



UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA PARTICULAR DE LOJA
La Universidad Católica de Loja

ÁREA SOCIO HUMANÍSTICA

**TÍTULO DE LICENCIADO EN CIENCIAS DE LA EDUCACIÓN
MENCIÓN INGLÉS**

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

TRABAJO DE TITULACIÓN

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CENTRO UNIVERSITARIO GUAYAQUIL

2017



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2017

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DEDICATION

To God with infinite love and affection, who gives me the opportunity of being alive and be able to carry out this thesis and fulfill one of my life goals.

To my beloved parents Angel and Marlene, for all their unconditional and constant guidance, not only during this hard and long way but all along my existence. They were a source of strength and encouragement, I am deeply grateful.

To my sisters Adriana and Valeria, nephew Lucas and Grandmother Carlota María. The culmination of this work would not have been possible without the patience, numerous prayers, love and support.

This achievement is all dedicated to them.

Samuel Arturo Sánchez Ávila

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I express my appreciation to all who took part in the development of this project and made this long journey possible.

I am especially grateful to my family, who encouraged my studies, supported my efforts and always believed in me unconditionally.

I thank Mónica, Mayuri and Kenny from “Unidad Educativa Evangélica Ciencia y Fé”, for opening the doors of their prestigious Institution and allowing me to observe their classrooms and carry out this study.

My deep and sincere gratitude to the “Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja”, which gave me the opportunity to obtain the degree of “Licenciado en Ciencias de la Educación, mención Ingles”.

Thanks to Mgtr. Marcelo Paredes, my advisor, who assisted and guided me on this thesis project.

Finally, I owe special thanks to my former boss Carlos as well as my current boss Ricky. Both allowed me have time off in order to be able to focus and complete my study matters.

Samuel Arturo Sánchez Ávila

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ABSTRACT

This research analyzes the influence of large classes in the English language teaching-learning process. The purpose of the study is to determine whether large classes affect or not the process of teaching and learning of English.

The method applied for this research was quantitative, based on students' surveys. The study was conducted in five different classrooms of a private high school located in the city of Guayaquil. The investigation process started by analyzing the instructional, social and psychological implications of large classes in the teaching-learning process. Special attention is paid to the teacher's skills and experience, the technologies used in class, as well as the attitudes of classmates, class space and other conditions that could limit the English teaching-learning process.

Once the research was conducted, it was possible to determine that even though the activities developed by the teacher in the large classroom environment, promote students participation, competition and contribution, not all of them have the opportunity to participate and obtain regular feedback, which can affect directly on students behavior, motivation and discipline, nevertheless, this does not limit the interaction among the teachers and students.

KEYWORDS: class size, implications, environment, feedback, interaction.

RESUMEN

Esta investigación analiza el impacto de las clases numerosas en el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje de lengua inglesa. El propósito de este estudio es determinar si las clases numerosas afectan o no el proceso de enseñanza y de aprendizaje del Inglés.

El método aplicado en esta investigación fue de tipo cuantitativo, basada en encuestas a estudiantes. El estudio se llevó a cabo en cinco aulas diferentes de un colegio privado ubicado en la ciudad de Guayaquil. El proceso de investigación para este estudio comenzó con el análisis de las implicaciones institucionales, sociales, así como el pensamiento psicológico del proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje en el entorno de un salón de clases con un número grande de estudiantes. Se presta especial atención a las habilidades y experiencia del profesor, las tecnologías utilizadas en clase, así como las actitudes de los compañeros, el espacio de clase y otras condiciones que pudiera limitar el proceso de enseñanza y aprendizaje del inglés.

Una vez concluida la investigación, se pudo determinar que a pesar de que las actividades desarrolladas por el profesor en un entorno con gran número de estudiantes, promueve tanto la participación, competitividad, así como la contribución de los estudiantes, no todos ellos tienen la oportunidad de participar y obtener retroalimentación apropiada, lo cual puede afectar directamente su comportamiento, motivación y disciplina, sin embargo, esto no limita la interacción entre los profesores y estudiantes.

PALABRAS CLAVE: tamaño de clases, las implicaciones, ambiente, retroalimentación, interacción.

INTRODUCTION

English is becoming more and more popular around the planet as minutes go by. This is not an isolated issue since we live now in a globalized world. Hence, it is useful for communication and interaction in our daily living. The main reason why English should be the medium of instruction at elementary schools of Ecuador as well as other countries is that it gives students a positive contribution to their future professional development.

In general terms, teachers of a foreign language tend to grow in number and enhance teaching skills and become experienced enough to contribute in a positive way with the teaching-learning process. Nowadays, several government programs have been developed in order to implement and create an English learning culture. Scholarships and special facilities have been created for teachers to enhance their skills to transmit this beautiful language through the creation of proper conditions that will help pupils to feel even more comfortable while they learn. When talking about a comfortable class atmosphere, it means that a class is composed with all the extra elements such as good ventilation, technological innovations as well as positive attitude, and of course class space. This last situation is one of the biggest problems often encountered in teaching English as a foreign language is the large number of students. English teachers do not prefer teaching large classes because of the many problems they have during classes. Despite teachers around the globe complaining about large classes, the problem is real and its consequences on teaching are reflected in the students' attitudes and achievement.

This study aims at answering three questions as follows: 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?

Haddad (2006), Harmer (2007) and Heppner (2007), among other analyzed the influence of large classes and the effect on the teaching-learning process, and lead us to classroom management, and introduce practical tips as solutions to the problems that teacher could come across with. The results indicate that most of the teachers are aware of the skills taught during the teacher-training program and they usually have good management skills. It also proved that it is really effective and useful to provide teachers with teacher training programs for classroom management skills. Shamin (2003), focused his research to find out the problems that Pakistani teachers face in large classes, what instructional or management techniques they use in large classes and what techniques they would use if they had an ideal number of students in their class.

Harfitt (2012) undertook a research project in order to investigate if stress associated with learning in large classes could be eliminated by significantly reducing the number of students in over populated classes. The results of this research indicates that while students were participating in small classes, the class as a whole felt more secure and the anxiety of being critically evaluated by teachers and peers seemed to be reduced. In addition, students had more confidence in taking part in the English class.

This study will certainly have a positive impact not only on teachers, students, and to public and private educational institutions, but also constitute a starting point to

further studies carried by researcher or college students that are involved in the teaching-learning process in general terms.

One limitation found is that there were not enough questions as well as the size of the sample is too small to generalize findings, but helps to provide the perception of the individuals that were consulted. Another experienced limitation is that only students were asked about the influence of large classes, and the information collected do not reflect the teacher's point of view.

CHAPTER I: LITERATURE REVIEW

It includes topics related to foreign language education with special focus on the use and importance of the implications related to a classroom environment and the interaction between its participants.

Throughout the world, when people with different languages come together they commonly use English to communicate since it is the language most widely used across the world and used language among foreign language speakers. For this reason, speaking English can allow you to travel and do business and still be able to talk to a large majority of people no matter where you are around the globe.

In Ecuador, English is the language that is officially taught in public and private educational institutions. The main reason why English should be the medium of instruction at elementary schools of Ecuador as well as other countries is that it gives students a positive contribution to their future professional development and helps to find high quality jobs. It is well known that the most important language in business life is English.

In addition to this, high quality jobs need a good handling of English. Therefore, companies all over the world can easily extend their relationships to other countries, and these companies generally employ graduates whose English is fluent. In despite of China is having a remarkable technological growth, the United States is still a leader in technical innovation, investigation and economic development. Fewell (2010), states that “This language is widely used in each of these fields. English is now spoken as a

first language by approximately 380 million people around de globe, as a second language or as a foreign language by a billion”.

In addition, along this review, it will be explained among the other kinds of approaches, methods and features, which allow and facilitate Educators to pass on the English language knowledge to their pupils all over Ecuador. The topics to be discussed are teaching approaches and methods, class size, managing learning, managing large classes, activities for working with large classes, seating arrangement and classroom space, different levels of proficiency.

Teaching approaches and methods

Teaching approaches, according to Harmer (2007) describes how people acquire their knowledge of the language and makes statements about the conditions, which will promote successful language learning. He also states that a method is the practical realization of an approach. These sequences of techniques are considered a teacher’s personal behavior at the moment of teaching. Among the various types of methods used by educators in classes all over is the Grammar Translation Method. This method dates back to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It was originally used to teach dead language such as Latin and Greek. (Thuleen, 1996).

It was also known as the classical method, the same that was based on the belief that different kinds of knowledge were located in separate parts of the brain. As a result, learning another language provided the necessary mental exercise to develop the section of the brain believed to be the marked for languages. In other words, the goal of this technique is to learn a language in order to read it literature or advantage from the intellectual development that results from the acquisition of a foreign language.

Another approach to be taken into account is the Audio-Lingual Method (ALM) which emphasis is on memorization of a series of dialogues and the rote practice of language structures. The basic premises on which the method was based were that language is speech, not writing, and language is a set of habits. It was believed that much practice of the dialogues would develop oral language proficiency (Zainuddin, Yahya, Morales, & Whelan, 2011). This information suggests that language laboratories began to surge, and students were required to listen to audiotapes and repeat dialogues that captured aspects of daily living. Furthermore, specific structural patterns of the language studied were embedded in those dialogues. Students were required to participate in a number of practice drills designed to help them memorize the structures and be able to plug other words into the structure.

Freeman, Y., & Freeman, D. (1998), mentions that Suggestopedia was developed by Bulgarian psychiatrist educator Georgi Lozanov (1982), who wanted to eliminate the psychological barriers that people have to learning. This technique uses drama, art, physical exercise, and desuggestive and suggestive communicative psychotherapy as well as the traditional modes of listening, speaking, reading, and writing to teach a second language. In this manner, the meaning of words can be learnt only in linguistic context. It is teacher centered and relies on drills and practice.

