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The Problem of Overcrowded Classes in Learning English as a Foreign Language

Case Study: First Year LMD students of English at Mohamed

Kheider University of Biskra.

A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of Foreign Languages in Partial Fulfillments of the Requirements for the Master's Degree in Sciences of the Language

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Dedication

To my parents for their unwavering support throughout my research.

To my dear brothers and lovely sisters

To all those who love me and believed in me.

I dedicate this work

Acknowledgment

To begin with, I would like to thank God (Allah) for giving me the strength, patience and perseverance to complete my master dissertation.

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Abstract

The globalization of English language has led to significant growth in the enrollment of students who either study English as a second or foreign language from various non-English speaking countries. At university level, this has led to increase the number and size of large classes. This descriptive study mainly aims at identifying the problems that English teachers at Mohamed Kheider University face while teaching overcrowded classes of about 50-60 learners and the strategies they employ to achieve specific outcomes in the English classroom. So, in order to gain deeper understanding of the impact of large classes on EFL teaching and learning, an interview was designed and conducted with six EFL teachers. Besides, classroom observation with first year LMD classes. The results of the research instrument revealed that noise making, assessment, student-teacher interactions and lack of space are the most common problems. Based on the results, our hypothesis was confirmed; EFL learning should be carried in reduced classes of no more than 25 students per class so as to create successful EFL environment.

List of Abbreviations

EFL : English as a Foreign Language

ICT: Information and Communication Technology.

TBL: Task-Based Learning.

CLT: Communicative Language Teaching.

CLL: Cooperative Language Leaning.

FL: Foreign Language.

LMD: License Master Doctorate.

IWB: Interactive White Board.

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Background to the Study

Nowadays, learning English as a foreign language has become a very sophisticated task. An effective teaching and learning process is based on the teacher, the students, and the classroom where the teaching-learning process takes place. In a Foreign language context, there are many factors that hamper the educational process such as : discipline problems, classroom management challenges, and overcrowded classes. This latter is considered among the social factors that affect education negatively. According to the National Council of Teachers of English Guidelines (1987, p.8), the reference number of students should not exceed 25 learners per class. Unfortunately, in the English division at Biskra university, learning EFL has been invaded by crowd of people and classes cannot contain the minimum number required for language teaching classes. This number ranges from 50-60 students and can lead to teaching problems that can be spatial, pedagogical, management till achievement problems. As a result, these problems not only affect students learning but also affect their final outcomes. Not only that, teachers cannot establish an effective teaching environment where the number of learners exceeds the normal standard. For these reasons, this study stresses basically on how reducing the number of students in class can improve their performance. The current research is an attempt to demonstrate the drawbacks of overcrowded classes on teaching and learners' proficiency in the target language.

Statement of the Problem

Overcrowding has become a very acute phenomena in today's societies. At university level, teachers believe that overcrowded classes are one of the negative factors

that could be linked to failure in English language learning. In classes that contains big number of learners, teachers feel that they have a lot of challenges. For instance, talking to everybody in class, ensuring that everybody is participating, evaluating all learners fairly, reaching all students needs, organizing group work activities, engaging all learners and monitoring the tasks . Not only that, large classes also pose challenges on students learning in a way that it hamper their language learning. As a matter of example, overcrowded classes affect negatively students motivation. If someone is intrinsically motivated ,he or she is not going to sustain that motivation for a long times because of the discipline problem. If he or she faces the noise issue, then they cannot focus on the flow of the lecture simply because of the distracting factors such as the noise, students talking, chatting, management issues and many other negative challenges. It is for this reasons why large classes are perceived as a great obstacles for language teaching and learning. This study is designed to find out the problems of overcrowded English language classes and suggest the appropriate methods that teacher should use in order to alleviate the burden created by those classes.

Literature Review

There was a debate concerning the effect of overcrowded classes on the teaching-learning process for some time. However, the issue was revisited where the most important findings started in the 1970's. Many scholars who tackled this issue share two distinct views on the effect of overcrowded classes on the academic outcomes. Certainly, Some have argued that smaller classes have a positive impact on student achievement, while others claim that there is no significant impact. As a matter of example:

In his article, *The Tennessee study of class size in the early school Grades*, Mostellar (1995,p.) provides a detailed description of the STAR Project reporting that

"this study found that classes of fewer than 17 students to one teacher are most effective. Also, the benefits of small classes are greater for minority students or students attending inner-city schools than for White students". Along the same lines, Blatchford et al.(2000-2003) in his contribution, results from a multi-method approach of class size effects on the teaching of pupils aged 7-11 years. "This study confirms the benefits of smaller classes showing that there was more individual attention in smaller classes, a more active role for pupils and beneficial effects on the quality of teaching" (Blatchford, ibid.).

Whereas, Eherenberg et al. (2001), conducted a meta-analysis study on the impact of class size on student achievement which concluded that there was no significant evidence that variations in class size explain improvements in student achievement. They suggest that even if some relationship did exist between class size and student achievement, Eherenberg suggests the benefits are too small to warrant the implementation of expensive class size reduction programs. Another study by Hanushek (1995 as cited in Benbow et al. 2007,p.) "review of 96 studies that attempted to link various educational inputs to student performance in developing countries. Hanushek concludes from these studies that there is little reason to believe that smaller class sizes systematically improve student educational performance".

The STAR Project study focused on the relationship between class size and students achievement while Blatchford worked on class size and teaching. Also, Eherenberg et al studied the impact of class size on achievement and Hanushek linked educational inputs to students performance. However, none of the above cited works have worked about the relationship between overcrowded classes and lack of teachers. We often accuse that lack of teaching achievement is due to overcrowded classes. But ,we are hoping to reveal what is really behind this issue. Is it really the number that impacted the achievements of learners or is it lack of teachers.

Purpose of the Study

The present work aims at:

- Identifying the issue and defining it.

- Locating the practical problems of overcrowded English classes specifically in Biskra University.

- Ensuring that large classes hinder the teaching and learning process.

- Then, suggesting solutions to such phenomenon.

Significance of the Study

Overcrowded classes in a phenomena that exists everywhere, it is not only in Algeria. Through this research, we intend to raise both teachers and students awareness concerning the problems they face during the teaching-learning process. It is a good opportunity to spotlight on the different problems that affect the quality of education in the division of English language and try to suggest solutions for this issue. To be specific, this study would provide EFL teachers with strategies that allow them to establish a positive classroom climate. Also, this study gives opportunity to students to achieve better learning outcomes as well as having more chances of interaction with the teachers. As well as authorities should be aware that education at universities is always for the sake of quality and never quantity.

Research Questions

The present study is based on the following questions:

- What are the various problems inside large size English classes?

- Are there any teaching methods and strategies specific to large classes?

- Is it really a problem of number of learners or lack of teachers?

Hypothesis

This study is designed to test the following hypothesis:
We hypothesize that if the number of learners per class is reduced, the learning conditions and performance of the students will be improved.

Research Methodology

According to the nature of the issue about education, the most plausible method that is used in carrying out this study that can fit our topic is the descriptive one. Our main aim is to describe a known and very acute phenomenon which is overcrowded classes and its negative impact on the learning process. In other words, using the descriptive method, we aim at determining the nature of the problem which is about the current situation of both teachers and student's difficulty in carrying out an effective teaching and learning in an EFL context and to clarify the environment or the physical factor which is overcrowded classrooms as a main cause of the problem. For this reason, it was ideal to adopt the descriptive method because we observe facts and analyze causes and consequences. In this sense, we would use two main gathering data tools which are classroom observation with first year LMD classes. Meanwhile, an interview is directed to English teachers who have been teaching for a long time and possess varied levels of experience.

Tools of Research

We have decided to use a classroom observation and an interview as a research tool that is useful in collecting and analyzing data. We choose classroom observation because it is more tangible to observe teaching while it occurs rather than to be told how it is carried. In addition, each year students are administered with hundred of questionnaires

to answer and eventually they will get bored from the same tools. That's why we opt for an interview. The teachers' interview includes questions to collect information about the problems teachers encounter in class including problems of (space / noise / interaction /assessment /motivation/ participation) caused by large classes. Then, we will conduct a classroom observation with first year LMD students in the English division, to see in which way large classes affect both teachers and learners.

Population and Sampling

We decided to choose first year LMD students at Mohamed Kheider University as a population (seven hundred eighty nine students). In addition, for the needs of study. We selected randomly six (06) teachers from the population of (37) according to the availability of teachers to help us accomplish the present study with useful data.

Limitation of the Study

Neither time nor conditions allow to carry out an experimental methodology to obtain objective findings. So, for specific considerations, we opt for the descriptive method. Also, this study will be narrowed in the scope of first year level classes and not all levels classes since the phenomenon of overcrowded classes is clearly present in all classes. In addition, the results obtained from this study cannot be generalized since the selected sample represents only students from Biskra University. Furthermore, we intended to use a questionnaire for first year LMD students as a third tool to gather further data for this dissertation, however due to time constraints, we rely only on teachers' interview and classroom observation . Finally, while we tend to focus more on the main difficulties English language teachers face in large class teaching since they are explicitly exposed to and to a certain length discusses students problems.

Delimitation of the study

The nature of our topic is within the field of second language acquisition.

Structure of the Dissertation

The present research is divided into three main chapters. Chapter one entitled "The phenomena of overcrowded classes". It stars with the definitions of some basic concepts and its main differences. Then, it sheds light on some overcrowded classroom challenges and the appropriate strategies to manage it. After that, we dealt with lack of teachers as a main source leads to large classes. Finally, we reviewed some experiences in teaching large classes in developing crowded nations such as China as a model of how teaching is carried out successfully despite the large number.

Chapter two, "learning English as a foreign language" specifically highlights some of the required conditions indicated by literature to learn a second or foreign language. Then, this part sheds light on the influence of large classes on the learning process, particularly speaking, listening, writing and reading. In addition, it is showed how teachers can be innovative in teaching through using various teaching approaches. Finally, we emphasize on how using appropriate teaching aids (ICT) can help minimize the negative influence of large classes.

Chapter three is the field work. Provides a detailed description of data collection as well as analysis of both teachers' interview and classroom observation. In addition, this chapter includes with a discussion of data tools.

In the organizations of the chapters. We open each chapter with an introduction and close it with a conclusion.

Chapter I:

The Phenomena of Overcrowded Classes.

Introduction

Overcrowded classes are generally considered to be a hindrance to teaching and learning owing to the fact that it can negatively impact a class's success in language learning. In this chapter, we try to define overcrowded classes concept as well as other concepts. Some key issues in large classes teaching will be then identified and their implications for effective learning as well as discussing some experiences in large classes teaching focusing on two main countries : China and India. Finally, causes of overcrowded classes will be discussed focusing on one reason which is lack of teachers.

1.1. Crowded Vs. Overcrowded

Most people ignore the fact that "crowded" and "overcrowded" concepts are not the same. National Council of Teachers of English Guidelines (1987,p.8) state that, "Classes larger than 25 do not give students and teachers the opportunity to engage literary texts through questions, discussion, and writing". So, we can say that the optimal size for English language university learning is no more than 25 students per class. However, what about a class of 26, it is crowded or an overcrowded class.

