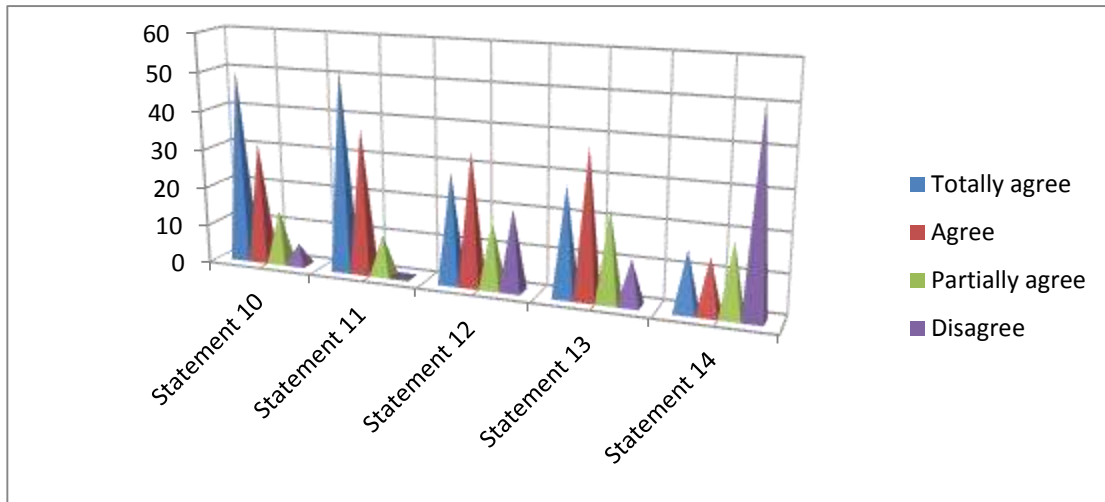
CHART 2

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.	91	49,73	57	31,15	25	13,66	10	5,46	183	100
11	Students have the opportunity to build relationships with their classmates.	95	51,91	68	37,16	19	10,38	1	0,55	183	100
12	The teacher has problems remembering all the student's names.	52	28,42	62	33,88	31	16,94	38	20,77	183	100
13	The atmosphere is less stressful since the teacher does not ask several questions to the same student	51	27,87	69	37,70	42	22,95	21	11,48	183	100
14	It is easier for students to use their cellphone or any other mobile device without being seen by the teacher.	28	15,30	26	14,21	34	18,58	95	51,91	183	100

Source: Students' questionnaire

Author: Tania Sánchez

Graph 2



Source: Students' questionnaire

Author: Tania Sánchez

This section analyses the students' perceptions regarding some aspects of social implications into a large class. The results for statement 10, related to the proper balance of student-student and teacher-student interaction in large classes demonstrated that a vast majority of students' responses (80.88%) affirm that there is an appropriate students' interaction and also teacher-student interaction in large classes. On the contrary, a little percentage (19.12%) of the respondent learners thinks that the interaction with all the members of the community in large classes is not feasible.

Regarding interaction, Richards and Renandya (2002) state that there are some other activities that work well in large classes. They asseverate that questioning, for example, is a valuable activity that not only fosters interaction among the participants but also helps teachers to assess students' interest and comprehension. Besides, they advise on the use of role-play activities, which allow teachers to group students by creating a scenario where all the participants interact.

To continue with the results, is was encountered that to statement 11, a great number of students (89.07%) perceive that in large classes they have the opportunity to build relationships with their classmates, and a minimum percentage (10.93%) thinks that having relationships with their peers is difficult in these kind of classrooms. The positive responses

can be due to most of the learners attends to the same educational institution for a long period of time.

To this concern, Bosch (2006) asseverates that a good classroom management and a good classroom environment include fostering positive students' relationships not only among teachers-students but students-students as well, which create a sense of community to facilitate the learning process inside the classroom. In large classes it is possible for teachers to encourage learners' relationships by giving them more opportunities to work together which let them to meet one another.

As it is shown in table 2, the results for statement 12 point out that a little more than half of the sample (62.30%) agrees that teachers have problems to remind their names during into the large class. On the other hand, the remaining percentage of students' responses (37.71%) assures that teachers can easy remember all the students' names even though they work with a large number of students per class.