Additionally, we have the Silent Way method, the same that requires that the teachers remain silent much of the time, thus its name. In this technique, pupils are responsible for their own learning. Based on the belief that students are initiators of learning and capable of independently acquiring language, the Silent Way provides a classroom environment in which this can take place (Zainuddin, Yahya, Morales, &

Whelan, 2011). In this way, the teacher models once, and the students are then given the opportunity to work together to try to reproduce what has been modeled

Furthermore, Psychologist James Asher developed the total physical response (TPR) method in 1974. This method is based on the principle that people learn better when they are involved physically as well as mentally. In TPR, students are required to respond to a series of nonverbal commands as it is based on the principle that people learn better when they are involved physically as well as mentally.

Also, Terrell (1977) suggested that the entire class period be devoted to communication activities rather than to explanation of grammatical aspects of language. The Natural Approach Technique describes as main goal to develop immediate communicative competency. For this reason, most, if not all, classroom activities are designed to encourage communication.

Harmer (2007) also explained that students also need to be aware of the need for appropriacy when talking and writing to people in terms of the kind of language they use, even formal or informal.

According to Krashen (1994), acquisition is a natural process, similar to the way children develop ability in their first language. It is subconscious process when students are not aware of the fact they are acquiring language but are using the language for communication.

Finally, we have the Communicative Language teaching (CLT). Shejbalová (2006) states that the main goal in this approach is for the learner to become communicatively competent. The learner develops competency in using the language appropriately in given social contexts. Thus, the need to communicate is authentic

because communication must take place to narrow the gaps between speakers and accomplish the task.

Class size (number of students)

Blatchford (2003) exemplifies that there is not much research regarding the effects of class size differences on teachers and students. The size of the classroom is a very important environment feature to be taken into account. It is significant to remind that it is made up of individuals, the majority of whom would like to be attended by the teacher directly. He also states that most teachers in large classes probably would have to be brief when providing acknowledgement such as a gesture, mimes, a smile or a word of support, but no matter how brief, its importance must always be underlined. On the other hand, in smaller classes the teacher ought to be able to give more personalized heed to every student, especially if it is requested. Teachers of the small classes is able to stay with one small group, the one the educator feels is needed for help, for more or less the whole class session. In this way, pupils may receive sustained attention and he/she is able to offer immediate feedback.

Likewise, Gower and Walters (2005) stated that preferable every single student must be given the chance to repeat any new language; have their errors corrected; have independent assignments if necessary; believe that they are an important part of lass in equal proportion. Indeed, the bigger the class, the more complicated is to reach information. Teachers in large classes probably would have to be brief when providing acknowledgement such as a smile, a gesture, a word of support, but no matter how brief, we must always underline its importance. In other words, in smaller classes the teacher ought to be able to give more personalized heed to every student, especially if it is

requested. According to his research every teacher feels that the main advantage of having a small class is that he or she can be aware of children individually, and that this informed direct feedback about her teaching, for instance in terms of questions to children, the educator acknowledges who knows and do not know something. Nevertheless, English is taught in a number of public schools to groups larger than 100 students.

Harmer (2007) points out that public school classes in several countries have up to 30 students, while in a private school of language the number is around 8 and 15 students. This information suggests that that the size of the class will influence education. The larger the class the more the attention is divided and it is more difficult to accomplish the ideal of every student being attended to their own individual needs.

Furthermore, He also states that when referring to the term “student’s needs”, it is noticed that this is subjective and complex as it describes a broad range of specific learning difficulties and so there is a great deal to explore in this field. For example, it might refer to a group of students with specific disabilities such as dyslexia, hyperactivity or any other sort of conditions that in some cases, not even the students are aware of them.

Moreover, Shamin (2003) points out that bases on results from her research that class size is neither an independent nor the controlling variable in the classroom, as it was once assumed to be. In fact, class size is perceived by the participants in relation to other variables in the teaching-learning situation. Also, it seems to interact with and upon other variables to produce an effect -positive or negative - on both the social aspect as well as the substantive content of a lesson. Thus, firstly, future research on large

classes needs to take cognizance of other factors that impinge on and/or interact with class size to bring about a change in the dynamics in the classroom, and consequently, in learning and achievement.

Managing learning (instructions, feedback, discipline, and timing)

Setting rules of conduct on classroom management has focused on student participation in establishing codes of conduct. Attwell (2007) suggests that students should actively participate in the creation of guidelines governing classroom behavior. According to his point of view, best practices recommend minimize the number of rules. It is very common for a child or adolescent to recommend a long list of rules however, teachers should provide limited structural input so that rules are direct, clear, and consistent, and encourage positive behavior. In addition, they must make sure that rules are designed to support a concept of consequences for inappropriate behavior rather than punishment task.

Also, Harmer (2007) explained that in the classroom, a plan helps to remind teachers what they intended to do especially if they get distracted or momentarily forget what they had proposed. According to this point of view, it is quite useful and important that teacher prepare a mix of activities in order to foster participation from the students. He states that for giving feedback, the teacher has to follow up the students moves as much as possible, without neglecting students' production. Feedback can be explicit or implicit. The explicit form is when the teacher clearly mentions what was right, wrong, or any kind of reply or correction. It can be implicit when no reply is said and the teacher remains silent and goes on with the next students.

He also states that setting time for the activities in order to exploit them and avoid the waste of time. Saving time, concentration, and reaching the goals planned are the result when students know what to do and the time that they have to do it.

Further, Dunbar (2004) suggests that inappropriate behavior should be followed by consequences rather than punishment. Consequences are viewed as an end result of a child's inappropriate act. That is, they should not be viewed as something imposed, such as sanctioning, but rather as an appropriate outcome for an inappropriate act. A consequence should make sense, be a logical ending for an action. Punishment, on the other hand, is severe. It does not necessarily serve for a learning purpose, it sends the wrong message instead. This suggest that teacher should come across with the idea that teenagers are in high school to learn. This approach is most of the times very challenging.

Similarly, Kounin (1970) states that effectively managed classrooms are orderly, with a minimum of student misbehavior and reasonable levels of time on task. Effective classroom managers are more skilled at preventing interruptions from occurring in the first place.

In addition, Fragoso (1999) identified specific approaches to keep students focused on learning and reduce the likelihood of classroom disruption. He states that discipline is perhaps one of the topics that troubles the mind of a great majority of teachers. Its importance and proper application is crucial since it can affect the teaching-learning process of the students in a classroom and impact in a direct manner on the feedback, timing and other aspects as instructions that the teacher might have planned for a specific time.

Managing large classes

According to Heppner (2007), it takes a lot more skill to use a blackboard well than use any kind of projection technique. In a big auditorium, for instance, the major problem is making sure that students in the back of the room can read what the educator writes. Besides visibility of the lines, the other major issue with blackboards is where teachers should stand in front of the board. The most natural way for a right-handed person to write on board is to face the board so or she can see what is being written. As teachers, one of the most remarkable concerns is being able to grab the attention of all the audience and of course, get to convey instructions and knowledge in an effective and efficient way, especially when a large number of students in a classroom is involved. He mentions on his research that another important feature is to maximize classroom space, while many of us do not have control over where we teach, we may have the opportunity to arrange our assigned classroom as we see fit. The arrangement of a classroom may be flexible or a challenge, but the idea is to draw students into the group and to create a physical space that makes them comfortable and want to enter into a discussion or group situation.

He also suggest facilitate movement and develop plans in advance for how students can best enter and exit the classroom; for instance, students who sit in the back of the classroom can enter first, followed by those seated in the middle, and lastly by those seated at the front. On the other hand, a reverse strategy can be used for exiting the classroom. Teacher should plan in advance how he or she will change the classroom arrangement depending principally on what the topic is, such as moving from a whole class arrangement for test taking to small groups for art or science lessons. Also, plan on

how routine activities will be conducted, such as handing out written assignments and then handing them back to students after grading. Further, plan so that your students' individual needs can be met, such as when they need to sharpen their pencils or to get supplies for learning. Additionally, using space outside of the classroom is really useful at the moment of managing large classes. School grounds can be quite a rich resource for learning, and they can better be felt as an enjoyable complement in contrast to the crowded classes. They are also important sites for students to develop skills, even social and cognitive ones, and to learn important lessons about teamwork, cooperation, tolerance, ownership, respect, and responsibility.

In addition, Haddad (2006) encourages educators to look around the school, identify good areas for learning, and incorporate them into the lesson plans. For example, different areas of the school grounds can be used as activity centers in order to support what is being learned about a subject in the classroom. Finally, he says that students can be very helpful in managing the classroom's physical space, and it helps them to develop a sense of responsibility. That is why it is very important to involve them. They can publish or hang up student work, create bulletin boards, and put away instructional materials at the end of each lesson.

Activities for working with large classes

Woodward (2011), exemplifies that the problems that include a class that feel too large are noise, too many people and fixed objects in a restricted space, not enough materials for everyone, not being able to respond to differing needs, the difficulty of organizing anything more than lockstep teaching and the lack of target language use if students speak common languages. On her research, she explains principles for

working with large classes such as crowd control and group work. When referring to crowd control, invest plenty of time in learning student's name is suggested, so the teacher can nominate individuals, as well as maintain eye contact with them. Also the teacher have to keep students involved from the start of the lesson so that a working atmosphere is achieved while social energy is high.

Also, Baker and Westrup (2003) states that pair and group work is the most efficient way to handle large classes. At times, it will be slow going and the class will get loud but this tactic will prove beneficial in the end.

Similarly, Doff (2007) agrees that the way the pair work activities are organized gives a demonstration to show how the activity can be conducted.

Woodward (2011) additionally mentions that on the contrary to what other teachers of smaller groups think, teachers of large classes need to use pair and group work a lot in order to give students natural oral/aural target language practice and use. When doing group work with large classes, the teacher needs to plant it well; otherwise, there will be chaos.