From that sense, Cambridge Dictionary defines the term overcrowded as "containing too many people or things". Similarly, thefreedictionary.com defines it as "with too many people or things in it (of a place)". In the words of Wedell and Maderez (2013, p. 175), "Overcrowding, when the number of students in a room is greater than the room was designed for".

On the other hand, the term crowd takes the following definition: "a large number of things or people gathered or considered together." (Collins Dictionary). In Old English, the term derived from '*crūdan*' which means press. In Middle English the senses moved

from 'move by pushing' , leading to the sense 'congregate', and hence (mid 16th century) to the current noun (Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary).

From the above definitions, we can say that the term overcrowded is more appropriate to the phenomena of large classes. The high numbers of learners in one class inhibits teachers from teaching effectively and learners from learning efficiently. In other words, when we say overcrowded we mean that it is exaggerating, it is beyond the means. Otherwise, it would not be a problem.

1.2. Definition of Overcrowded Classes

There is no universal definition of what is a large class. i.e. there is a general disagreement amongst researchers as to what number of students in a class can be seen as large. Throughout the dissertation, the term overcrowded and large classes are used interchangeably to refer a university language class contains 50-60 students which pose real challenges in the delivery of knowledge and equal learning opportunities to all students in that classroom.

According to a definition provided by Coleman (1989 as cited in Richards & Burns, 2012) what is defined as a large class in one context may be considered a small class in another context-or even at different levels of education in the same context .For instance, a large class in European and North American contexts can be a small class in South and East Asia or the opposite. This is due to the fact that teaching contexts differ from one country to another. As Wang and Zhang adds (2011), there is no numerical determination of what shape a large class as teachers' perceptions of large classes differs from one context to another That is to say, in different contexts people have various interpretations of large classes.

Locastro (2001) goes deeper, claiming that what class size is large or too large depends to a great extent upon the individual teacher's perceptions and experiences. Ur (1996, as cited in Renaud et al., 2007, p.13) reinforced this idea saying that "the exact number does not really matter, what matters is how you, the teacher see the class size in your own specific situation". Teachers generally consider classes to be too large in comparison to what they have already been teaching. If they have been teaching twenty students in a class, thirty students in a class is a large class for them. Similarly if they have been teaching forty students in a class, fifty will be large number for them (Bughio, 2012).

There seems to be no consensus in literature as to what should be the optimum numbers of students in a class. However, Todd (2006, p.2), an EFL instructor at Thailand's King Mongkut University of Techonology, has drawn a table that shows the number of students given by different authors in articles about large classes for English language teaching.

Author	Minimum size of large class
Barker (1976)	55
Chimombo (1987)	50
Dixon (1986)	40
Finocchiaro (1989)	65
George (1991)	60
Hayes (1997)	50
Holliday (1996)	50
Hubbard et al. (1983)	45
Li (1998)	50
Long (1977)	60
Nolasco and Arthur (1986)	40
Safnil (1991)	60
Samuda and Bruton (1981)	40
Touba (1999)	60

Table 1. Some Minimum Sizes of Large Classes (Source: as cited in Todd 2006, p.2)

The table shows that all authors share the same view that a large class contains from 40 to 60 students. Also, the number of students in a class differs from one author to the other.

This is maybe due to the different contexts of teaching, the subject taught, the discipline and other factors that are believed to affect learning along with large classes.

1.3. Problems of Overcrowded Classes and it's Pedagogical Implications

The basic mission of the teacher is to distribute the knowledge to everybody. Each learner has his own way in internalizing the second and/or foreign language rules through the teachers explanations. However, in large classes, where the student-teacher ratio ranges from 50 to 1 to more than 150 to 1. It is difficult to establish a sufficient interaction with all students due to the overwhelming number of students in a class. Challenges such as monitoring attendance, checking assignments, maintaining discipline, checking comprehension checks and many others are all problems worrying language teachers involved in large class teaching.

Opposite to the different opinions on the definitions of large classes. Most researchers agree when it comes to problems related to teaching overcrowded classes. As the literature indicates, according to Bamba (2011) large classes are characterized by certain common problems including: The physical environment of the classroom, the issue of management, students' engagement in the learning process, difficulties of assessing student's knowledge and feedback, and the problem of teaching resources.

1.3.1. The Physical Environment of the Classroom

"We never educate directly, but indirectly by means of the environment".

John Dewey (1944)

From the above statement we can recognize the role that the physical setting plays in promoting effective learning. Some people give no importance to the physical setting of the classroom until they encounter problems that prevent them from teaching effectively.

The way classroom is organized, the type of seating arrangement largely determines the experiences teachers and students share. Hayes (1997, pp. 111) agrees with that thought saying "classrooms with large numbers of desks and chairs often prevent teachers from doing the kind of interactive activities that they would like to do".

Wedell and Malderez (2013) give three problems related to the physical environment of the classroom. First, furniture and facilities. It is no more news that classes are designed to accommodate certain number of students. However, what about classes with an increased number of learners. How teachers are supposed to teach in a limited space where learners are squeezed in and some cannot find a chair to sit (al-Jaref, 2006). Second, circulation and movement. In such situation, teachers cannot monitor groups if there is no space to walk around the room and cheating can become a problem when you cannot be everywhere and consequently students lose concentration and fail to understand their lessons.

Finally, possibilities for communication. With a restricted movement and limited classroom space it is inevitable to experience a increased rate of interaction between teachers and students. Therefore, it is essential to recognize that the physical environment can influence the way teachers and students think and behave (Sariçoban & Sakizli, 2006).

1.3.2. The Issue of management

Classroom management refers to all of the things that a teacher does to organize student's space, time, and materials so that learning can take place. In large classes, "teachers spend more time on task and with individual students because of less time spent on dealing with disciplinary problems and interactions not related to learning objectives, compared with teachers in larger classes" (Al-Jaref 2007, p.2).

In large class setting, some students benefit from the large number of students and escape from the lecture without notice. Such students photocopy lecture notes from their colleagues instead of attending themselves. Thus, overcrowding resulted in a high rate of absenteeism among students and teachers (Corcoran as cited in Akhtar et al. 2012, p. 367). In this case, Classroom management becomes a formidable obstacle that needs to be overcome before we can even begin to think about real teaching (Jesus, 2011). That is to say, discipline problems may bound the teaching-learning process and make it less effective unless those behaviors are approached right from beginning of the year in order to avoid a lack of engagement in learning and disruptive behaviors.

Shamim et al. (2007), has identified noise as an element that concerns teachers, mainly because it interferes with the development of the lesson as well as becomes a disturbance issue for neighboring classes. For instance, if the students are too many, they make a loud noise and consequently, the teacher cannot control them. Al-Jaref (as cited in Bamba, 2012) reinforced this idea saying "large class sizes inhibit small group activities and individualized instruction, because of the noise level and lack of space in the classroom".

1.3.3. Students' Engagement in the Learning Process

Another negative impact of large classes on teaching-learning process is students' engagement in the learning process. Students' engagement is affected in so many ways by the size of the class. In large classes, "students have less active role in interactions with their teachers, and are less attentive to their teachers as well" (Bamba, 2012). This means that larger class sizes provide students with limited individual attention, the focus being on active students more than the shy ones, putting the other students in the state of passive learners.

Wulff, Nyquist, and Abbott (1987 as cited in Cuseo 2007,p.4) "found that what students report to be most *dissatisfying* about large introductory courses is the lack of instructor-student interaction and the opportunities for questions and discussions. Thus, large classes limit teacher- student interactions and prevents them from asking questions". On the other hand, the work of Light (2001as cited in Cuseo, 2007,p. 5)" involving in-depth interviews with 1,600 undergraduates showed that students who chose at least one small class each semester were noticeably more engaged in the college experience".

1.3.4. Difficulties of Assessing Student's Knowledge and Feedback

In large classes, the chances that many students can complete a whole term or semester of study without experiencing a single episode of interaction with the tutor is very high. According to Çakmak (2009) teachers believe the evaluation process is different in large and small classes in a way that teachers working in class sizes consisting of 16 to 23 students were more satisfied because marking took little time and corrections were immediate; whereas in classes of 30 students marking became more formal, time-consuming, and sometimes delayed.

The work of Tinto (as cited in Sing & Maringe 2014, p.769) demonstrates that "interaction between tutor and individual students through verbal or written comments is closely associated with higher students' gains due to increased retention, higher academic achievement, development of critical thinking and having higher aspirations". For many students, the absence of such personalized feedback reduces their chances of attaining meaningful outcomes. As a result, this can lead to dropping out, poor performance, non-completion, and reducing their motivation to learn.

To that, Shamim et al. (2007) added that with a large class size, teachers are unable to evaluate students' work continuously. According to them, due to this lack of on-

going assessment of students' performance, teachers are unable to identify the learners' problems, know their progress, provide them with appropriate feedback and finally provide them with remedies based on feedback from their assessment.

1.3.5. The Problem of Teaching Resources

The lack of resources and facilities represents another concern for teachers and students of large classes. Resources are anything which the teacher uses to help students learn. Renaud et al. (2007) investigating large classes in Haiti noted :

> Many students in developing countries do not have textbooks. The only materials they bring to class are a notebook and, sometimes, a pen or pencil. The teacher usually has a blackboard and chalk supplied by the school, but no access to photocopies, no electricity, and often little access to books. Many teachers do not even have an English dictionary or an English grammar book available. (p. 15)

From this statement we can see that even in developed countries, teachers cannot have access to the simplest facilities required for teaching. In these under-resourced classrooms, teachers have few resources, perhaps only a blackboard and a few books. As a result, we can say that this problem is rather of poverty that could be one of the issues that leads to overcrowded classes.

For Michaelowa (2001 as cited in Benbow et al. 2007,p. 7) "the availability of books is very important in achieving high scores. She found that having books available in students' homes can improve achievement scores by 2-3%". The same improvement rate was noticed when students have appropriate classroom facilities. It is important to note that teaching-learning resources play a vital role in the improvement of the quality of the teaching-learning process in that they support pupils' learning and increases their retention of lessons learnt. For istance, a worksheet may provide pupils with important opportunities to practice a new skill gained in Class.

1.4. Strategies of Teaching Large Classes

One of the most concerns voiced by language teachers is how to keep their classroom disciplined in classes with large enrollments and how to correct large amounts of written work. Most discipline problems occur due to boredom and lack of interest in learning. Teachers can alleviate those problems by using some techniques.

To begin with, teachers should make some efforts to know the names of their students. It is a common problem when classroom is so large that it is difficult to remember all students' names. One simple way to use is to have the students say their names when they ask a question. Also, teacher can ask students to have a name card that they display in front of them during each class. Second, setting ground rules, instructors find it beneficial to establish rules in the first day of class by writing it on the board. For instance, they have to work quietly; they may talk, but not loudly; and students who have finished the lesson tasks can read a book to keep them busy (Kunkam et al. 2007, p.2). Creating these rules by both teachers and students will encourage students to participate and become individually engaged in class.