UNESCO (2006) implies that something that helps teachers to remember students' names in a large class is by dividing the class into small groups which makes that teachers can remember eight or nine students' names per each group, which it is easier than remembering all the 50-60 faces of students in a large class.

The same institution refer that another strategy to remember students' names in large classes is by asking two or three students each day to act like "class assistants". These pupils will be in charge of delivering the material to their classmates and other functions which make that teachers learn their names and finally all the students' names.

With respect to the results for statement 13, a little more than half of the surveyed population (65.57%) describes a large classroom atmosphere as less stressful since teachers do not ask questions to the same students all the time; while almost the third (34.43%) of the students asseverates they feel anxiety into the large class.

To this concern, Ur (1999) suggests that the application of productive teaching strategies can redound in an adequate learning environment where teachers and learners

can feel comfortable to work and improve the results during the teaching-learning process into a large class.

Continuing, the results stated in table 2 statement 14, show that a quarter of the sample (29.51%) perceives that students in large classes have more opportunities to use cellphones or any other device without being seen by the teacher; while (70.49%) of the surveyed students disagree with the asseveration.

The results obtained through the surveys show that most of the teachers manage large classes adequately and control students' behavior inside the large class, since a little percentage of students asseverate the opposite, which can probably happen because some educators are not able to move around the whole class due to a tightened space and a large number of students into the class.

According to the results, it is clear that there are not negative social implications during the process of teaching and learning in large classes, since there is an active interaction between all the participants; most of the learners are able to build good relationships with their partners; and, although most of the surveyed students perceive that teachers do not remember all the students' names, most of the teachers are able to control the use of electronic appliances inside the class, which means that there is an effective control of students' behavior.