Among these activities the point to attend are for example, making sure students work well together before considering breaking down the group into smaller units and that planned tasks are clear and interesting, and verify that all activities are explained to the students in an useful way. It is important to give timing warning towards the end of the work group and finally she suggest planning how the work will be checked through the evaluation stage.

Seating arrangement and classroom space (physical space- big/small rooms)

Classroom arrangement as Dunbar (2004) explains “A good classroom seating arrangement is the cheapest form of classroom management. It is discipline for free”. Many experienced teachers recommend assigned seating for students to facilitate discipline and instruction. Best practices suggest a few common-sense rules to guide classroom arrangements.

Moreover, Tauber and Mester (2007), mentions that good and experienced teachers make spontaneous decisions about where to place themselves, their students, or their materials within the classroom space, just as good actors can improvise on occasion. Besides, this helps to create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments. Effective use of the classroom can help to control these trouble-maker students who take advantage of the bad distribution of the setting; we can say that the closer we are to our students, the better results we will get on our lessons. The worst point about this topic is that classroom space is an area which teachers most of the time cannot control.

Also, Shamin (2003) explains that sometimes, when the size of the class becomes very large and/or when class size is perceived as the major problem in the classroom, teachers tend to develop 'survival' strategies, such as creating a smaller class within the large class, in order to carry on with the 'act' of teaching in their classrooms. Conversely, alternative ways are devised to do the same kinds of things effectively in larger classes as were done earlier in smaller classes, such as appointing student checkers to help the teacher in correcting the large amount of written work in very large classes. However, it seems that by trying to participate in classroom activities (e.g., answering questions)

students at the back have to put themselves in a position of greater risk than students in the front because both the teacher and their classmates, i.e., other students in the classroom, do not expect them to be able to answer correctly. Hence, they are interrupted and generally not given an opportunity or encouragement to self-correct.

As oral communication, both actors and teachers can benefit from being observant of the effect of space on the impact of their communication. Since nonverbal elements are part of the message communication, students and teachers must, for instance, consider how well the listeners can see and hear when they speak. According to Tauber and Mester (2007), teachers have long realized that students sitting in certain areas of the room tend to be more attentive and responsive than others. They agree that the physical nature of the rooms within which we all must work will vary in terms of such things as acoustics and sight lines, and those elements will, in turn, impact the listeners' ability to attend to our messages. The responsive movement is particularly sensitive to the issues of class space. They focus in the promotion of interactive learning in an atmosphere capable of variations in the different students' learning styles.

Additionally, they state that movement around the classroom will be most effective if planned in conjunction with a thorough review of the material to be presented on a given day. Some portions of a math lesson, for instance, are going to demand that the teacher be near the chalkboard, whereas other portions allow more options in using the classroom space.

Clearly, the classroom seating arrangement is a factor that influences both the student's attention and controls the teachers' use of physical space and deserves special concern as it is considered the planned blocking of the class time period. These

researchers cite that the teacher's proximity to a student or students establishes the specific student-teacher relationship, we realize that there will be occasion when that relationship reflects a hierarchy of power, other times when a more caring relationship is indicated, and yet others times when the relationship is somewhere in between.

Finally, Tauber and Mester (2007) address one last reminder is precise as we think about classroom rearrangements and physical space in order to enhance teacher confidence and student learning. That reminder is that whatever adjustments we envision should be made with the requirements for special needs students in mind. Franklin Hill suggests that no student should be seated further than fifteen feet away from the focus of the classroom activity (Hill, in Schibsted 2005)

According to Blatchford (2003) there is not much research regarding the effects of class size differences on teachers and students. It is does not matter the size of the class, how big it is, and especially regarding seating arrangement as it is important to take into account that it is made up of individuals, the majority of whom would like to be listened by the teacher directly.

Similarly, Harmer (2007) provides some advantages about placing the seats in orderly rows. He says that this kind of seating arrangements allows the teacher a global vision of the students as well as it enables the students to see the teacher, facilitating the eye contact among both. This implies that the teacher can work with the whole class in activities that need a kind of organization. Orderly rows is a good seating arrangement for teaching grammar, displaying video, explaining on the board and using a projector.

In addition, Harmer (1998) and Gower and Walters (1983), both agree that the horseshoe shape (form to sit the students) is advantageous in smaller classes where the

teacher would sit at one of the open ends where he or she would have easy access to demonstrate or teach.

Different levels of proficiency

Leaver and Shekhtman (2002), explains that there are outstanding difference also between the teaching and learning needs of any one student just starting out and that same student at the superior level. At the tower of levels, students need to acquire the basic linguistics system and some understanding of culture first. At lower proficiency levels, students benefit with new vocabulary and grammar is embedded in real content and real contexts. For students at the Superior level, language and content in foreign language are intertwined by necessity. At the superior level, grammatical accuracy is not redundant and grammatical fluency is not absurd, as they often are at lower levels of language proficiency.

These researchers mention that there is clear reasons why proficiency scales are used. This clearly requires the linguistics maturity exhibited principally in adult population. In working with adults, many foreign language education recommend the application of students' knowledge and the personalization of questions and other tasks, in order to take into account adult's scheme.

It must be underlined the importance of having a well-balanced lesson plan. Inasmuch as teachers could come across students who demonstrate a more advanced level in English than some of their classmates. It is common for more knowledgeable students try to stand out in comparison to the rest of the class.

They agree that at this point, the teacher must take control of this situation and find an efficient way to allow all pupils to participate in the lesson. This can be

challenging for any teacher. But making the correct application of available tools, can lead us to convey meaning in a proper manner.

Likewise, Leaver & Shekhtman (2002) talks about authenticity, in ever larger numbers, language programs and teachers are turning to authentic materials, for use in the classroom at increasingly lower levels of proficiency.

Further, Harmer (1998) cites that peer teaching and help is an advantageous route to go in a classroom of varying levels of proficiency.

The fact that the teacher is less able to pay attention to every individual in the class means that for the class to function well, the students must help by teaching common, contributing to a warm and supportive classroom climate. The idea that large classes have adverse effects upon students and teachers is not a new concept. It has been widely reported by both pupil and instructor that it is a difficult environment to flourish in for many reasons.

Also, previous investigations into this ever present obstacle of oversized classes have been carried out around the world and it is of great importance we revisit these studies to have a well-rounded view of our current situation.

In addition, Harfitt (2012) conducted an investigation in order to examine the teachers' perceptions and practice when teaching large and reduced-size classes. Its conclusions showed that transforming teachers' beliefs, understandings and skills into appropriate classroom pedagogy for classes of varying size must be of central importance in promoting teacher professional development both in Hong Kong and elsewhere. However, one of the limitations was the fact that this study was done with only with three teachers.

Another study conducted by Thaher (2005) investigated the effects of large class. The reason for conducting his research was to learn more about how the instructional, psychological and social effects that oversized classes had on EFL students. The second reason for this study was to understand how students responded to oversized classes because of their gender, education level, choice of college or entrance exam grade. Its conclusions showed that teachers should change their methods in dealing with large classes and they should adopt new strategies, for example, arranging the class in groups could help in solving this problem. The EFL teacher should build up a collaborative and lively learning atmosphere. Large classes affect students' educational practices and performance. They should motivate their students by using their names when giving examples or using words in sentences, and they should involve them in classroom activities. No limitations were found.

Chowdhury & Shaila (2001), developed a study about teaching speaking in large classes, which objective was to investigate how the English language teachers deal with the large classes at the tertiary level, especially when they are conducting speaking skills of students.

Also, this study took as participants 52 English language teachers working at different private high schools of Bangladesh, in order to find out the problems teachers face when they carry on and observe speaking classes.

In addition, the research also tries to find out what problems the teachers face when they carry on and observe speaking classes, the way they try to solve the problems and how they utilize different new methods of teaching speaking in the language classrooms while dealing with these problems.

The researchers used several methods which are described along this literature review. Impromptu Speech is one of them. This is an ice breaking technique. Here every student of the class participates individually to deliver short speeches with very little and quick preparation. The instructor selects a list of topics; topics are written on cheats; cheats are randomly chosen by the students.

The instructor also focuses on the correct use of vocabulary, correct pronunciation, and accent. Grammatical errors can be given secondary priority.

Then, simulation is employed as a group assignment. The entire class was divided into several groups. They allowed the group members to vary from 2 to 5; it should not be more than that because equal participation of every student is required here. The issues evaluated for this task were the correct use of vocabulary at appropriate situation, the appropriate use of grammatical structure and verbal expressions, and correct pronunciation.

In addition, simulating the Role of a Counselor, also known as the “Dear Abbey Approach”. This is a pair activity in which the instructor will select a number of mails usually published in the newspapers or magazines in which people usually write about their personal problems. The class is divided in to a number of pairs. Each pair is given a problem. They are given 10 minutes to study and solve the problem. After 10 minutes, in front of the audience one student summarizes the problem and his/her partner gives suggestions or solutions to the problem.

Linked story telling was also used. This can also be an ice breaking method in the first class. Usually the instructor takes the initiative by narrating a story or describing a scenario. Then a student continues with the story. He/she speaks for about 2 minutes

and takes the story to a certain point. Then a student sitting next continues from the point where the first student stopped. In this way every individual speaks for at least 2 minutes and together they construct a whole story. Students enjoy this very much as it usually turns out to be very funny and hilarious.

An important method was using movie clips. Here the students will be divided into pairs or in small groups. Each group will be shown a movie clip with inconclusive ending. The groups will try to guess what could happen next. Sometimes they are shown a particular scene, e.g. the war scene from the movie 300. They will describe the scenes and the other students will take note of the words to describe that scene. This would help them to increase vocabulary.