Another concern for teachers is the large amount of written work. That is to some extent a burden for teachers faced with various tasks like teaching other classes, planning lessons, and supervising students. Renaud et al. (2007) proposes two techniques to help teachers asses their students effectively. First, have students work in groups to produce one piece of writing for each group or to complete grammar exercises together. This will reduce the number of papers teachers must correct. Second, for all written work, have each student go through the process of self-editing and one or two rounds of peer editing before turning in the paper. This decreases the amount of written assessment that the teacher needs to provide.

1.4.1. Promoting Active Learning

Keeping learners engaged during the whole course is not an easy task especially when the number of learners is beyond the normal standard. Changing the traditional way of the lecture method and varying the type of instruction in large classes encourages student participation. Also, giving students some time to recall what they learnt by stopping lecturing every fifteen minutes is a very practical strategy.

Moreover, Inviting students to write questions or comments on index cards and give them to the teacher at the end of class is a good strategy to give chance for weak and shy learners to express themselves. Teachers can use some small group activities in order to engage students such as Think-Pair-Share and One minute paper.

Think-Pair-Share is a good ice-breaking technique suitable for large classes. First of all, teacher asks a question to the whole class. After that, he gives students one to three minutes to think about it individually and then divide them into pairs. Next step, for three or two minutes teachers make students discuss their answers with each other. Finally, invite students to share responses with the entire class. In this case, students will be more open to participate in future class discussions.

Another strategy is one minute paper. Teacher asks students to take out a sheet of paper and for one minute, summarizes main points of lecture or notes any specific points of the lecture. Then, teacher collects the papers and uses feedback to target problem areas. This will help to assess student's comprehension and locate the potential problems. In brief, there are other activities that can be used inside the classroom such Jigsaw texts, clickers and twitter, discussion, individual work, three-step interview and other activities.

1.4.2. Using Up-to-date Technologies

In today's society, a big portion of teaching and learning is carried out with the help of technology. It has permeated every aspect of our lives. Integrating technology in

language teaching and learning help learners be more motivated and engaged. Teachers can use a variety of digital tools in teaching overcrowded classes inside and outside the classroom. As a matter of example:

The interactive whiteboard (IWB) and data projectors are one of the widely used teaching tools inside the classroom that have multiple tasks such as displaying texts, pictures, pages from the textbook, presentations and video (Ur, 2012). IWBs are attractive and easy to use. Just one flip of a finger can erase and write in the same time as well as restoring information is much easier. Whereas, E-mails allows for more individualized learning between students and teachers. Students can send their written assignments and in turn teachers check, send them back and give grades. This serves as an alternative way to communicate or maintain contact with students outside the classroom.

1.4.3. Using Pair and Group Work to encourage Cooperative learning

Collaborative or cooperative language learning involves three or more students working together. Richard Felder, an expert in teaching, once suggested group work was especially important for large classes, where getting students engaged was usually a challenge (Ming, 2009). As a component of classroom interaction, group work can promote learners autonomy and make them less dependent on the teacher. Also, this will give learners a chance to develop their oral fluency and learn from each other.

In a large EFL class, convincing students of the necessity of working together in groups or pairs is not an easy task. However, Renaud et al. (2007) have suggested some ways to get students to work together and remain interested.

- When you introduce your pair or group work for the first time, plan simple activities for every short periods of time. At first, having students ask the person next to them a pre-set of question may be enough. The time spent on activity and

the complexity of activities can gradually be increased as students become used to the routines.

- Give instructions clearly and carefully, and check comprehension before the pair or group work begins. Write instructions on the board so groups can refer to them as they progress.

- To limit the time it takes for students to get into groups, have students work with those next to them, or immediately behind them. Seats can be changed weekly or monthly in order to allow students to work with different classmates

- Set up groups in advance and have them stay together for several class periods, which will avoid the time-consuming daily reorganization of groups

- Make one copy of handouts per group or pair of students. This obliges students to share and to work together, and fewer copies are needed.

- Assign roles to group members so that everyone in the group feels involved in some way.

- For each activity, roles should rotate among group members, with different students acting as the facilitator, secretary, recorder, time keeper, and so on.

- Establish quiet signals to show students when to start and stop activities. Students must be trained to stop working on a task when the teacher gives a signal by doing something such as raising her/his arms, ringing a bell, or holding up a stop sign.

1.5. Teachers' Shortage as a Cause of Overcrowded Classes

Language teaching and learning requires the interaction of two important part of the process, the teacher and the student. However, the problem of lack of qualified or specialized EFL teachers is a serious issue in today's societies. In universities, most concerns are directed to the increased number of learners per class. However, people fail to

recognize that the number of teachers is also linked to overcrowded classes, it is not only the number of learners who determines this issue..

Ali Al-Zahrani (as cited in www.Arab News.com) a teacher, said:

"The Ministry of Education is silent and not helping to find solutions. Establishing additional classes requires a budget for special equipment and salaries for new teachers. The ministry has not been successful in doing this, even though there are unemployed graduates sitting at home waiting for jobs".

This means that the government is not able to provide more teachers because providing teachers require many financial means. However, if the government puts more money into education and brings English native speakers to alleviate the problem. Eventually, the situation will be improved.

The reason behind the shortage of teachers could be attributed to many factors such as the recruitment of EFL teachers. Each year, universities are recruiting a very limited number of teachers maybe three, four or five maximum. Sometimes there is no qualified teachers for the job i.e. teachers who finished their magister degree or doctorate degree are not very available.

Suffering from lack of teachers in universities will lead to more overcrowded classes and more lesson taught by people who are not qualified in that subject. As a result, this will negatively affect students achievements.

1.6. Experiencing Teaching in Large Classes

Some people may wonder why an overcrowded nation like China is considered among the important countries that experienced overcrowded classes. "It is simply because

it is an emerging power and it account for a large proportion of the world's population" (Rao et al.2013,p. 136).

Considering the nature of learning a foreign language, learners should be exposed to the language i.e. they must speak, listen, read and write. However, given the fact that China is an overpopulated country. One may ask how English language teaching is carried out there? Since there are many learners there must be something specific to teach language overcrowded classes or to put it differently, what are the strategies used to teach those classes?

1.6.1. Beginnings: TEFL in China

Before the foundation of Peoples' Republic of china in 1949. Teaching English as Foreign Language (TEFL) went through two stages. The first stage lasted for 22 years (1902-1922), the focus was given to reading and translation and little or no attention to the spoken English due to the great influence of Japan on China . The second stage between 1922 to 1949, in this stage listening and speaking were given much importance because students were more exposed to English language spoken by the British and Americans. Consequently, English language was flourished and was used to teach other modules such as physics, mathematics and chemistry. Also, some textbooks were written by Chinese scholars like Lin Yutany and Lin Handa (Keqiang, 1986).

After the foundation of China, TEFL in China has gone through some ups and downs. However, in 1977 china reached its golden age where English language has been given first priority and is one of the basic subjects in schools. It is taught at least four times a week starting from the third grade up to the sixth grade at elementary level and five days a week at secondary schools. It is also a compulsory course at universities (Zhang, 2004).

According to Keqiang (1986,p. 155) the government has established many effective strategies to encourage citizens to learn English.

1.6.1.1. Taking Advantage of the Media

China started to take advantage of the use of media as a motivator to develop English language and urge citizens to learn English as well as make them aware of importance of learning it. Television programs such as "English on Sunday" and materials (films and tapes) were widely used. Furthermore, *China Daily,* is a national English newspaper that allows Chinese learners to enhance their language proficiency. Moreover, in China there are over one hundred different journals and locally produced newspapers for English teaching and learning (Keqiang, ibid.).

1.6.1.2. Exchange Programs

Since its open door policy, tourists and businessman from all over the world visited China while Chinese went abroad to study and work. The emphasis was given to communicative English skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing. The government encouraged many universities to exchange programs between English speaking countries and China. Therefore, opportunities were allowed to foreign teachers to teach in China. Likewise, Chinese teachers of English were sent abroad to inhance their language teaching skills (keqiang, ibid.).

1.6.1.3. Training of TEFL Teachers

The training of TEFL teachers occurs in foreign language departments of normal universities or colleges and foreign language institutes throughout the country. They learn all aspects of English-speaking, reading, writing and listening, in addition to social studies in the English language and classes in teaching methodology. They also have eight weeks

of practice teaching in local middle schools, where they work with experienced EFL teachers. According to Li (2007, p.36) "Today, training programs are offered to Chinese teachers in order to introduce them to the new method and to prepare them to handle learner-centered classrooms".

1.6.2. Problems of Teaching English in China

In Chinese society, the problem of large class size and lack of technology support is a serious issue in every level of educational system. The large numbers of students limits the teaching-learning process and make it harder for the teacher to teach effectively. What makes teaching worse is the lack of technology support; teachers have a little access to teaching materials such as tape recorders, photocopies, language laboratories and overhead projectors. Moreover, overcrowded classes inhibit teachers to employ various teaching methods that attracts learners attention and requires different classroom management techniques. As a result, teaching in Chinese context requires teachers to be innovative and creative in order to teach effectively in a large class.

Another problem is the use of traditional teaching methods like grammar translation method and audio lingual method. However, the CLT approach was introduced by the Chinese government as a solution to overcome situational constraints of large classes and traditional methods. Liao (2004) said that : "Large classes can be reduced, and more teachers hired, if the government puts more funds into these measures. Of course, this process of change will inevitably be gradual (p.272)". he explains that if teachers are aware of situational constraints, any difficulties can be overcome.

Conclusion

To conclude, there is little agreement on what is a large class, since it is a relative term, it remained difficult to define in a satisfactory way. Despite the innumerable

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challenges that overcrowded classes brings to language teachers and it's negative impact on the teaching and learning process, other teachers find a lot of opportunities and challenges that stimulates them to put more efforts to combat this phenomena through using some strategies aids them to maximize learning in large classes. Some of these strategies have proved to be effective in delivering knowledge that permits students and teachers to teach and learn effectively in the classroom namely in countries such as China.

Chapter Π:

Learning English as

a Foreign Language.

Introduction

Teaching EFL requires a specific treatment because in order to learn a language , practice is essential. To put it differently, every learner exposed to the language must speak, listen, read and write. Unfortunately, in overcrowded classrooms it is impossible to teach all learners through the four skills. As a result, this latter does not provide an optimal learning environment for teachers and students.

Through this chapter, we selected the basic issues in learning EFL that are relation with overcrowded classes. Whenever there is a large class, the ideal conditions, the learning process and teaching approaches will be inhibited. First of all, we try to shed light on some of the most important requirements that help to achieve successful English language learning in classrooms. After that, we are going to deal with the learning process (listening, speaking, writing and writing) and try to mention the problems of each skill created by large number of students. Then, in order to achieve the aim of language teaching, teachers ought to use a variety of teaching approaches focusing on the recent ones. Finally, the use of ICT in large classes as a remedial proposal to minimize the burden created by overcrowded classes.

2.1 Ideal Conditions to Successful Language Learning in Classrooms

"The conditions of English language learning vary among the different types of educational institutions" (Qadir & Riaz 2014, p. 138). This means that these conditions are not similar because every country has his own educational system, curriculum and needs. We review some of English language conditions indicated through literature including: motivation, classroom arrangement, syllabus design, exposure to language and English communication in the classroom. However, what about overcrowded classes, if we apply

this conditions and apply them in large classes, will it remain an ideal for successful learning or not?.