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

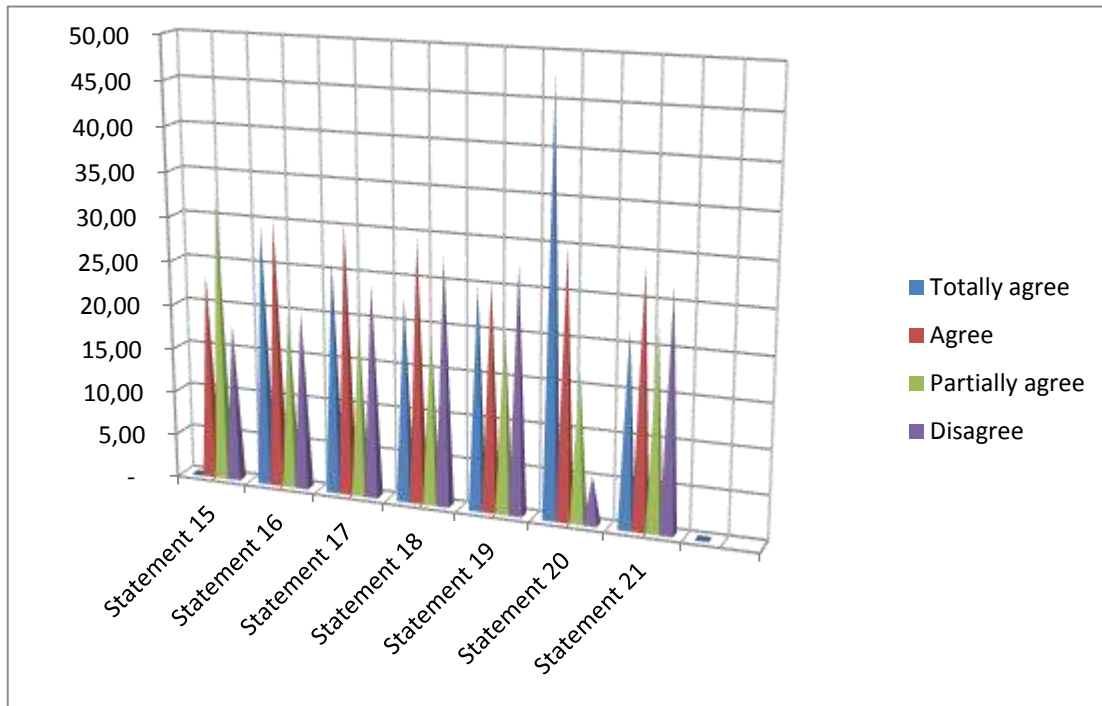
CHART 3

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.	48	26,33	43	23,50	59	32,34	33	18,03	183	100
16	Students feel inhibited when speaking in front of the rest.	54	29,51	56	30,30	36	19,67	37	20,22	183	100
17	Students do not have the opportunity to express their opinions	48	26,23	56	30,60	35	19,13	44	24,04	183	100
18	Students do not like to participate because they feel afraid.	42	22,95	54	29,51	36	19,67	51	27,87	183	100
19	The teacher does not pay equal attention to all his/her students.	46	25,14	47	25,68	39	21,31	51	27,87	183	100
20	Students feel they can act competitively with other students.	87	47,54	55	30,05	31	16,94	10	5,46	183	100
21	Students feel relaxed because they can go unnoticed.	40	21,86	53	28,96	41	22,40	49	26,78	183	100

Source: Students' questionnaire

Author: Tania Sánchez

Graph 3



Source: Student's questionnaire

Author: Tania Sánchez

Concerning psychological implications during the teaching learning process in large classes, students' perceptions obtained through the surveys demonstrate that 49.83% of the students think that attending to large classes is stressful; while the other 50.37% disagree with the asseveration stated in statement 15, table 3. According to the results obtained it can be deduced that students' viewpoints are divided, it can occur due to the different personalities and English proficiency students have which makes they feel anxious in a large class.

To this concern, Littlejohn and Hicks (1998) and Coppola and Primas (2009) coincide in the premise that in any class, teachers will find students with different personalities, interests and likes and even more, different level of knowledge.

Likewise, Bastkowski (2010) infers that students should be evaluated considering their proficiency levels. The author affirms that although heterogeneity seems to be a problem for teachers, since this situation can make them feeling overwhelmed, they can cope with it by preparing lessons that motivate high level learners and encourage low level ones.

The results for statement 16 show that a little more than the half of the surveyed population (59.91%) confirmed the students' inhibition when speaking in front of their classmates in large classes, while a little more than the third of the students (39.89%) points out their disagreement with the statement.

The results obtained can evidence that making mistakes in front of an overcrowded class can produce that some students feel inhibited and being teased by their classmates during oral assignments, especially those with low self-esteem.

To this respect, UNESCO (2006) states that one of the techniques that teachers can apply inside a large class is making that the students can express their own opinions. Teachers must give to their pupils the opportunity to speak in class during the first weeks of starting school by encouraging them to actively take part in debate activities. Teachers can arrange the class into small groups, especially at the beginning of the school year in order to reach that shy students participate.

As it can be observed in statement 17, the results indicate that a little more than the half of researched students (56.83%) agree with the statement that affirms that in large classes, they do not have opportunity to express their opinions; while an important percentage (43.17%) affirms the opposite.

The answers that respond to this statement demonstrate that almost half of the respondent students do not have the possibility to express by themselves which can occur due to in classes with a large amount of attendants might be difficult that all the learners have the same opportunities to participate.

To this point, UNESCO (2006) mentions that there are some strategies and techniques teachers can apply to lead the learners to participate actively in large classes but teachers have to select the accurate activity that fit better to get the lessons objectives. For instance, simulations and games or role plays are some of the activities teachers can apply inside the class in order to make that students be involved in situations of the real life which becomes them empathic.

To continue with the analysis it was found that the results for statement 18 evidence that half of the students (52.46%) perceives that they do not like to participate in large classes, because they feel afraid; while almost half of the responses (47.54%) clarify that it is not so difficult to perform some activities in overcrowded classes.

The results denote the fear students feel when they have to participate in class overall when they are exposed to a large number of students. This situation might occur as the result of the lack of self-confidence and also the low level of proficiency of the foreign language.

Regarding this theme, UNESCO (2006) infers that to make that students develop speaking activities in large classes is a big challenge since to speak in front of a large audience make that the students face a lot of stress; while in small classes, students are more confident to develop oral assignments.

To continue with the analysis, it was observed that the results for statement 19 show that half of the surveyed students (52,46%) believe that teachers do not pay equal attention to all of the students in large classes, while almost the other half (47,54%) confirm the whole class receive the same kind of attention during the class time.