Regarding picture presentation, that is a semi-formal presentation where students will have to use multimedia, power point or any other visual aid. In this task each student chooses a picture which can be a photograph or painting. The student may explain the picture, or may talk about why this picture is so special for him/her.

Classroom debate will present a list on debatable topic related to society, politics, moral issues etc. there will be several groups in the class; each group will have maximum two members. The teacher will explain the significance of the topics first. Then the groups will choose topics. Next there will be some pairs of groups-one will support and the other will oppose the topic. In the entire debate procedure the teacher acts as a moderator who will announce the winner at the end. In order maintain discipline in the class the instructor should employ some rules prepared beforehand.

Surveys showed that among 52, 40 teachers (76.9%) have to take 3 to 6 language courses period. 12 of them (23%) take 1 to 3 courses. 37 respondents (71.15%) said that

the number of students in the class is more than 30 and the approximate number of students mentioned by them varies from 30 to 50. All the 37 respondents agree that theirs is definitely a large class.

The difficulties and problems faced by a language teacher in observing and evaluating a large speaking class are undoubtedly painstaking. In order to convert the difficulties into challenges the teacher needs to be focused on students' needs. More and more modern approaches and methods should be introduced. Also, teachers should pay special attention to the following issues while practicing speaking in large classes.

Teachers have to make sure that all students participate in the speaking practice as well as the inter exchange in the classroom. Further, there should be even and equal contribution by all the students in the speaking process. The teacher should take care that the discussion is not dominated by some specific students or group.

Maintaining a balance in the performance gap is also another area that teachers should be concerned about. In a large mixed ability class there will always be some students who are shy than the rest at speaking out and expressing their views.

Owoeye and Yara (2011), carried out another remarkable research, which stated the following research question: Is there significant difference in the performance of students in rural and urban secondary schools in term of whether they are in small or large classes?. In order to try to answer this, the subject of investigation were final year students of schools in the rural and urban areas of Ekiti state, Nigeria, in 50 secondary schools formed the target population comprising 4 Federal unity schools and 64 public schools.

The method was Student Class Size Questionnaire (SCSQ). This was designed by the researchers. It has section A with seven items dealing with profile of the respondents such as gender, age, school type (rural/urban), and grade among others. Whereas section B has eight items that measured the number of students in class in rural and urban schools, number of periods taught by teachers among others. The respondents were asked to respond to the questions on a four point Likert Scale of strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree.

According to Owoeye and Yara (2011), the results attempted to establish whether or not a significant difference exists between urban large and urban small; rural large and rural small classes in relation to academic achievement in Senior Secondary Certificate of Education (SSCE) as indicated in the hypothesis.

The result showed that all urban small classes had mean achievement core of 1.4000 while the urban large classes had mean achievement score of 1.7765 with the t-value of 1.49. It also showed that there was no significant difference in their achievement scores, compared the school certificate examination achievement score between rural large and rural small classes and also established the significant difference or otherwise in their scores. The result of the t-test statistic employed showed that the rural large and rural small classes were not significantly different with their respective mean scores of 1.4737 and 1.5300 at t-value of 0.58. Therefore the hypothesis was accepted at alpha level of 0.05.

These results suggest that there is no difference in the performance of students in rural and urban schools. Even though research findings showed that there are no difference in the performance of students in agricultural science from both rural and

urban schools there is the need to make the number of students to be taught in our agricultural science classes to be moderate so that the teacher can be able to manage the class effectively and be able to give individual attention to students who may have problem of assimilating the concepts of what has been taught.

The issue of class size has been addressed in some states of Nigeria like in Oyo state who made an educational policy that the maximum number of students in a class should be 20.

Researchers therefore recommended that our educational policy makers should formulate policies that will ensure that the number of students in a class should not exceed 30 students.

In the same manner, Thaher (2005) performed a study based on the effects of large class on EFL Students, which had as main questions: What are the instructional effects of large classes on non –English major EFL students at An-Najah National University? And What are the psychological effects of large classes on non-English major EFL students at An-Najah National University?

The subject population of the study was limited to non-English major EFL students who study English. All the subjects have had at least eight years of English instruction at school. The population of this study consisted of 1200 students who attended the class in the period of 2003-2004. The sample of the study was 230 non-English major male and female students of Palestinian high schools.

Despite teachers' complaint about large classes, the problem still exists and its consequences on teaching are reflected in the students' attitudes and achievement. The data for the questionnaire was collected according to feedback from the students. The

researcher asked the students an open –ended question about the effect of large classes on them. After gathering the data, the answers were classified into three major areas: instructional, psychological and social which were considered as the study instrument by the researcher in the form of a questionnaire.

For the first question, the researcher used the means, standard deviations, percentages and ranks for each item in this domain and all the items within each domain. The results show that the students’ responses on the items of the Instructional Effects Domain were moderate with a mean of (3.42) and a percentage of (68.4%). In a similar way, the researcher used the means, standard deviations, percentages and ranks for each item in the domain and the items within each domain. The results show that the students’ responses on the items in the psychological effects domain were moderate with a mean of (3.28) and a percentage of (65.6%).

Also, Shamin (2003) developed a research focused on Teacher-learner behavior and classroom processes in Large ESL classes. It was stated as a hypothesis the studies of class size and achievement have typically been undertaken to test the “Smaller is Better” based on the common belief that an increase in numbers in a class inhibits effective teaching and learning. It is thus usual to take class size as an independent variable and study its effect on achievement as the dependent variable.

These studies usually follow an experimental or input-output research design where the learners are assigned to two or more groups of different sizes and their learning and achievement is measured by comparing their pre and post test scores, on standardized tests of achievement. A total of 232 classes were observed at six different elementary schools in Karachi, Pakistan. Classroom observation was planned in order to

observe a number of classes during all the three phases of the fieldwork, beginning from a relatively unstructured observation of classes in Phase I to a progressive narrowing of focus in Phases II and III of the field work.

The nature of classroom processes is so complex that it is very difficult to observe everything that is happening at any one time, especially in a large class. Hence it was decided to make an audio-visual recording of the classroom events, wherever possible, to complement the field notes.

Interviews were also performed. It was decided to conduct semi-structured interviews of both participating teachers and learners at each site, mainly for two reasons. The first one was to get complementary data on classroom events and processes, and the second one was to serve as a kind of check on data collected from classroom observation.

It was also planned to conduct the teacher interviews in the pre-and post-observation phase in each institution. On the other hand, it was decided to hold learner interviews in Phase III of the field work. It was considered desirable to interview the learners in groups, each group possibly comprising some weak and strong learners identified by the teacher for the purpose of the interview.

The researcher cited that examining documents that are not prepared for the purpose of research are often significant in terms of throwing light on different aspects of the teaching-learning process. Hence, though he did not plan to do an 'active' search for different kinds of formal documents, he decided to include in his data all documents that he would come across during his visits to different institutions.

The data was analyzed using basic descriptive statistics. The results indicate that, overall, the average size of teachers' 'experienced largest class' (69.08) is considerably greater than the size at which they perceive a class to be large i.e. 45.73. Similarly, the average size of the 'usual class' (54.75) is greater than the size (45.73) at which classes are perceived to become large (see table 4.2 below).

These results are in agreement with Coleman's conclusion (1989) who concluded that the majority of teachers seem to be teaching classes, which they consider as large. At the same time the high number of missing responses for the variables perceived small class and perceived intolerably small suggests that small classes are perhaps outside the experience of many respondents. This is also evident in some of the comments given by teachers in response to these questions.

As conclusion, the researcher presented an overview of the literature on class size. I began by outlining some issues and concerns in the study of class size. Next, some selected studies from different types of research traditions were reviewed in an attempt to identify the major themes and directions in the study of large (and small) classes. The recent work of the Language Learning in Large Classes research project was then presented as significant in terms of being the first concerted effort undertaken by teachers and researchers together, in different parts of the world and particularly in developing countries, for investigating teaching-learning in large classes. Next, some coping strategies developed by practitioners to deal with teaching in large classes were described. Finally, a case was made for the need to reorient research efforts on class size from proving that smaller is better to understanding the process of teaching and learning in classes of varying size.

It was argued that a reorientation of research efforts on class size was necessary for improving the effectiveness of the teaching-learning process in the classroom, while remaining within the present configurations of class size and financial and other constraints in developing countries such as Pakistan.

The difficulties questionnaire comprised a number of open ended questions. The aim was to find out what problems teachers face in large classes, what instructional techniques they use in large classes and what techniques they would use if they had an ideal number of students in their class. A number of researchers looked at the responses in terms of only the first and second questions.

Different categories were devised by each researcher to analyze the data. Coleman (1990) felt that the various problems identified in different studies could generally be grouped under five categories as problems of control, discomfort, evaluation, individual attention and learning.

The beliefs of teachers and learners about teaching-learning in larger and smaller size school classes in Pakistan will be discussed in relation to the findings of the Learning Communities Research and Practice (LCRP).

In addition, Nakabugo (2008) carried out a study of the issues emerging in the teaching of large classes (70+learners) primary schools in Uganda: The challenges that the teachers experienced in the teaching of large classes. What strategies had been developed at individual and institutional levels to improve teaching and learning under the circumstances, and the implications of teachers reflecting on their lessons to large class teaching.

Moreover, the participants were 35 teachers, 31 were females and 4 males. The schools that were either located in the urban (12) or peri-urban areas (16). Only 7 taught in schools located in rural areas.

The research was undertaken in Uganda in two phases. The first phase, the baseline, adopted a descriptive survey design whereby using the Education Management Information System (EMIS) data, a cross-section of twenty schools and thirty five teachers were surveyed from Kampala and Wakiso Districts. The districts were selected because they offered a variety of schools with different characteristics such as rural and urban and varying class size.