2.1.1. Motivation

"Motivation is classified as one of the 74 conditions for success in second language learning" (Spolsky & Sung 2014,p. 17). In its broadest sense, motivation is a natural tendency to seek out and conquer challenges. Another definition by Harmer, "motivation is some kind of internal drive that pushes someone to do things in order to achieve something" (2001, p. 51). When a learner enters the classroom with a high level of readiness to learn, learning becomes more productive. Nevertheless, when it comes to increasing motivation in large classes. Learning becomes more of a challenge to teachers and learners.

2.1.1.1. Sources of Motivation

In the view of Harmer (2001), the motivation that could lead students to be successful and involved in the learning process is affected by many other reasons including the teacher, the society and the others. To begin with, the teacher is the source and resource of English language learning inside the classroom. The teacher positive attitude will have a direct effect on students motivation to learn English in an optimal classroom climate.

Second, the society we live in. Here, Harmer (2001) highlights the importance of English language in non- English speaking countries. For instance, whether English language is taught as a compulsory course or not?, whether it is a second or first language?, whether English is the personal choice of students and why they choose it?. All those questions shapes students readiness a d willingness to learn English and the degree of motivation students bring out to the class.

Moreover, significant others. In his theory, Vygotsky, Russian educationalist, highlights the role of others in developing the child cognitive abilities . In his turn, Harmer (2001) shares the same view saying that the attitudes of people around us especially who are close help increase the amount of motivation that students could possess.

2.1.1.2. Overcrowded Classes as an impediment to students' Motivation

When speaking about motivation in large classes. It is apparent that students motivation to learn will be negatively influenced by the increased number. According to Harmer (1991, as cited in Wimolmas 2013,p. 907), the physical setting can affect students motivation negatively. For instance, when students are obliged to learn in class with restricted space or overcrowded with too many students. Obviously, either they lose motivation or their motivation will be reduced (Wimolmas, 2013). The method of the teacher is another factor affects students motivation. As Harmer said (1991, p. 5) "If the students loses confidence in the method, they will become demotivated". This is to say, Teachers and learners should have a mutual confidence in the way teaching and learning is carried out. If this trust is unbalanced, motivation could be easily demolished.

2.1.2. Exposure to The Language

Learnersdictionary.com (2016) defines exposure as the "the fact or condition of being affected by something or experiencing something **:** the condition of being exposed *to* something". That is to say, in order to learn a language effectively, being exposure to it is required condition for a full mastery of that language.

It is generally known that people learn or acquire a language through being exposed to it whether inside or outside the classroom. The degree to which learners are exposed to language is somehow not enough especially outside the classroom where students have a less contact with the language they are trying to learn. In non-English

speaking countries, the teacher acts as the only source to language learning inside the classroom. Since teachers in EFL are the only source, so conditions must be ideal. EFL.

Meanwhile, the degree to which students are exposed to language in overcrowded classes in reduced. How much time is give to learners to express themselves in English or to put it differently, the chances of distribution for each individual are limited. Large classes are believed to affect students cognitive skills in the classroom. Fischer and Grant (1983 as cited in Cuseo 2007, p. 6) report that in large classes "46 or more students), the discourse of students who participated in class most often reflected the lowest level of thinking—factual recall". That is to say, the more students expose to a language, the more they understand and develop their thinking abilities.

2.1.3. English Communication in the Classroom

Teaching is not an easy task to perform especially when teaching a foreign language. Both teachers and students are faced with difficulties in terms of interaction , giving enough individual attention to learners and establishing a good relationship inside the classroom. The following strategies if well adapted to the teaching environment, communication inside the classroom will be more effective (retrieved from www.ics.uci.edu).

- Speak slowly. Teachers should limit themselves to what is useful i.e. neither speak slowly nor rapidly. Thus, students will have more time to understand and teachers will have more time to select what they say.
- Use body language (gestures, facial expressions, eye contact). For instance, teacher must distribute his eye contact to everybody to see whether students are following or not.

- Welcome students' questions on any topic. If students know that their teacher is willing to answer questions, they will be more cooperative.

- At the beginning of each lecture, write a short outline of lesson presentation on the board. This gives students the opportunity to follow the instructor.

- Write each key term on the board to avoid ambiguity from the part of students. Also, it is essential to know the correct pronunciation of the key term in order for students to grasp it correctly.

- Language learning does not happen immediately. Students should make efforts to practice the language daily. Watching TV shows, broadcasts, interviews, talking to native speakers, reading articles and newspapers help accelerating the progress of your skills as well as your language proficiency.

When these strategies are used, it would be easy to communicate in the classroom. However, in large classes students from various backgrounds often tend to use their mother tongue while learning. In turn, this hampers effective communication in the classroom. For instance, when working in groups or pairs students use their first language to speak with each other about irrelevant topics and that does distract others from performing tasks appropriately.

2.1.4. Classroom Arrangement

Within one lesson, teachers could use different types of seating arrangements. For instance, teaching a class as a whole group, getting students to work on their own or having them perform tasks in pairs or groups. In a study conducted by Jackson (2009) investigating the influence of seating arrangement of the teacher-student interaction through implementing three different types of seating arrangements in EFL classrooms. The results showed that seating arrangement impacts student and teacher behaviors positively. Also, students were concerned with being able to communicate with each other

and the teacher especially in classroom activities that were more easy to handle in an arranged class (Jackson, ibid.).

In classrooms, something simple as the seating arrangement could make a difference and have an impact on the teacher-student interactions. This demonstrates the importance of organizing classroom activities in various patterns of seating arrangements such as pairs, rows, U-shape, small groups.
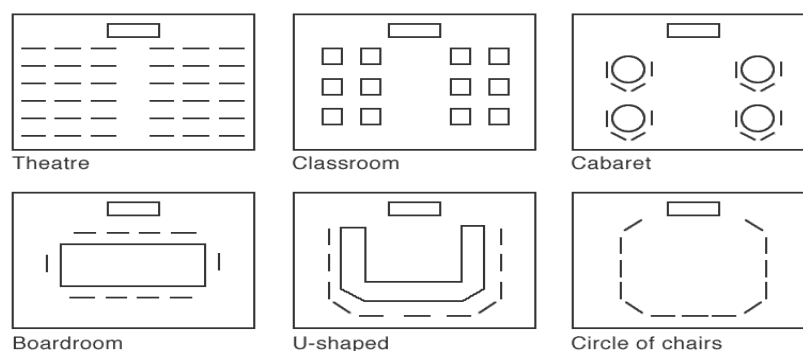
Figure 01.Various Types of Classroom Arrangements (Source: Retrieved on May 06, 2015. From www.google.com).

Figure (02) shows different types of seating arrangements that could be applicable in large classes even with limited resources. These types include U-shaped, circle of chairs, boardroom, theatre, classroom and cabaret arrangements.

However, if we consider the large number of students in class. Could we implement these different designs of classroom arrangement in large class setting. The lack of classroom arrangement could impede students from participating effectively. This idea is supported by Benbow et al. (1989, p.40) reporting that "traditional classroom seating arrangements often work against you in your interactive teaching".

2.1.5. Syllabus Design

Syllabus is generally developed by a group of teachers in one school or Experts in related subjects and resource. A syllabus is "an expression of opinion on the nature of language and learning ; it acts as a guide for both instructor and learner by providing some goals to be attained " (Robini as cited in Hamrit 2013,p. 27).

There are various types of language teaching syllabi, and these different types could be presented in different learning situations. Harmer (2009) introduces grammatical syllabi, functional syllabi, and situational syllabi as three main types of syllabi in language teaching So, teachers should take into consideration their lesson objectives when choosing designing a syllabus in language teaching. However, in a large class context, according to Ratcliff 1992 (as cited in Cuseo 2007,p. 7), "Class size is cited frequently as a *major limitation* on what could be accomplished in instruction and in what reasonably could be asked of students in class assignments". This means that the teaching objectives are not fully accomplished when there are an increased number of students.

2.2. The Learning Process

It is well known that in order to learn a foreign or second language, learners have to practice it very frequently. The more learners practice the four skills, the more they achieve a mastery of language learning. Research has shown that adults spend 30 to 40% of communication listening, 25 to 30% speaking, 11 to 16% reading and about 9% writing (Rivers, 1984 as cited in chelli 2013, p. 50).

Every learner should be given maximum chance and sufficient time to be exposed to language practice performance. In foreign language context, confronting classes that comprise large number of students that may exceed 100 students per class increases the difficulties of giving each learner a chance language exposure for practice of the four

skills. Thus will decrease the chances given to each learner to overcome the four skills because language classes are a matter of processing the four skills.

2.2.1. Speaking Skill

2.2.1.1. Definition

It is generally known that the more we speak, the more we become fluent speakers. Speaking is the pillar of foreign language learning. One of the major tasks of any teacher teaching English language learners is to give them equal chances of expressing themselves. The simplest definition, to start with, is that speaking is a complex process of sending and receiving messages through the use of verbal expressions, but it also involves non verbal symbols such as gestures and facial expressions (Kouicem, 2010).

Following Hedge (2000, p. 261), "speaking is a skill by which they [people] are judged while first impressions are being formed". This means that speaking is a major skill in foreign language learning because it reflects peoples' opinions and personalities.

2.2.1.2. Conditions of Speaking in EFL and Overcrowded Classes

Having a good proficiency of the foreign language is totally different from knowing about this language. Most often, some EFL learners find some difficulties when speaking the target language. According to Ur (2000) there some problems students encounter when speaking the foreign language in the classroom. In overcrowded classes, inhibition is very common ; students are embarrassed when chances are given to them to speak which results in higher anxiety and stress. In this case, students develop a fear of making mistakes especially if they confronted with myriads of students. Second, Nothing to Say (Avoidance Strategy), is a kind of negative strategy where students in large classes take advantage of the number and either hide themselves to stay out of the teacher sight or avoid answering questions.

Finally, low Participation. Students in large classes tend to be less involved in the lecture where they prefer to remain silent rather than participating. For instance, when teachers focus is on the students who participate especially those in the front row, the other students in class experience less or even no interest from the teacher. As a result, they do not participate.

2.2.2. Listening Skill

In today's society, we cannot dissociate learning from education because when we learn, we move from someone who ignores to someone who knows. That in itself is a form of change. In EFL classroom, when teaching the four skills most teachers focus on the spoken language in the classroom without giving much importance to the listening skill i.e. teaching students how to listen.

Listening is a receptive skill defined "as an active process in which the listener constructs meaning by using cues from contextual information and from existing knowledge while relying on multiple strategy resources to fulfill the task requires" O'Malley et al. (1985, as cited in Chelli, 2010).That is to say, in order for listeners to interpret what is being said (the content), they use a variety of communication strategies to predict what the sender is going to say and make sure they understand and are understood (Ur, 2012).