According to the outcomes stated above, it can be said that teachers do not impart attention to all the students in the same way. This situation may occur due to the large number of attendants in large classes; or they work in multilevel classes where students have different background.

In this regard, Sadovnik, O'Day, Bohrnstedt and Borman (2013) state that although some educators give the same attention to all the students in large classes, many teachers dedicate more time to students with higher motivation or better accomplishment.

As it is shown in statement 20, the majority of respondents (77.59%) feel they can compete actively with their classmates. On the other hand, students in a minimum percentage (22.4%) do not agree with the asseveration.

These results confirm that large classes do not limit the opportunities of academic competition even more if students are appropriately stimulated by the teachers. Through competitiveness, students in a group, can experience cohesion and group spirit. This may explain the answer given by the majority of the surveyed students.

Regarding this topic, Agarwal (2010) states that human being does not act in isolation. His or her behavior is the result of the relationship with other people. This author asseverates that the individuals who are the most probable to survive in this society are the ones who are empowered to do it because of their group.

Finally, according to the results for statement 21, it is observable that half of the respondents (50.82%) confirm they feel relax in large classes because of being unnoticed by the teachers during the class time. However, almost the other half of the surveyed students (49.18%), disagree with the statement.

The results stated above demonstrate that in there are a high percentage of students who perceives they are unnoticed by their teachers. It might happen due to some teachers do not make adequate seating arrangement which benefit the control of the teaching-learning process especially in large classes.

Okoth & Ndaloh (2008) affirm that shy learners may be reluctant to participate during the lesson activities. They also imply that large classes make reluctant students. They often sit at the back of the classroom which is a good site for them to go unnoticed.

The summary of psychological implications in large classes during the process of teaching and learning, evidence that half of the surveyed students perceive that the atmosphere in crowded groups is stressful; they agree that in large classes they are not able to participate very often; followed by other high percentage of students who feel inhibited to develop speaking activities in front of their classmates. In addition, in crowded groups the teacher cannot pay equal attention to all the students. However, according to the results there is a positive aspect to be considered in table 3 since most of the learners agree that in large classes they have the opportunity to compete healthily with their counterparts.

CONCLUSIONS

- Regarding instructional implications and according to students' perceptions, the size of the class does not affect greatly the process of teaching and learning given that teachers in large classes foster the development of activities which involve the practice of what the learners have learnt which also let them to practice the four skills.
- The study implies that teachers who manage large groups of students are able to make adequate seating arrangements, which allow students to work in pairs, group work, and individually.
- The results show that in large classes teachers face some troubles to feedback all the students after the different activities they develop into the class, because of the great amount of pupils into the class.
- With regard to social implications in classes with a big number of attendants, students' perceptions show that teachers in this environment are able to enhance interactive activities not only between student-student but among teacher-student as well.
- Regarding the same aspect, students' insights evidence that in large classes they have more opportunities to strengthen ties of friendship with their peers, which facilitate the process of teaching and learning English during the class time.
- With regard to psychological implications students perceive that the number of learners per class affects the normal development of the activities since they think the environment of a large class inhibit their speaking during the English classes and they do not receive equal attention by their teachers.
- Students in large classes are able to compete healthily with their counterparts, which increases their motivation and participation during academic assignments into the class.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Teachers, who manage large groups of learners, should encourage high level learners to give support to low level ones in order to overcome lack of feedback due to the big numbers of pupils into the class.
- Teachers who work in large classes should create a reliable atmosphere where all the students feel empathy which fosters the normal development of the activities in order to make that students do not feel stressed when performing speaking activities.
- Teachers should apply updated strategies and techniques during the class time to make that all the students be involved during the teaching learning process since there are some learners who requires more attention from their tutors.

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ANNEXES

STUDENTS' SURVEY



UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA PARTICULAR DE LOJA

La Universidad Católica de Loja

OPEN AND DISTANCE MODALITY

ENGLISH DEGREE

Dear student,

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

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

Informative data: Please fill in the information below

Name of institution: _____

Type of institution: Public () Private ()

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

City: _____

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

A. Academic issues

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

B. Social issues

Nº	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!