The study sample focused on lower primary (specifically Primary 3) teachers of mathematics and English, teaching classes of seventy pupils and above. English and mathematics were preferred because the main purpose of basic education is the achievement of numeracy and literacy.

Due to rural-urban migration, urban and semi-urban schools in Uganda have tended to have an influx of children compared to their rural counterparts.

Data for the baseline was generated from interviews with the thirty five teachers, twenty school administrators and one hundred lesson observations. Both categories of interviews were conducted using structured schedules.

The suggestions they held for improving teaching and learning in large classes Interviews with school administrators probed their views on class size in their schools, the challenges their schools faced with teaching large classes, the institutional responses to large classes, and their suggestions for improving teaching and learning in large classes.

The teachers' lessons were observed and analyzed using a structured lesson observation template that enabled the capturing of information on the teacher's type of teaching.

The second phase of the study, the action strategy, utilized the lesson study methodology in which the teachers reflected upon their taught lessons together with the research team, shared with one another, and tried out new strategies with a view to enhancing their teaching and learning in large classrooms.

Data was analyzed using the constant comparative method according to Glaser & Strauss (1967), that involves a continual process of comparing pieces of data and identifying similarities and differences between them for generating patterns or categories from the data. Comparisons were made across the teachers being studied and across the different types of data collection instruments.

As a result, two hundred and seventy nine responses were generated from interviews with the teachers regarding the constraints they experienced with Resource constraint came up as a major issue. The teachers felt the available resources did not match the large numbers of learners. In response to the challenges highlighted above, teachers had developed some strategies to cope with the large classes. Some strategies were institutional while others were particular to individual teachers. Although the official duration of lessons for lower classes is 30 minutes, the teachers often spent longer time than allocated. The research built on what the teachers were already doing to try and move them a step further in thinking about improvements in the teaching of large classes.

While teachers can do what is in their means to facilitate teaching and learning in large classes, they would still need institutional and policy support. The urgent support required include, but not restricted to provision of basic infrastructure such as bigger classroom space, sufficient furniture and instructional materials.

Increasing the number of teachers to allow at least two teachers per class, providing schools with the necessary resources and enabling teachers to develop the confidence and skills to improve the learning environment in large classes seems to be paramount.

CHAPTER II: METHOD

Setting and Participants

This research was carried out in a private elementary high school in the city of Guayaquil, Ecuador. In order to bring together the required information, the sample consisted of students from five classes with at least thirty five people. They were randomly chosen and then surveyed after the performance of their normal lessons.

The participants of this study were from ninth and tenth grades. Furthermore, the average age of the sample interviewed oscillated from thirteen to fifteen.

It is important to point out that in general terms, every observed grade possessed a high level of English.

Procedures

To start this research, it was necessary to develop a literature review in order to support the current investigation. This included important topics such as teaching approaches and methods, class size (number of students), managing learning, student's motivation, feedback, discipline and timing, classroom activities, seating arrangement and levels of proficiency. The information was gathered from books, encyclopedias, and the Internet.

A questionnaire was used in order to gather information from the students. This document was written entirely in Spanish. It had twenty one questions related to the following aspects: Instructional implications, social implications and psychological implications.

Afterwards, the answers were tabulated in Microsoft Excel sheets. By all means, they were classified into three major areas: instructional, psychological and social.

Finally, answers were graphed according to the percentage of agreement, this mean: Totally agree, agree, partially agree and disagree. Bars graph was used to represent each statement.

Clearly, after tabulating this information, results were interpreted in order to draw conclusions according to the objective of the study.

CHAPTER III: DISCUSSION

Description, Analysis, and Interpretation of Results

This research aims at determining if there is influence of large classes in the English language teaching-learning process. Results are based on the answers from the questionnaire applied to a sample of five large classes of thirty five students each.

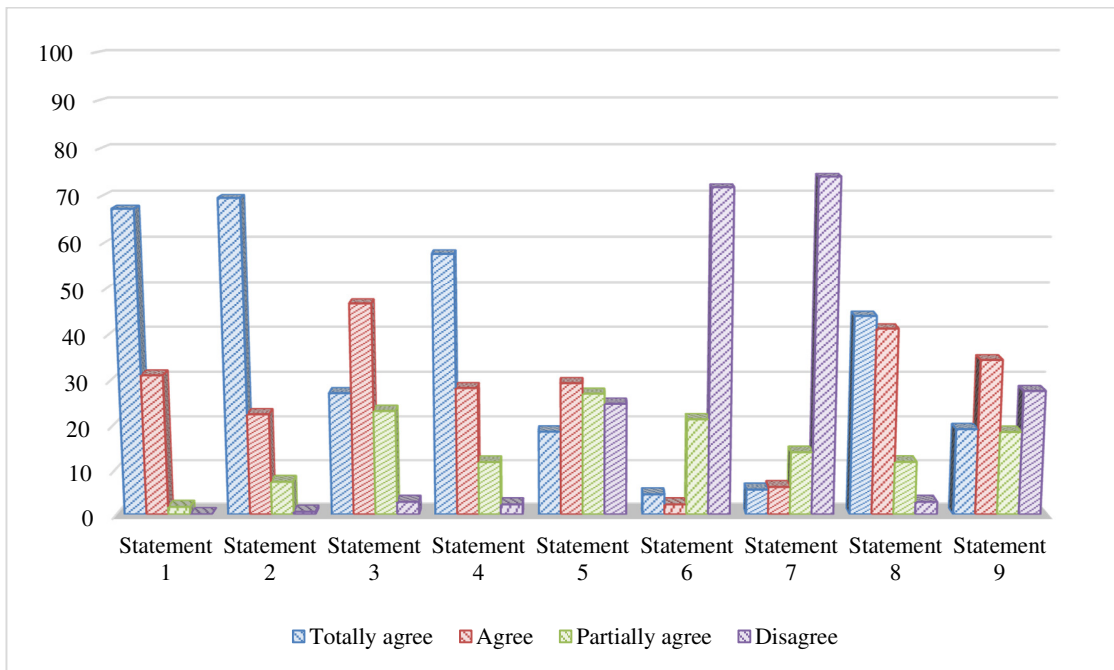
Quantitative analysis

Factors Concerning Instructional Implications

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

Nº	In classes with a large number of students:	Totally agree		Agree		Partially agree		Disagree		TOTAL	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1.	The activities done in class help to apply what students learn in class.	24	67	11	31	1	1,7	0	0	35	100
2.	The activities done allow to practice listening, speaking, reading and writing skills.	25	70	8	23	3	7,4	0	0,6	35	100
3.	The students are attentive and participate in class activities, including those sitting at the back of the classroom.	10	27	17	47	8	23	1	2,8	35	100
4.	Varied class activities are used such as group, individual, pair-work activities, etc.	20	58	10	28	4	12	1	2,3	35	100
5.	Activities such as plays, competitions, debates, games, etc. are used in class.	7	19	10	29	10	27	9	25	35	100
6.	Students can cheat during the test.	2	4,5	0,8	2,3	8	21	25	72	35	100
7.	Students get distracted by doing assignments from other subjects.	2	5,6	2,2	6,2	5	14	26	74	35	100
8.	The seating arrangement facilitates the tasks that are carried out in class.	16	44	15	41	4	12	1	2,8	35	100
9.	Students cannot receive regular feedback from the teacher due to the large number of students.	7	19	12	34	7	19	10	28	35	100

Author: Samuel Sánchez Á. (2013)



Graph 1: Instructional Implications

Author: Samuel Sánchez Á. (2013)

According to the results presented in the graph on item (1) related to if the activities done in class help to apply what students learn in class, 67% of the students totally agree, 31% agree that activities do reinforce what is learned in class. This demonstrates undoubtedly that students feel that their lessons are being well reinforced and practiced by the activities the teacher implements in the classroom. This helps students to put into practice what they learn, which means that the teacher is using correct activities to work with large groups. Chickering and Gamson (1987) state that students have to practice what they learn and integrate learning as part of their knowledge.

In item (2), that asks if the activities done allow to practice listening, speaking, reading and writing skills, 70% of students totally agree, 23% agree that activities developed by the teacher in the classroom allow them to practice the four major English

skills and therefore enhance competence for a correct learning process, which suggests that the teacher has a set of different activities that includes listening practice, speaking, reading and writing in order to have students practice the required skills for proper language acquisition. However, 7,4% of students only partially agree, which reflects that there are some students who feel that these activities are not enough or that better activities may be used to practice the four English skills.

The development of the four English language skills is fundamental for an effective learning of this language. According to Davies and Pearse (2000), success in the classroom can be achieved by integrating these four skills in language learning, of course, under the supervision of the teacher. The lessons should also include potentially interesting listening and reading texts, role-plays, and simulations, so as to engage the students in communicative practice. Furthermore, listening, speaking, reading, and writing should be integrated in the classroom in the same way as they are integrated in natural settings. Activities developed by the teacher in the classroom, are a way to engage students on the different tasks, but if students are not responding positively, changes will have to be applied in order to benefit the class as a whole.

According to the results in item (3) directed to if students are attentive and participate in class activities, including those sitting at the back of the classroom, 27% of students chose totally agree as their option, 47% of the students agreed. It is clear that 74% of the class believes that students are attentive and participative in class activities, but on the other hand, there is a considerable 23% of students that partially agree with this statement. This considerable amount reflects that not all students feel convinced that proper participation actually occurs in the class. This suggests that the fact of being in the

middle of a large class climate does not contribute efficiently during teacher and student interaction, which does not promote the proper social environment that include all students. This is evidence that activities performed in class are not completely fulfilling its goal, which is to have the entire class engaged on the activities, hence these activities and tasks have to be modified or enhanced in order to grasp the attention of the whole classroom. Pair or group work might be included, since they help students come together, and make those less participative more active by giving and checking instructions. According to Shamin (2003), it seems that by trying to participate in classroom activities (e.g., answering questions) students at the back have to put themselves in a position of greater risk than students in the front because both the teacher and their classmates, i.e., other students in the classroom, do not expect them to be able to answer correctly. This way, everyone or at least the great majority will have the chance to participate and interact with their teacher or classmate. Furthermore, Sarikoban and Sakizli (2006) concluded that former studies have showed and proved that the process of teaching and learning a new language implies interaction of “teachers and students, in a social environment”.