2.2.2.1. The Teaching of Listening in English overcrowded Classes

Listening is a difficult process. There are problems associated with teaching listening to students who learn English in large classes. as a matter of example, the physical setting plays a major role in delivering the content of what is being said. Distractions such as noise, ringing telephones, traffic movement, limited space and lack of technology can inhibit the task of listening effectively and leads to misunderstandings of

the message. For instance, the number of students and the noise that may happen affects students and consequently lead to lack of concentration and attention. Even using tape recorders with background noise make it harder for learners to listen and interpret what is being said. So, teachers need to be careful in choosing listening materials that fits the learners' level and environment.

2.2.3. Reading Skill

2.2.3.1. Definition and Problems

Learners seize any chance they obtain in order to develop their language proficiency. One of the most common ways to achieve that is through reading. When we open the Oxford Learners Pocket Dictionary (2008, p. 365) to check the meaning of the term 'read' we find the following definition: "look at and understand something written or printed". Ur (2012, p. 133) expresses a similar view stating that in foreign language context reading means "reading and understanding". He explains that when a student reads a text but fails to understand the meaning is not a reading, but rather decoding.

Today's language learner need to be a fluent reader. However, reading is not an innate process that children are born with. It is taught directly through the exposure to authentic texts and printed materials. Reading importance lies in the sense that it helps people learn from human knowledge and experience. Also, It is regarded as a complex process that it's prime objective is comprehension. Through reading we can rise people's comprehension levels' that enable us to replace old views with new ones.

Research regarding the effect of large classes on reading achievement tends to favour small classes as claiming that students achieve better results in reading when the number is reduced. This is supported by According to Murphy, 1998 (as cited in Leahy

2007,p. 15) who "indicate that smaller class sizes do lead to "substantially faster gains in reading".

2.2.4. Writing Skill

2.2.4.1. Definition and Problems

For many individuals, writing represents a difficult task because it means expressing their thoughts and ideas about a topic, way of life or even a person into a piece of writing. Even for native speakers, having the ability to write effectively is a complete challenge. Yule (2010,p. 212) defines writing "as the symbolic representation of language through the use of graphic signs". He explains that not all languages have a written form. That's why; writing plays a major role in representing cultures and peoples' lives.

In large class setting, most teachers do not give sufficient assignments to students because of the immense number of students. For them, this means increasing their workloads. Among the four skills, writing is regarded as the most difficult skill to acquire. It is true that knowing one language is definitely helpful in building another. That's why most learners first language affects learning the target language. Gomaa (2010) identified some common mistakes that students make while writing including run-on-sentences, punctuation, arabish (influence of mother tongue) and ill writing organization.

Broadly speaking, the big problem of overcrowded classes is assessment because when there is an overcrowded class, we simplify everything. Teachers do their best to know each student capacities in order to be fair when assessing them. However having more students means more assignments to correct and that in itself is a source of difficulty. Risley & Zao (as cited in Leahy 2007, p. 14) points out that "the flow of papers and essays for language teachers specifically is enormous and never-ending which sometimes lead

teachers to avoid specific activities because they are difficult to implement in larger classes".

2.3. Approaches of Teaching

Language is the representative of any culture or civilization. In order for teachers to teach English , they should be modern and updated and never be the slave of the method or the text. Brindley describes teaching as being "about creating opportunities for pupils to work on their understanding, to engage with new information or interpretation in a way that supplement or challenges their existing concept or frameworks" (1994,p. 56). The core problem of language teaching is the 'How' i.e. how to teach languages?. Every teacher should have his own methods especially when dealing with large classes.

In universities, the widely used teaching method is the lecture method especially in large classes. As a result, the interaction between the teacher and learners becomes more of lecturer-centered rather than student-centered (Ghana, 2015).

In their work, *approaches and methods in language teaching*, Richards and Rodgers (2001) propose the most recent and effective communicative approaches to teach languages including: communicative language teaching, task-based language teaching, cooperative language learning and content-based instruction.

2.3.1. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

In the last thirty years, a considerable amount of literature has been written about Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). "CLT can be understood as a set of principles about the goals of language teaching, how learners learn a language, the kinds of classroom activities that best facilitate learning, and the roles of teachers and learners in the classroom"(Richards 2006,p. 2). Richards explains that not all teachers know the meaning

CLT when asked about it. This may be due to the fact that CLT is a state-of-the-art and not all people have adequate knowledge about it.

Activities in CLB are numerous; they basically necessities information gap to be filled. For instance, role plays jigsaw activities, puzzles, games, map reading, dialogues, and many other tasks. The teacher acts as a facilitator of the communicative process as well as acting as an independent participant within the learning-teaching group (Richards & Rodgers,2002). CLT has both advantages and disadvantages. It emphasizes the necessity of group work inside the classroom where " the cooperative (rather than individualistic) approach to learning stressed in CLT maybe likewise unfamiliar to learners" (Richards and Rodgers 2002, p. 166). In fact, group work is not an option in overcrowded classes.

In the same line of thought, Littlewood (1981 as cited in Richard & Rodgers 2002,p. 155) explains that " One of the characteristic features of communicative language teaching is that t pays systematic attention to functional as well as structural aspects of language". It means that CLT put emphasize on both the structural and real life situation characteristics of communication. However, for other teachers this also means using classroom activities that requires students to work in groups or pairs which could be a difficult task to perform with large number of learners in large classes.

2.3.2. Task-Based language Teaching

To begin with, according to Nunan (2004,p. 4) the word task refers to "a piece of classroom work that involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is focused on mobilizing their grammatical knowledge in order to express meaning". In task-based-learning "students are presented with a task they have to perform or a problem they have to solve" (Harmer 2001,p. 86). In other words while teaching the emphasize is being on the task rather than

the structure". Willis (as cited in Harmer 2009) gave a framework for task-based-learning. The shows three main frameworks namely: "pre-task," "task cycle «and» language focus."
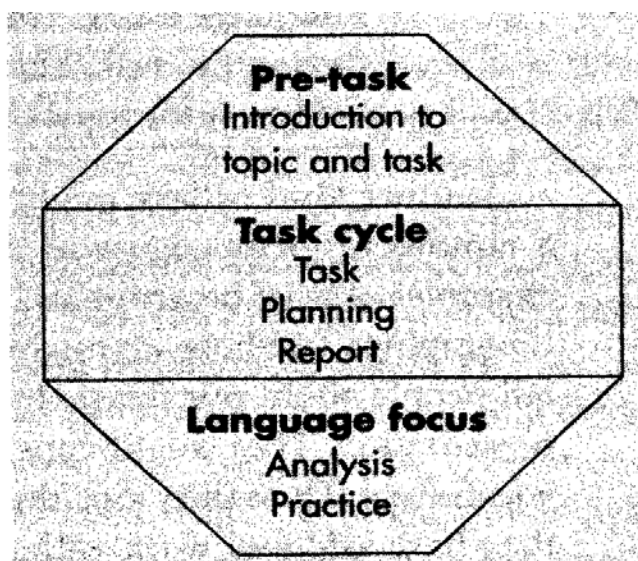
Figure 02.The Willis TBL Framework (Source: As Cited in Harmer 2009, p. 75)

As shown in the framework, in the pre-task stage the teacher introduces his students to the topic using different ways such as reading part of a text as lead in to a task. After that, the task cycle phase students first perform the task in pairs or small groups. Second, they to plan how are they going to present what they achieved. Finally, they report to the whole class either orally or in writing. The last stage is language focus where students analyse specific features of any task they performed before or the teacher gives a practice focusing on some features of language.

One major drawback of TBL that it focuses on the mainly on tasks which could be a problem in large classes where teachers have less time to cover tasks. This concern is expressed by Swan (as cited in Harmer 2001, p. 73), "he worries about how appropriate tasks are in a situation where teachers have little time". The chances given to individuals to be evaluated by the teacher is large classes is reduced. Teachers cannot find enough time to check each student's work.

2.3.3. Content-Based Instruction

Content-Based Instruction is "...an approach to language instruction that integrates the presentation of topics or tasks from subject matter classes (e.g., math, social studies) within the context of teaching a second or foreign language" (Crandall & Tucker, 1990, p. 187).That is to say, CBI is an approach to language teaching that focuses not on the language itself, but rather on what is being taught through the language. Richard and Rodgers (2002) provide some assumptions about the nature of language in CBI :

- Language is text and discourse based, it means that how meaning and information are communicated and constructed through text and discourse (Richard & Rodgers, 2002).

- Language use draws on integrated skills. That is to say, students are engaged in tasks associated with the four skills. Also, CBI gives importance to grammar instruction that could be integrated with other skills. (Richard & Rodgers, 2002).

- Language is purposeful. i.e. language is used for specific purposes. Whether to get a diploma, to get a job or simply learn a language. (Richard & Rodgers, 2002).

In CBI, English teachers comment that "CBI is a major challenge. Taking up this challenge requires a highly motivated and dedicated individual—or group of individuals"(Stryker & Leaver as cited in Richard & Rodgers 2002, p. 215). In another sense, large classes climate affects negatively learners' motivation which in turn rises the difficulty of establishing CBI. Another criticize is that CBI courses " are characterizes by heavy use of instructional media" (Brinton et al. as cited in Richard & Rodgers 2002, p. 215). The use of media can enhance English learning; but this is not the case with large classes with restricted resources. However, despite the drawbacks of CBI, "we can expect to see CBI continue to be as one of the leading curricular approaches sin language teaching" (Richard & Rodgers 2002,p. 220).

2.3.4. Cooperative Language Learning

According to Zhang (2010) cooperative learning "refers to a systematic instructional method in which students work together in small groups to accomplish shared learning goals". This means that teachers use different set of activities to ensure that all learners are learning equally in groups. CLL is based on the idea that language learning can be established when learners work in groups or pairs where they exchange ideas and various opinions.

" The success of CLL is crucially dependent on the nature and organization of group work" (Richard & Rodgers 2002, p. 196). However, establishing CLL is large classes can be somehow difficult if not possible. Most of large classes are characterized by limited classroom space which in turn prevents students from working cooperatively in small groups. Not only that, the noise level, disruptive behaviors and lack of organized classroom arrangement all contribute in the success of group work. In this case, this takes more from the teacher to monitor, check and evaluate each group within large number of learners. In addition, CLL places more responsibilities on teachers who may encounter difficulties in adapting the new roles required of them (Richard & Rodgers 2002).

All in all, the above mentioned approaches are the most recent and up-to-date ones. They are a viable option for teachers who want to establish a good rapport with their students. However, all the approaches stress on the importance of providing enough individual attention and time for each learners. It is like if there is one teacher and one learner when learning English using one of these approaches. So, it is more preferred if teachers adopt themselves to large classes where they try to use wide range of activities that is suitable for overcrowded classes.

2.4. Using ICT in Teaching English to Large Classes

One of the main roles given by Harmer (2001) in describing effective teachers is the role of teacher as a resource. However, Harmer explains that no teacher knows everything about language. So, in order for teacher to develop their students self autonomy. They should direct them to look for the information themselves. In this case, teachers should take foreword step to ensure high quality education. Using technology can play a vital role in presenting lectures. ICT is an acronym for the word (Information Communication Technology). "It encompasses various technologies that are used for facilitating communication such as Cellular Phones, radio, video, television, computers, and satellite systems among others" (Sharndama 2013,p.34).

Technology tools such as data projectors, overhead projectors, projection screens, sound system, computer and DVD player, control panel and wireless microphones make the learning experience more enjoyable and interesting for both teacher and students. According to Mohamed (2013,p. 3-5) "technology can provide the opportunity for the teacher to approach the students and have individual conversations during class". With the aid of ICT, teachers can create small class atmosphere where they can perform a variety of tasks. Students can be comfortable in asking and answering questions. Moreover, "ICTs enable the teacher to modify teaching and learning strategies in order to create student centered learning environment instead of the traditional teacher centered which persisted for long" (Sharndama 2013,p.34).

In a nutshell, Vicente (2006, p.17) declares that "More and more we're being asked to live with technology that is technically reliable, because it is created to fit our knowledge of the physical world". ICT could help to a great extent in facilitating teaching and learning in large classes. However, this technology could never replace the teacher

because initially, the teacher is the source and resource for his learners. There is no learning process without the teacher.

Conclusion

It is said that a successful classroom is when a large number of learners develop a self autonomy. We observe their success through high level of interaction, high level of motivation as well as great interest given to the topic. However, when we introduce the variable of number, all the earlier mentioned conditions will be inhibited due to overcrowded classes. Also, the teacher transmits knowledge through the four skills taking into consideration the amount of exposure and the allocated time for each learner to practice them. Moreover, possessing knowledge about teaching approaches helps teachers in the deliberation of their lectures as well as having adequate teaching aids in disposal such PPT, tape recorders and OHP will enhance learners performance and creates a friendly learning environment.

Chapter III:

Analysis and Result

Findings of Teachers'

Interview and Classroom

Observation.

Introduction

In order to fulfill our objective and validate our hypothesis, which assume that if number of learners per class is reduced, the conditions and performance will be improved. We have chosen two main tools: teachers' interview and classroom observation.

Initially, the chapter begins with the description of teachers' interview. Then, its administration and analysis. After that, the analysis of the results obtained from the observation we did with first year LMD section students which we chose randomly. Then, the observation results as well as their analyses. Likewise, this chapter provides the discussion of the main findings of our study.

3.1. Research Methodology

3.1.1. Method

In designing our study, we opt for the descriptive method to gather and acquire data for this research. In addition, we intended to deal with a semi-structured interview with to EFL teachers in the division of English to obtain various opinions concerning our topic. Moreover, we used classroom observation with first year EFL students as a second tool that fit with our case basically to get more realistic and reliable data. The results of the interview and classroom observation will be discussed in the dissertation.

3.1.2. Population and Sampling

The current study deals with students of first year English at the department of foreign languages, division of English at Biskra University. There are 789 first year students divided into twelve groups, each group includes approximately 60 students. Since our aim is to observe first year students where the issue of overcrowdings is clearly present. We observed the whole section of first LMD students.

The reason behind choosing the first year student population is to have a clear picture of the status of teaching English language in large classes and how students construct their own knowledge regarding that it is their first year phase of learning in university. According to a study by Sing & Maringe (2014) which states that the negative impact of large classes in many universities tends to characterize first year classes. They report that first year classes contain huge number of learners which in turn poses more challenges such as anonymity in the class, absenteeism, less individual attention and other drawbacks. Also, Zebila (2012) adds to that saying that first year EFL students:

> "Are freshmen; they learn in new environment, deal with new modules with new curriculum, receive knowledge from different teachers in different manners, and meet different people with distinct cultures. The students, in this case, feel anxious, bored, then their desire to learn may evaporate." (p. 61)

Moreover, we opted for a random selection of teachers who teach English choosing six (06) teachers as a sample of study. In our interview, we approached (10) teachers to gather data for our study. However, (04) teachers out of (10) did not have sufficient time for an interview due to the examination period where they had more workloads.

3.1.3. Research Tools

This study uses two main research data tools. First, a semi-structured interview that is directed to six random teachers who teach English at Biskra University. There is no selection of any specific teaching modules because we intend to obtain various points of view from various teachers that teach different subjects. Besides, teachers deal with many students with different needs, characters and behaviors and that help us in locating how they deal with different learners in large classes. Secondly, classroom observation to gather more tangible evidence through the presence in a real teaching context. In all our sessions,

we did not involve ourselves directly within the teachers' lecture; we simply observed, witnessed and reported objectively what has happened.

3.2. Teachers' Interview

3.2.1. Administration of the Interview

Interviews are considered as a conversation between two people : the interviewer and the interviewee. In his view, Kvale 2007 (as cited in Baggour 2015,p. 58) defines it as "a professional interaction, which goes beyond the spontaneous exchange of views as in everyday conversation, and becomes a careful questioning and listening approach with the purpose of obtaining thoroughly tested knowledge".

Teachers were interviewed in their work place during their spare time. Interviews lasted between four minutes until fifteen minutes. Some of teachers take a long time to develop the answers. This variation in duration shows how interviewees willingness to share their experiences and knowledge concerning the issue of large classes. The interview was submitted in a discourse way rather than written from. All teachers accepted to be recorded using a cell phone except one teacher who refused.

As it was already mentioned, the present interview is addressed to six random teachers of English at the department of foreign languages, branch of English studies at Mohamed kheider University of Biskra.

3.2.2. Description of the Interview

In our attempt to gather consistent information about overcrowded classes, we opt for the administration of an interview to teachers. The present interview is a semi-structured. It is organized through a random selection. Our aim behind this selection is to

get different points of view from teachers having varied teaching experiences as well as different levels of trainings. By adapting this qualitative data collection instrument, it will be plausible for us to get acquainted with teachers' perceptions regarding this phenomena because they are directly exposed to this problem and have more available data concerning this dilemma. We seek to know how teachers manage those classes and the challenges they encounter when teaching overcrowded language classes.

The interview includes thirteen (13) questions including a considerable number of open-ended questions based on the topic areas that we want to cover. All teachers are asked the same questions. All questions were all asked in a natural way to put the interviewee at ease besides providing an opportunity to discuss some topic areas in details.

3.2.3. Results of the Interview

During our interview with teachers. The six interviewed teachers are collaborative by providing valuable data from their daily teaching career. We are interested in their answers as specific data in order to help us clarify some aspects of the topic as well as draw some conclusions concerning the study. Teachers responses are as follows:

Item One: Which subjects do you teach?

Teacher A: "written expression".

Teacher B: "didactics and pragmatics".

Teacher C: "culture of the language, grammar and cognitive psychology".

Teacher D: "oral expression, social sciences and civilization".

Teacher E: "oral expression, literature and culture of the language".

Teacher F: "written expression and didactics".

Since our study is basically on the problem encountered in overcrowded foreign language classes; it is essential to mention the subject taught by every teacher. Most of the teachers we interviewed teach at least three modules. This means that they have sufficient knowledge about teaching EFL in general and large classes in particular. This also enables them to detect various problems in teaching different types of classes that ranges from regular, small to large ones. In addition, this imply that teachers have met different kinds of learners with mixed abilities, needs and capacities and have an amount of knowledge on how to handle large classes.

Item Two: How many students have you got?

Teacher A: 42 students.

Teacher B: 1300 students.

Teacher C: 900 students.

Teacher D: 500 students.

Teacher E: 600 students.

Teacher F: 35 students.

All teachers teach a great number of students ranges from 900 to 1300 students especially when they are grouped in sections. However, teacher **A** and **F** do not teach whole sections, so they gave the regular size of the TD classes.

Item Three: Do you consider that number as a large class?

Teacher **C, D, E** and F who teach whole sections all tend to agree that the number of students in classes is not adequate for learning EFL and consider it as a large class.

However, in TD classes, teacher **B** commented that 42 students is "somehow" a large class. Similarly, teacher **B** also said that 33 students in class "is not a large number".

Item Four: Do you think that large classes inhibit EFL learning?

All teachers affirmed that overcrowded classes inhibit EFL learning. Teacher **D** commented that " large classes may constitute very serious problems to the teachers and to the learners". While teacher **F** says that "overcrowded classes are really a problem in certain courses such as oral expression and written expression where he cannot satisfy all his learners needs in one hour and a half because the number of students is incontrollable". Moreover, teacher **C** add that "it is very difficult to reach all individual students due to the size of the class".

Item five: In your opinion, what is a large class?

In item five, we got various responses about the ideal class size. It ranges from 25-35 students in class. Teacher **A**, **E** and **F** said that " an overcrowded class is the that exceeds 25 students". whereas, teacher **B** commented that "a large class for him is a class that exceeds 35 students per group". Another response from teacher **C** and **D** claiming that "an overcrowded class is more than 30 students in class". Despite the different views, it seemed that large classes are those which exceed 30 students per class.

Item Six: How do you manage overcrowded classes?

In asking this question, we have recorded a variety of strategies that teachers use to handle large classes. Teacher **A**, **B** and **C** all agree on the importance of involving students to show them that their collaboration is interesting and appreciated. They comment that to achieve that they use questioning, telling stories, humor, jokes and drawing. Teacher **A** adds to that "it is very important to create a healthy environment and

make good preparation of the lecture". Furthermore, teacher **D**, **E** and **C** as well, declare that they use collaborative learning techniques to manage overcrowded classes taking into consideration the subject being taught in determining the appropriate strategy to use.

Whereas, teacher **F** expressed that he sets rules at the beginning of the year reporting that " I think setting regulations and classroom policy at the beginning of the course is an effective solution." Also, he tries to make pauses every 20-25 minutes in order to give students time to relax.

Item Seven: Is there any specific assessment for large classes?

It is generally known that large classes poses challenges on teachers especially when it comes to the increased workload that teachers feel obliged that they need to adopt themselves to it. By asking this question, we expected from teachers to inform us about the strategies they employ to evaluate the huge number of students in classes. Whether they find an unbalance between teaching and assessment in overcrowded classes or not. But, unfortunately, we were dissatisfied with some answers where some teachers did not even comment about the issue but rather their answers was irrelevant to our topic at hand. Nevertheless, teacher **B** commented that he relies on written evaluation because he cannot assess students orally because of the number. Likewise, teacher **F** also gives students written assignments but using different kinds of tasks. For instance teacher **F** declared:

> "the assignments I often give to students is writing a paragraph. Sometimes we
> do it in class, sometimes we start the task like generating the ideas and
> elaborating the topic sentence in class and I ask them to finish the paragraph at
> home. And in certain cases, I give them assignment as a home work where they
> need to accomplish the whole task at home".

Whereas teacher **C** said that he does not use any individual evaluation except the official exams.

Item Eight: Which is better an essay or an Multiple Choice Questions?

This question was supposed to be related the aforementioned question. However, considering the inconsistency of the answers we tried to give a variety of choices in order to see whether teachers employ at least one type of assessment in their large classes. All the interviewees declared their preferred style of assessing their learners. For instance, teacher **A** said he used MCQ, he explains that "it is more time consuming in elaboration of questions. But easier to correct". In the same vein, teacher **B** replied that it is very difficult to assess 1300 students. therefore, MCQ system seems the most plausible way to assess them. Also, teacher **B** reinforces this idea, by saying that MCQ is a very practical technique besides easier to correct and said that essays are very difficult to correct in large number of learners.