In the matter of that varied class exercises such as group, individual, pair-work activities are used, corresponding to item (4), 58% of the students totally agree, 28% agree that different group, individual, and pair activities are being used in the class by the teacher in order to have a better response towards the lesson. This evidently shows that the teacher’s activities are varied and proper for a large class and that students obtain practice to develop the different skills. However, there is a considerable 12% of students that partially agree with this statement. This shows that some students think that activities are not varied enough and that better or more attractive and interactive tasks

should be used. These tasks should be revised and modified or increased if needed.

According to Davies and Pearse (2000), teachers need to use interesting topics and stimulating activities to get their students' interest. They further emphasize that true acquisition of new words can only be achieved through use, that is, by being exposed to frequent communication, plenty of reading, and specific practice activities such as brainstorming, guessing, labeling, and classifying scrambled words.

According to results presented in the graph on item (5) regarding that activities such as plays, competitions, debates, games. etc are used in class, 19% of the students totally agree and 29 % agree that these task are being used in class. This suggests that at least one of these activities is being used in class. On the other hand, 27% of students partially agree and 25% disagree. This demonstrates that the teacher does not encourage them enough to carry out all these types of activities. The goal of these tasks is to keep students motivated and contribute to the improvement and quality of their learning. Unquestionably, the use of these activities promotes motivation to participate actively in class. Anderman and Wolters (2006) as well as Schunk and Zimmerman (2006), agree that in many cases these activities impact the students' behaviors in the learning environment.

It's important to mention that even though most of the time, teachers provide a variety of activities such as mentioned few lines earlier, not all of them are preferred or liked by the whole group of students in a specific classroom. DeBord (1989) mentions that activities such as role plays and games are useful to teach English since they offer well- defined roles including specific times, places, equipment, and rules that motivate students to discover, examine, and learn a language. Considering this information, it is

necessary for teachers in large classes to use role plays and games as part of their teaching in order to encourage and stimulate the English learning of their students.

It is worth mentioning that activities such as dramatizations, competitions, debates, and games make a great contribution to develop listening and speaking skills since they are provided with enough opportunities to be exposed to English. Moreover, these activities increase the students' knowledge, introduce new languages structures, and it can be used with students from all ages. It is important to mention that Harmer (2007) explained that in the classroom, a plan helps to remind teachers what they intended to do especially if they get distracted or momentarily forget what they had proposed. According to this point of view it is quite useful and important that teacher prepare a mix of activities in order to foster participation from the students.

In item (6), that asks if students can cheat during the test, the majority of students, this means a solid 72%, disagree that they can cheat during the test in an environment of large classes. This suggests that the students find more difficult to cheat probably due to the quantity of students as they can be caught not only by the teacher but also by the classmates and might get some kind of punishment. On the other hand, 21% of students partially agree with this statement. All these results reflect that the teacher has certain control over the class during the test, however, this cannot be performed at all times during the development of the test in this large class environment. Furthermore, it is important to mention that there are students that do not really care being caught, so they take the risk to cheat as soon as they have the opportunity during the test. McCabe and Trevino (1993), suggests that many students feel they are not likely to get caught or that no one cares enough to punish them even if they are. They also mention that

decisions about academic dishonesty are clearly influenced by societal and school norms, as well as the attitudes of teachers and most importantly, friends. In addition, Power (2008) mentions to deal constructively with the problem of cheating. The educator needs to understand the causes and conditions that lead to this behavior. Such knowledge could help in determining proper sanctions and finding ways to stem the problem.

In item (7) concerning that students get distracted by doing assignments from other subjects, 74% disagree. This means that the majority of students think that they do not get distracted during the development of the class with other activities such as tasks or assignments from other subjects that are not related to English. The teacher seems to control the time for the different activities performed in class in a very good way. This is important because it leaves no time to students for getting distracted by other subjects. In addition, the teacher controls activities in such a way that feedback is constantly requested and according to this work scheme, a response or result from each activity must be given within a time. Woodward (2001) suggests remembering to give timing warnings towards the end of the group work, plan the evaluation stage and also how the teacher will check the work and make students accountable for it. Moreover, Haddad (2006) indicates that assignments are an important part of the planning and learning process, especially in large classes where there is a need to track the learning of many students.

On the other hand, 14% of the students partially agree, which reflects that other assignments distract some students. 11,8%, this means 5,6% of them totally agree and 6,2% just agree with this statement. This data suggests that some students find not

trouble at all when performing other assignments during the English class, probably due to the large amount of students. In general, the teacher seems to have good control of behavior over the class and have them motivated and focused in the class; however, there is an important portion of students that might need more control. Here, motivation plays a crucial role in student learning. This is usually described as an inner state that stimulates, directs, and preserves behavior. Daniels (1998) states that when there is a mismatch between teaching style and the learning styles of students, misbehavior inevitably results. He adds that incidents of misbehavior may also result when students refuse to learn concepts because they are unable to see the relationship between the skills being taught and how these skills transcend to the context of the larger environment. The ideal climate for any teacher education is one in which students simply do what they are asked to do by the professor by a sense of teamwork cooperation and not by command. As this collaboration state becomes routine and comes to the point where it is not necessary asking for silence, organization, responsibility, among others. In addition, Woolfolk (2010), points out that the majority of teachers have reached an understanding that motivating students is one of the critical tasks of teaching. Certainly, gain the cooperation of the whole class is not an easy task, as it must be voluntary for sure. Students should not be forced to cooperate, it must be voluntary. Woodward (2001) indicates that teachers should keep students involved from the start of the lesson so that a working atmosphere is achieved while social energy is high.

According to results presented in the graph on item (8), 44% of the students totally agree, 41% agree that seating arrangement helps to perform the different tasks given by the teacher in the classroom. This indicates that the teacher handles in a good

way the general arrangement of the classroom and that pupils feel more comfortable with the classroom environment if it is presented with order and organized spaces, since this eases distribution of groups and activities. McLeod, Fisher and Hoover (2003) states that having sufficient personal space helps the students avoid the stress of other students invading their space and engaging in unnecessary conversation and disagreements. It is important to note that there are similarities between these authors and Woolfolk (2010) as they pointed out that the organization of space affects the way students behave and move around the classroom, as well as how much attention they pay to instruction. Moreover 12% partially agree, which suggests that some students think that this methodology of space organization do not help them to develop tasks during the class. Eggen (1989) sustains that the environment must be arranged so all the students can see the board, and the other instructional aids all the time. At the same time, Daniels (1998) explains that classroom climate and physical arrangements can also encourage desirable behavior.

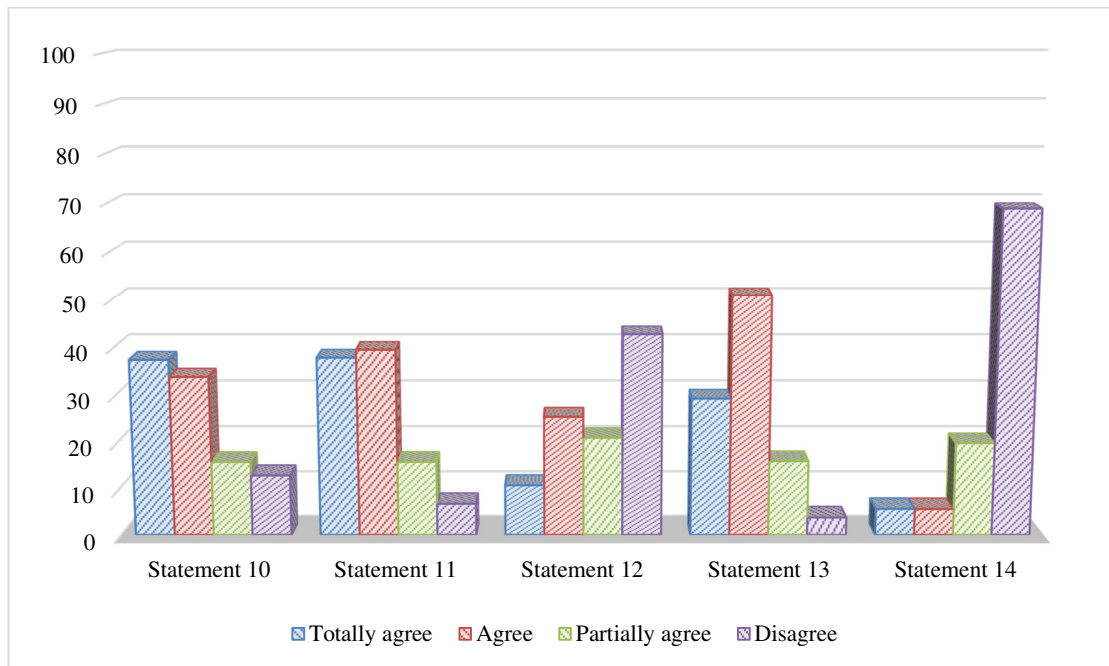
Item (9) directed to if students cannot receive regular feedback from the teacher due to the large number of students, 19% of them chose totally agree as their option, 34% agreed and 19% only partially agree. Here it is clear that 53% of the students think they cannot receive proper feedback probably due to the large class environment. On the other hand, 28% of students disagree with this statement. This shows that all students have different points of view about the feedback they receive. However, students that are closer to the teacher will probably receive feedback in a more effective way or in a higher frequency than those sitting in the back because of the proximity to the teacher. Here, the amount of students plays an important role; in fact, the findings of Wulff et al.