On the contrary, teacher **E** and **F** hold an opposite view. Teacher **E** declared that essays seems much easier claiming that learners do not get good marks when they give having an MCQ exam. While teacher **F** reported that considering the subject he teaches and the designed program, he is forced to use essays to assess his learners.

Item Nine: Are large classes noisy?

Teacher A: "sometimes".

Teacher B: "yes, they are".

Teacher C: "yes, always".

Teacher D: "yes, of course. Large classes are very often very noisy".

Teacher E: "yes, they are very noisy".

Teacher F: "if you have large number of students studying, then the first thing that everybody is talking and chatting with each other".

With regard to the question above, all teachers encounter one common problem related to classroom discipline that is noise. The majority declared that students in large classes are very noisy and they try the maximum to control that noise. All the teachers except one replied positively to the question. Teacher **A** who reported that students in overcrowded classes are sometimes noisy. This is maybe due to fact that teacher **A** does not teach whole sections but rather regular classes. So, he is not concerned about the large number of large classes.

Item Ten: How do you find students motivation in those classes?

In asking this question, we intend to know whether large classes affect students motivation to learn or not. However, some teachers are ambiguous in their answers. For instance, teacher **A** replied that students motivation "depends on the lecture or /and the prior knowledge they posses about it". Likewise, teacher **C** said that some of the students are motivated which are basically the excellent ones while others do not take an active part in the learning process. Whereas teacher **B, D, E** and **F** strongly agree that overcrowded EFL classes are very noisy. For instance, teacher **F** declared " for sure, overcrowded classes affects negatively students motivation".

In addition, some teachers mentioned obstacles when it comes to learners motivation in large classes. The following are some problems mentioned :

- **Teacher C** "There is no big participation or kind of interaction between students and the teacher. They are present only to take the handouts".

- **Teacher E** " a large number is great obstacle for students. for first year they are very motivated. However since it is a large group I cannot listen to all of their answers and eventually they get bored and less interested in participating."

- **Teacher F** "if someone is intrinsically motivated, he will not sustain that motivation for long time because of the discipline problem."

Furthermore, other tips were provided by teacher **B** who claimed that in order to motivate his students " he tries to give them meaningful information which help them understand and make sense of the world".

Item Eleven: Learners complain about marks because they are badly marked or marked hurriedly, what do you think?

The aforementioned question attempted to induce if teachers are aware of issue that learners constantly complain about marks and what could be the reason behind their complaining. We intended to know whether the reason behind this is because teachers do not have enough time to correct them or simply because students are not fairly marked. However, teachers were not clear about their answers. We expected that they will provide us with much more specific answer concerning this issue. Yet, each teacher has his own opinions regarding this question. Out of six teachers, teacher **D** is the only one who give a precise answer reporting that "they are always hurriedly marked because of the number, so the teacher cannot have enough time to evaluate each and every students. so, there is kind of injustice because of the number of students".

Whereas, the other teachers have given varied answers. Teacher **A** agree on both reasons commenting that sometimes students are not assessed in fair way considering the large number that does not permit to know every students. other times it is because there is not time to correct in effective way. Another answer provided by teacher **B** who believes

that we test students in the wrong way " we don't test what they know and what they can do but we test their memory and here is the problem".

On the contrary, teacher **C** has a different view compared to teacher **B** quoting that "the exams, the models are very highly designed simply to fit all levels". He adds that if any kind of misunderstanding or an issue about marks, it should discussed between the teacher and students directly or what he called 'isolated cases'. In addition, teacher **E** claimed that it is not a matter of bad marks or time. However, it is a matter of marks only i.e. teacher commented that "they complain because they want the marks no matter how. All what they want is to succeed". This means that students are more interested in getting marks as their objective to succeed.

On the other hand, teacher **F** said that tries to be fair as much as he can. However, there are some cases that he cannot fairly assess students because of the large number of students in class. He reported " if I have less number of students in class then I can remember more but because they are many I cannot remember all students so I can fairly assess them."

Item Twelve: Do you think that overcrowded classes is mainly due to the large number of learners or the reduced number of teachers?

One again, teachers did not fully understand the question. The reason behind asking this question is that we hoped to reveal what is really behind the issue of overcrowded classes. Is it really the number that impacted the achievements of learners or is it lack of teachers. Out of six teachers, teacher **D** provided us with a clear answer to what is the cause of overcrowded classes. He commented**, "**in fact, it is the number of teachers that is the cause. We don't have enough teachers, EFL teachers especially in English. So, this is why we have large classes". It was evident from his answer that he was aware of the

situation of suffering from lack of specialized EFL teachers in English branch at Biskra university.

Furthermore, teacher **E** and **F** believe that the number of teachers and learners both contribute to the existence of overcrowded classes. Teacher **F** adds to that they do not have other solution since we do not have sufficient number of teachers and at the same time we have large number of learners coming every year. so, they cannot manage this number. Therefore, they are obliged to group them in overcrowded classes.

Whereas, teacher **B** shares a different opinion where he believes that this not the case. The problem lies in the output of the Baccalaureate exam. He commented "Our Baccalaureate is political rather than academic. Students get the Baccalaureate, pass the BAC not because they are able to go to university but because there is a political circumstance that pushes the government to let everybody pass". So, for teacher **B**, the problem is political rather than pedagogical. Teacher **A** on the other hand, said that the reason behind overcrowded classes is the large number of learners reporting that " there in no selection of learners who want to study English".

Item Thirteen: Do you have comments to add?

Teacher A: No.

Teacher B: "If we would like to control or handle a large class we need to have equipment such as data shows, ICT's and we should manage the number by dividing them into manageable groups. Also, we need to have more work days such as Saturday because if we have Saturday's as working days we will have less crowded classes and less crowded schedules."

Teacher C: "there are some learners that are interested in learning English and those who aren't. We need kind of filter before they are officially learners of English**.** We need to filter them for those who want really to go further into learning English and those who are here just to change. And I hope we could have more opportunity to work better and in better conditions".

Teacher D: "there should be a kind of classroom management as far as this overcrowded classroom with mixed ability classes. The teacher has to adopt himself to that situation because there is no other solution , to adopt himself, to prepare tasks and activities that are suitable and appropriate for this type of classes".

Teacher E: "it would be better if they don't accept this large number in first year and of course recruiting more teachers".

Teacher F: "I think if we have for example equipped classes with technological tools then we can reduce this problem. If we seek help from other teachers even if they are substitute teachers probably we can solve also the problem. Finally, if we have an entry test for baccalaureate students coming to the department of English, this test also will lessen the number of students who intend to subscribe or enroll in the department of English".

By asking this final question, we tend to open the scope for the interviewees to comment or add any comments and opinions about the subject of our present study, and to encourage them to raise other issues they felt relevant to the research. One teacher did not add any comments. Whereas, the others emphasized the importance of integrating ICT in the classroom, recruiting specialized teachers, applying collaborative learning techniques, seeking help from other teachers and most importantly, they all tend to agree that there should be a selection of of baccalaureate students who want to study English.

3.2.4. Analysis of the Interview Results

After stating the results of the interview, it is high time to analyze teachers responses. As we know large classes are a worldwide phenomena and not only in Algeria. All teachers responses showed that they teach or have taught overcrowded classes in some point of their teaching career. It also revealed that teachers are not comfortable in teaching large number of learners in class because it hampers learning.

Based on item 1, we infer that teachers who currently teach more or at least three different modules as having many difficulties including that they need to prepare various tasks and activities that are suitable and appropriate for this type of classes.

Also, based on the teachers responses to item 2 and 3the research inferred that all EFL teachers are familiar with teaching overcrowded classes in university especially first year classes. They all agree that the number of learners they teach is beyond the normal standard and is considered a large class. Furthermore, in item 4, all teachers absolutely agree on that learning English language in overcrowded classes is impossible. This means that they prefer to teach English with reduced number of students particularly language classes because the nature of learning conditions such as language skills and activities require a reduced number of students.

In item five, the variance in teachers opinions is due to the fact that every teacher has various modules to teach whether it is a whole section or TD class. In defining a large class, it depends to great extent on how the teacher perceives a large class. It means that the perception of large class is subjective and can depend on a number of variables according to teachers.

According to Todd (2006) the definition of large class from the point of view of teachers depends on three variables including the subject taught, the largest size they taught and the content being taught in addition to other variables such as the age of learners, their motivation and the room which lessons are taught. So, we can say that people (teachers) have various perceptions of large classes. But in our context, we can assume that the ideal class size that is visible with peoples' work is 25 students per class.

Concerning responses to item 6, we find that many teachers tend to use collaborative learning techniques such as discussions. Despite the difficulty of managing group work in large classes, Harmer (2001, p. 129) said that "...even when chairs and desks cannot be moved, there are ways of doing this: first rows turns to second rows, third rows to face fourth rows and so on ." .Another strategy is using ICT in teaching English to large classes. Bouzeraa (2010, p. 97) emphasized the importance of using materials inside the classroom saying, "visual materials are also thought of to be motivating in that it represents an effective means to achieve novelty in terms of topics, skipping from one topic to a completely different one is only easy and possible if appropriate aids are used".

Besides, in order to manage discipline teachers stress on the importance of setting ground rules. This idea is also supported by Zahorik et al. (2003 as cited in Çakmak 2009,p. 402) "indicate that successful teachers establish clear rules, routines, and reward systems in their classrooms, and they do not allow students to distract the class".

However, the most important thing that teachers emphasized was that the necessity of involving all learners in meaningful learning. This means that the teacher should not do all the talking himself. But, he needs to engage all learners whether by asking questions, or discussions. According to Nunan, 1991 (as cited in Bouzeraa 2010,p.86) "it is estimated that about three quarter of the classroom talk is performed by

the teacher. He is actually either asking a question, appointing the students who will answer it, or giving feedback when necessary".

From the responses to item 7 and 8. The answers are not concise. We set clear questions but we did not receive clear answers. This maybe due to the ignorance or they are not interested in the topic. It seems that when there is a large number of learners, there is less assessment of the learners. In fact, teachers did not report that they give to their students enough assignments throughout the year or even the semester. The only kind of assessment that was confirmed is the official test. From the one hand, it means that learners do not even have interrogations in the semester because of their number. On the other hand, teachers do not vary their assessment strategies to locate students' strengths and weaknesses. in brief, teachers developed a facilitation strategy to use MCQ in evaluating students especially the correction. It is evident that MCQ remains as the unique assessment refuge for overcrowded classes.

Item 9, all teachers agree that overcrowded classes are noisy. Controlling noise level in large classes is not an easy task. Increased noise levels does only affect classroom where students but also extends to the neighboring classes. As Shamim et al. (2007,p. 47) expresses that "noise can be disturbing to those teaching in neighboring classrooms so every efforts should be made to ensure noise levels do not rise too high". Al-Jaref (2006, p. 11) shares similar view saying "Large class enrollments also result in discipline problems even at the college level. Some students talk in class and make it difficult for the majority to hear the instructor and concentrate due to increasing the noise level". That is to say, students may be disturbed; they may mishear or understand a point because of noise level.