(1987) support that increased class size dictates a lower quality of instruction and that as class get larger, students' learning and degree of satisfaction decrease. Experience suggest that size is indeed a factor that influences the way classes are taught. Furthermore, Haddad (2006) indicates that the feedback helps students to see how well they are doing and if they understand the topic or material that is being taught. Consequently, the more feedback the student receive, the better, because it will not only help them, but also the teacher. Besides, a positive relationship can be established between the teachers and their students by communicating with them and properly providing feedback to them. According to this point of view, the interaction between the student and teacher becomes extremely important for a successful relationship through the entire time of a school year.

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

N°	In classes with a large number of students:	Totally agree		Agree		Partially agree		Disagree		TOTAL	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
10.	There is a proper balance of student-student and teacher-student interaction.	13	37	12	34	6	16	5	13	35	100
11.	Students have the opportunity to build relationships with their classmates.	13	38	14	40	6	16	2	6,8	35	100
12.	The teacher has problems remembering all the students' names.	4	11	9	25	7	21	15	43	35	100
13.	The atmosphere is less stressful since the teacher does not ask several questions to the same student.	10	29	18	51	6	16	1	3,8	35	100
14.	It is easier for students to use their cellphone or any other mobile device without being seen by the teacher.	2	5,6	2	5,6	7	20	24	69	35	100

Author: Samuel Sánchez Á. (2013)



Graph 2: Social implications

Author: Samuel Sánchez Á. (2013)

According to results presented in graph 2 on item (10) regarding that there is a proper balance of student-student and teacher-student interaction., 37% of students totally agree, 34% agree and 16% partially agree that there is proper balance of interaction during the class. Berge (1999) relates that interaction in education involves a continuum from teacher-centered to student-centered approaches. Additionally, interaction is central to the expectations of teachers and learners in education, and to that extent it is a primary goal of the educational process. Certainly, for these reasons and to provide the necessary feedback between learner and teacher, interaction will continue to be seen as a critical component of formal education. On the other hand, there is 13%, which is a considerable amount of students that think that there is not a proper balance of student-student and teacher-student interaction, probably due to the quantity of students in the large class environment. At this point, it seems that the quantity of

students affects but does not limit the balance of interaction. It is important to note that Churchill (2011) mentions that it is crucial that teachers know their students, so that the planning of challenging activities is appropriate for the variety of different abilities within the learning environment. When teachers pursue positive relationships with students and class work that enables students to construct their own meaning, students are more likely to behave and participate effectively in learning tasks. The fact that a positive relationship exists is a fundamental and a very important aspect of quality teaching as well as students learning. This interaction offers positive outcomes; for example, simple words of encouragement or upbeat small talk can set a positive tone for students entering a classroom.

In item (11) concerning that students have the opportunity to build relationships with their classmates, 38% of the students totally agree, 40% chose agree as their option. Here is clear that 78% of the class believes that they have the opportunity to build relationships with their classmates. On the other hand, a considerable 16% reflects that there are some students that think they do not have the opportunity to build relationships with their peers. Berge (1999) indicates that when students have the opportunity to interact with one another and their instructors about the content, they have the opportunity to build within themselves, and to communicate, a shared meaning, to "make sense" of what they are learning. He further adds that learners share information with their peers and receive feedback, in a learner-learner interaction; students do not depend on their teacher all the time, waiting for instructions, words of approval, correction, advice, or praise. Chacon (1992) indicates that interpersonal interaction offers the opportunity for the student to gain the motivational support of fellow students

and instructors, develop critical judgment, participate in problem-solving, and often has the potential for other incidental learning.

Item (12) directed to if the teacher has problems remembering all the students' names, the majority, this means 43% of the students chose disagree as their option, 21% partially agree, whereas 11% of the them totally agreed and 25% just agreed. These results suggests that even though there is a large class environment, the teacher seems to remember the name of most of the students and has just little problems remembering all the students' names, which contributes in the teaching-learning process of English language in a positive manner, and controversially, the fact the professor does not remember the name of all of these classrooms seem not to be cause of demotivation. Haddad (2006) explains that although it may seem frightening in a large class setting, learning your students' names is the first step in creating a comfortable classroom that will encourage student participation. It also shows students that you are interested in them as individuals.

In the matter that the atmosphere is less stressful since the teacher does not ask several questions to the same student corresponding to item (13), 29% of them totally agree, 51% agree. This demonstrates undoubtedly that they think that indeed the atmosphere is less tense because the teacher asks questions to different students. However, there is a considerable 16%, which reflects that some students think that the atmosphere is stressful. Perhaps the fact that that there is a large amount of students does not suggest that the teacher might not ask several questions to the same student. This may depend on the teacher, as sometimes they must be sure that certain students understand the topic or task. In addition, it may also happen when the teacher wants to

promote involvement on specific students and make them more participative. This benefits learners as it encourages engagement and focuses their thinking on key concepts and ideas. Haddad (2006) explains that questions are a valuable mean of getting feedback on what your students are learning, what they are having difficulty with, and how you can make your teaching more meaningful – and enjoyable - for the teacher and their students. She further adds that one of the class objectives is that the teacher interacts with more students and states this can be accomplished as the teacher moves around the room.

At this point, one of the teacher concerns about promoting a good atmosphere, using the ideal approach, teaching method and for sure, the proper intervals of time to ask questions to the same student so to avoid that student feel overwhelmed. Byram (2002) manifest that the teacher should create a good ambiance in classrooms. This helps students to be more relaxed in their interrelationship with the class, and help them to be active in the classroom.

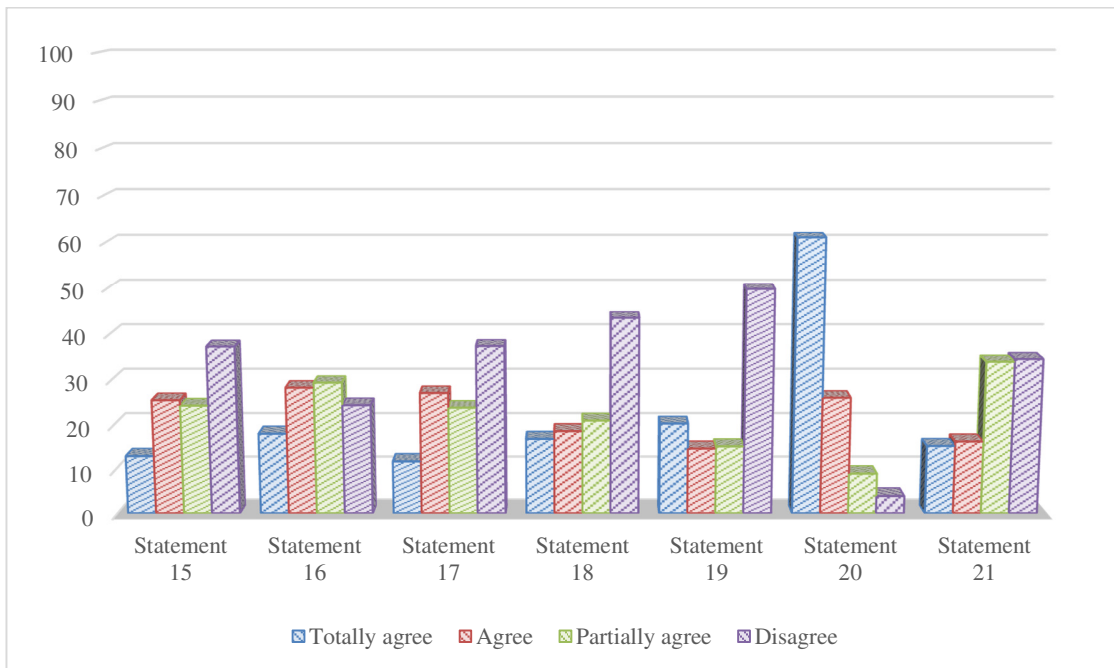
According to the results presented in the graph 2 on item (14), regarding if it is easier for students to use their cellphone or any other mobile device without being seen by the teacher, 69% of the students totally disagree and only 20% of them chose partially agree as their option. This suggests that teacher keeps control on the activities that are being developed by the students as well as behavior rules and discipline. McCoy (2013) explains that digital devices such as smart phones, tablets, and laptop computers are important college classroom tools. They support student learning by providing access to information outside classroom walls. However, when used for non-class purposes, digital devices may interfere with classroom learning. Nowadays, technology

may be a distraction when is not used with teaching-learning purposes. As mentioned in previous researches developed by Froese (2012), Campbell (2006) and Wei, Wang and Klausner (2012), indicates that non-classroom use of digital devices by college students causes learning distractions in classrooms. Nevertheless, the proper use of digital tools during classes depends on how the teacher convey the rules to students in first place. According to this point of view, it is important to note studies of Anderson (1984), who explains that it is the responsibility of the course instructor to decide what type of technology may or may not be used during class. He further adds that any use of technology that degrades the learning environment, promotes dishonesty or is used for illegal activities should be prohibited.

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

N°	In classes with a large number of students:	Totally agree		Agree		Partially agree		Disagree		TOTAL	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
15.	The atmosphere is stressful.	5	13	9	25	9	24	13	37	35	100
16.	Students feel inhibited when speaking in front of the rest.	6	18	10	28	10	29	9	24	35	100
17.	Students do not have the opportunity to express their opinions.	4	12	10	27	8	24	13	37	35	100
18.	Students do not like to participate because they feel afraid.	6	17	7	19	7	21	15	44	35	100
19.	The teacher does not pay equal attention to all his/her students.	7	20	5	15	5	15	18	50	35	100
20.	Students feel they can act competitively with other students.	22	61	9	26	3	9	1	3,9	35	100
21.	Students feel relaxed because they can go unnoticed.	5	15	6	16	12	34	12	34	35	100

Author: Samuel Sánchez Á. (2013)



Graph 3: Psychological implications

Author: Samuel Sánchez Á. (2013)

According to the results presented in the graph on item (15) concerning that the atmosphere is stressful, 13% of the students totally agreed and 25% agreed. In addition, there is portion of 24% students that chose partially agree to this statement. This suggests that some students think that there is a tense or uncomfortable atmosphere in the classroom in general terms, probably to the large number of students in the classroom, which might contribute in the teaching-learning process of English language in a negative manner if the teacher does not apply the proper approaches or teaching methodologies. Jensen (1998) exemplifies that when promoting positive classroom environments, educators have needed to be aware of the impact of stress upon students. Excessive stress has been considered to be one of the greatest contributors to impaired academic learning, and teachers have needed to understand the many potential threats for students and the brain's response to stress. Atkins (1999) also explains that when

environments have been positive and joyful, the body has released endorphins elevating good feelings. Learners have been more likely to experience better learning, memory, and feelings of self-esteem. Furthermore, Blatchford (2003) mentions that class size is just as important as studying other factors that affect teaching, “class size must be seen as one contextual influence of classroom life, to which teachers and pupils will inevitably have to adapt, and which will affect the nature of the interaction between teachers and pupils.

Controversially, 37% of the students disagree that the atmosphere is stressful, which demonstrates that some students think that there is not stress related to the class activities. Byram (2004) explains that the class size itself does not necessarily have a negative impact on the quality of teaching and learning process. According to these results, it is probably that the teacher promotes interaction and applies methodologies to address interaction; however, these methodologies should be revised so the rest of students feel that the environment is not stressful, or at least reduce the possibility of stress.

In item (16) related to if students feel inhibited when speaking in front of the rest, 18% of the students totally agree, 28% agreed on feeling inhibited when speaking in front of the class. This suggests that some students do feel inhibited when speaking in front of the class, probably because they may feel embarrassed in case of making mistakes in front of the rest of the classroom, but not necessarily due to the size of the class. Furthermore, a portion of 29% of the students partially agreed. This shows two possibilities. The first one is that these students don't feel inhibited in class at all and the second one is that perhaps they feel inhibited but not when speaking in front of the class

but for other reasons. However, a considerable 24% of the students disagree with this statement; this means that not all students feel the psychological barrier of fear when having the chance to participate in front of the class, as they feel confident and able to break the obstacle of the so-called fear of stepping forward, even if they make mistakes, probably because these students feel motivated to participate. Anderman and Dawson (2011), Anderman and Wolters (2006), Schunk and Zimmerman (2006), also mention that motivation is important as the interests and goals of every student differ from one student to other, so it is very important to keep every one of them interested and hooked to it. This motivation can also come from outside the classrooms and may be influenced by several of external or extrinsic factors such as family and classmates among other. It is also known as extrinsic motivation. It is for sure the kind of the motivation that pupils bring within into schoolroom from outside. Otherwise, students also show intrinsic motivation, which is produced and driven by what happens inside the classroom.

In addition, it is important that the teacher should motivate students to speak in front of the class. Haddad (2006) suggests encouraging students with questions and comments, since many of them are too shy, or embarrassed, to ask questions or make comments in front of their peers.

In the matter of students do not have the opportunity to express their opinions, presented on item (17), 37% of the students, disagree about the statement, which suggests that these representative portion of the students do have the opportunity to express their opinions. Moreover, 24% of the students partially agree. This result shows that there is a possibility that this portion doesn't really look for this opportunity, perhaps because they just want to go unnoticed. In contrast, 39% of students chose

totally agree as their option. This demonstrates that there are other students that think that not all of them have the opportunity to express their opinions, probably due to the large amount of participants. These results show that these students have different points of view about the chance to express opinions they have. However, students that are closer to the teacher will probably have this opportunity in a more effective way or in a higher frequency than those sitting in the back because of the proximity to the teacher. Here, the amount of students plays an important role. Blatchford (2003) explains that there is not much research regarding the effects of class size differences on teachers and students. However, it does not matter the size of the class, it is important to remember that it is made of individuals, the majority of whom would like to be listened by the teacher directly.

In item (18) concerning to if students do not like to participate because they feel afraid, the majority, this is 44% of the students totally disagree. This shows that students in general do not feel afraid of contributing to the class. However, 17% of the students chose totally agree as their option, 19% agree and 21%, a considerable amount, chose partially agree. This demonstrates that some student indeed feel afraid of participating in class, probably because of the large amount of classmates. In addition, this behavior may occur because they are too shy and because they feel afraid of making mistakes in front of the rest. Furthermore, Jensen (1998) explains that students generally feel afraid of making mistakes and hearing a gross comment from the audience. A rude classmate or a teacher who humiliated or embarrassed a student in front of peers may be perceived as a threat.

It is also important to mention that the way the teacher develops the classroom activities plays an important role here. Students will feel motivated if their teachers promote other students are very understanding with the mistakes other students make during class participation. This is the reason why the teacher should promote respect, tolerance, friendship and teamwork. Moreover, in all manners, negative comments, sarcasm and criticism should be avoided as much as possible. At this point, all the students should be considered as integrant of a well-formed society called classroom. Sarikoban and Sakizli (2006) mentions that the process of teaching and learning a new language implies interaction of teachers and students, in a social environment.

According to the results presented in the graph 3 on item (19) related to if the teacher does not pay equal attention to all his/her students, 50% of the students disagree to this statement. This shows that most of them think that the teacher indeed pays equal attention to all students. However, 20% chose totally agree, 15% agree and a considerable amount of students, this is 15%, chose partially agree. These results demonstrate that all students have different points of view about attention they are receiving. It is probably that the students that are closer to the teacher are paid more attention than those sitting in the back because of the proximity to the teacher. Shamin (2003) states on her research, that one of the major problems in a large class is that teachers cannot pay individual attention. This information suggests that that the size of the class will influence education. The larger the class the more the attention is divided and it is more difficult to accomplish the ideal of every student being attended to their own individual needs.

According to the results of item (20) concerning to if students feel they can act competitively with other students, 61% of the students chose totally agree, 26% agreed. This demonstrates undoubtedly that most of students indeed feel they can act competitively. This suggests that all these pupils are quite motivated and feel confident to participate and compete in class. However, a considerable 9% of them partially agreed. This shows that some students feel they cannot act competitively with other students. It is common for more students that are knowledgeable try to stand out in comparison to the rest of the class. Teachers should establish a fun and competitive atmosphere within the classroom; frequently they tend to encourage competition with the students and to create competitive class activities, which facilitates students' achievement. In the same manner, students believe that competition among other classmates promote learning for students in large classes. According to this point of view, competition can be used as a tool to engage students to learn English in a motivating way. This can be challenging for any teacher. However, making the correct application of available tools, can lead us to convey meaning in a proper manner. Anderson (1984) explains that the teachers should apply in their classroom activities that help students to compete and help each other. These activities are related to the cooperative learning process, which allows students to work together and to reach common goal.

According to the results presented on item (21) related to if students feel relaxed because they can go unnoticed, 34% of the students chose disagree, and also 34% partially agree. This data demonstrates some students do not feel relaxed when they go unnoticed. It is possible that the teacher handles at least the majority of students through

class activities and that being unnoticed is indeed a matter of concern for some of these students; On the other hand, 15% of the students chose totally agree, 16% agree. This information suggest that some students are not attentive and participative in class tasks and activities as they can actually go unnoticed, probably due to the large number of students. According to this, some students in large classes prefer to be in the anonymity and be ignored. Students take a more passive role and they are less likely to participate in class, hoping that their lack of involvement will go unnoticed. In fact, some students in large classes, where they feel relatively unnoticed, may behave in ways that they would not do in smaller classes.

The teacher is expected to observe and pay attention to the whole class and keep control of all the students. According to this point of view, Svinicki and McKeachie (2013) state that a problem in teaching large classes is that some students go unnoticed because the teachers very often do not pay enough attention to them. In this case, students do not take their own responsibility to participate in class; therefore, they might decrease their motivation for learning.

CONCLUSIONS

- Activities such as competitions, debates and games, carried out by the teacher in these large group classes help students to apply and practice what they learn in class.
- The activities developed in the large classroom by the teacher, promote contribution to the majority of students, however, not all of them have the opportunity to participate in class activities or obtain regular feedback due to the quantity of students.
- Teachers in these large classes remember the name of most of the students and have little problems remembering all the students' names, which contributes in the teaching-learning process of English language in a positive manner, because they feel included as part of the class.
- In spite of the large class environment, students in these large classrooms find it difficult cheating during tests, getting distracted by doing assignment from other subjects and even using their cellphones without being seen by the teacher because he has certain control over the discipline of the class.
- Teachers in these classes try to pay attention to each one of the students but cannot pay equal attention to all of them due to the large size environment.
- Students in these large classes feel engaged and confident to act competitively with other students during class because they feel motivated by the teacher to participate and compete.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Seating arrangement should be improved in order to be closer to the student so the teacher can pay more attention to all students and give them more opportunity to express their opinions and participate in class.
- More and new activities should be used by the teacher in order to avoid repeatability and monotony. This can help to grasp the attention of the whole classroom and make students more active, especially those less participative.
- Educational authorities should supervise the teaching-learning process on a defined period basis. This will help to enhance aspects such as teaching methodology, lesson plan design, teacher-student interaction, etc., and help to detect problems and find possible solutions.

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ANNEXES

1 INSTRUMENTS



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 honestly as possible based on the following criteria.

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

Informative data: Please fill in the information below

Name of institution: _____

Type of institution: Public () Private ()

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

City: _____

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

A. Academic issues

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

B. Social issues

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

C. Psychological issues:

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

Thank you for your collaboration!

2 PHOTOS