Another important factor which is seen as the key to success in language learning which is motivation. In item 10, all teachers stressed that students motivation is negatively

affected by the large numbers. As Wimolmas (2013, p.904) states "students' motivation toward English language learning can, to a certain degree, influence their learning results". For teacher teachers sustaining learner's motivation in large classes is more difficult than trying to motivate them.

As for item 11, this question clearly attempts to reveal the cause behind the poor level of students in large classes. Is it because there is no time to correct or simply because students do not perform well in those classes?. Instead of clarifying the issue, teachers answers by explaining that students are more interested in marks than studying itself. While others answers are not consistent to our expectations. However, one teacher said that it is due to time constraints and number of learners, teachers often correct student's assignments rapidly.

According to Shapson et al. (1980 as cited in Çakmak 2009,p. 396), "teachers working in class sizes consisting of 16 to 23 students were more satisfied because marking took little time and corrections were immediate; whereas in classes of 30 students marking became more formal, time-consuming, and sometimes delayed". As we can say, teachers rarely assign their students in large classes. However, assessment plays a crucial role in teaching-learning process.

In responses to item 12, no teacher has answered correctly about the question except one teacher who stated that large classes are due to lack of teachers. We expected teachers to answer in the right way. However, in Biskra University we assume that the problem of overcrowded classes is more due to lack of teachers. We have a very reduced number of teachers. To be precise, we have 789 first year students that equal 37 English teachers. Obviously, this number of teacher cannot cover the needs of 789 students.

National Council of Teachers of English Guidelines (1987, p.8) education norm is 1:25 students per class. So, the distribution of students per each teacher will be 25 students.

in English division, we have 789 first year students to be divided on 25. The result obtained is 31, so we lack 31 teachers to cover all the needs of this number. The evidence based on the National Council of Teachers of English Guidelines (1987, p.8) confirms that we do suffer from shortage of teachers in the division of English at Biskra University.

Adding to my evidence, there is another information which is very valuable. Every year, Biskra University offers (30) job vacancies for qualified teachers in English division and for many years the number of teachers in not fulfilled.

The final item 13 was to give teachers the opportunity to give more details concerning large classes which they think important or simply because we did not cover it while interviewing.

3.3. Classroom Observation

In order to confirm or refute our hypothesis. We deal with classroom observation as second tool to collect data with first year English LMD classes as being our sample of the study.

3.3.1. Description of the Observation

The distinctive feature of observation as a research tool process is that it offers the investigator the opportunity to gather 'live' data from naturally occurring social situations. It is defined as "One effective mean of learning how certain teaching methods are employed in the schools, how classrooms are organized, and how students respond to the classroom environment (Reed & Bergemann 2005, p. 9). From this quotation we can say that classroom observation provides an opportunity for the sharing of ideas and expertise, as well as a chance to discuss problems and concerns.

We carried out our observation pending the second semester on April, 25 with first year English students at Biskra University. We attended total of six (06) sessions in Social Sciences, grammar and literature with both first year sections (section I and section Π) in amphi theatres. Since we are bounded by time constraints, the observation period lasted one week only. We intentionally observed lectures in amphi theatres only because learners are gathered to study in groups of large numbers and that assisted us in our process of observation to get more valid data. During our observation, we acted as a passive observer without involving ourselves during data collection procedure (to preserve objectivity).

Furthermore, the condition of our study was the presence of large number of learners. Both sections contained a reasonable number of students. To be specific, the whole population of first year is 789 students. Students are divided into two sections. Each section comprises six (06) groups and each group contains from 59 to 61 learners. However, there was a high rate of absentees especially among boys where the number of girls was dominant.

The main goal of our observation is to observe our issue of concern which is overcrowded classes in its real setting. To observe how teaching and learning is carried out in classes that comprise that huge number of students. How teachers present their lecture, the amount of interaction, the use of material aids are all some variables that play evident role in the consistency of lessons. Not only that, we also seek to observe how learners copy with this problem taking into consideration that they are first year students; it is their first time studying in university where they did not use to study in groups containing big number of students.

We used covert observation in order to ensure that students and teachers behave naturally. This means that no teacher was informed in advance in order to observe the

sessions in its real setting without any preparations from teachers to have more tangible evidence on the effect of overcrowded classes has on the teaching-learning process. In our attendance, we sat in the last row of the amphi theatre in order to see all learners as well as the teacher. Not only that, at the end of each session we have asked some students about their views about studying with large groups to have more understanding to the problem we deal with.

As we know classroom teaching is a complex enterprise, to make our structured observation focused. We have used a checklist that contains twenty eight items grouped. Using checklist help us reflect upon what we see in the classroom. Also, we tend to focus more on some aspects of classroom teaching including: the physical setting, the distribution of the lecture, teacher-student interactions, classroom management strategies and the use of ICT's inside the classroom.

3.3.2. Results of the Observation

During our observation, we aimed to tick all what have a relation to our study. Thus, concentrating on classroom aspects such as noise, assessment, discipline, interaction, space, marking, participation, motivation, attendance and many other classroom variables.

The chapter provides the analysis of the classroom observation data collected through a checklist. The main aim of the classroom observation was to know how students perform in overcrowded classes, how they interact with each other or with the teacher. Also, we seek to know how teachers teach English language in large classes, what strategies they employ and how they deal with management problems. The checklist consists of five aspects which are analyzed below.

Aspect One: Detailed Description of the Physical Setting

It is well known that the physical environment of the classroom is an umbrella term that encompasses a broad range of classroom concepts such as the physical setting. During our observation we focus on some aspects of the physical setting including room arrangement, seating, lighting, space, black/white board and furniture.

The classroom is a social system where teaching occurs. That's is spending enough time observing the classroom can enrich our comprehension about language teaching and learning and particularly about some aspect that we focus is oriented in a given study. As we mentioned before our observation period was one week only during which we attended a total of six sessions. All session observations were conducted in one place that is the amphi theatre.

In our attendance with teachers, we arrived a few minutes ahead of time to make sure to observe anything that would happen. The observation was conducted in normal setting for one hour and a half and these sessions were characterized by the attendance of huge number of students. From my observation notes of the sessions with (T1), (T2) and (T3), we noticed that the amphi theatre was not always clean. For instance, there were bottles everywhere, sheet of papers, dust on the tables and the teachers' desk as well. Not only that, the room also contained some useless furniture on the floor which was not functional. It only prevented teachers from moving easily between while teaching. As we counted, there were twenty (20) lamps ready to use out of forty lamps (40) which means that the other twenty were broken and needs to be fixed.

Considering the vast space of the amphi theatre, there was sufficient furniture for all students in the classroom because tables and chairs were already connected to one place

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and cannot be moved or replaced. There was three rows that comprises approximately 400 chairs connected to one long table.

Another important physical aspect of the classroom that we observed was that of lighting. Generally, there was adequate lighting in the room because there were enough functional lamps. In addition, the room contained nine operable windows that allowed the entrance of natural light as an additional lighting source.

Furthermore, the seating arrangement of students was not organized in a systematic way. Students were seating randomly in different places. For instance, we may find two students seating in a row that comprises twenty students while others row stay empty. It is clear that teachers did not have sense of organization. Otherwise, they would have asked their students to seat in an organized way. Also, the seats do not allow enough space for students to pass without distracting their classmates. This is due to the limited space and the way seats are arranged inside the room.

Finally, the entrance to the amphi theatre causes distraction to students during lessons. To be clear, the door was broken in a way that when anyone tries to close it. It re-opened again and that caused an annoyed voice to both students and the teacher while the other door was always closed.

Aspect Two : Distribution of the Lecture

At the beginning of all sessions we noticed that teachers do not check attendance. This gives learners the opportunity to escape from lectures and show up only in the official exams. This can be due to the immense number of learners that takes more time to write all students names. As we begin, we noticed that both teachers (T_1) and (T_2) started the lesson on time with a revision of the previous lesson particularly asking question such as 'would you remind of what we discussed the last lecture?' Both teachers greet their students with

big smiles on their faces. They seemed respected and loved by students. Whereas, it took ten minutes waste from (T3) to start the lecture. However, (T3) also commenced her session with a previous revision.

After that, (T1) gave students a broad outline of the lecture goals and activities so they know what to expect. This aids students to limit their current knowledge about the topic they will study. While (T2) provided his learners with the course title only by writing it on the board. Likewise, (T3) moved directly to dictating and explaining the lesson content on the students and that is because the teacher was already late in covering all the syllabus content. The course was presented in a dull way that did not motivate students to engage or participate at all. Also, the lecture with (T3) did not stimulate students at all. In fact, they complained that it was more preferred if the teacher bring handouts because it was tiring for them to write what has been dictated.

By contrast, after reviewing the last course, (T1) started distributing the handouts on his students. then, he asked them to read it. A reasonable number of students raised their hands to read. They were all excited to read. Also, (T3) gave one handout for each two students and asked them to read quietly. Then, he asked one learner to read while explaining at the same time. Moreover, we noticed that (T1) gave his students a whole class evaluation activity that lasted no more than 8-10 minutes. Obviously, time did not allow for individual activities in the class since the teacher cannot evaluate each and every student's work and that is due to the large number. While, (T2) and his students work on activity orally together and then he gave instructions to the students asked them to work in pairs to answer the written task for 10 minutes.

Aspect Three: Teacher-student Interactions

As we mentioned before (T3) session was presented in a dull way and did attract students attention be motivated at all. There is no participation that was noticed, the whole lecture the teacher was standing and explaining in the same time. Students did not ask for clarification except one student asked the teacher to repeat what he said.

On the contrary, with (T1) the lecture was so interesting and enjoyable. The lesson was about "introduction to literature" where it was a follow-up the previous lecture. Teacher informed his students that the lesson will be full of stories and discussions about famous characters. Teacher use of language was so simple where we noticed that he took in consideration that it is a first year class. Also, teacher makes use of the board constantly in order to explain to his learners the different words and new concepts which are unknown to most students. Nevertheless, teacher tone of voice was clear where he managed to communicate with all students but learners at the back found difficulty in listening to the teacher and asked often for repetition. Moreover, (T1) used various kinds of questions such as Wh question, tag questions and yes/no questions. Also, teacher moved around the class to check students when they were copying the lesson from the board. Students find it a chance to speak with their teacher. However, other learners could not have direct interaction with the teacher because of seating arrangement and limited space that did not allow the teacher to move freely.

As we observed (T3) did not have any kind of interaction with students. even when (T3) asks students a question, some of them uses avoidance strategies in order not to answer the question either because they are not interested or do not understand the course. Also, the teacher does most of the talking and never moved around the class to check learners or interact with them individually. Time did not allow teacher to have time for free

communication with students. another point is that the number of girls is larger than boys and teachers seem to establish eye contact with those sit at the front which left others act passive during the whole session.

In brief, large number of students did not permit teachers to reach all their learners. Engaging them in activities and allowing time to speak, read, write and listen seems quite impossible to establish in those classes neither time allows showing an interest to cover all learners.

Aspect Four: Classroom Management Strategies

To be precise, the most dominant problem that we noticed in large classes was that of discipline particularly noise. Learners take any chance to speak with each other. Teachers were constantly asking their learners to be quiet. It was estimated that teachers waste about 15-20 minutes of their teaching time. It is really a problem that impedes teachers from presenting the tasks intensively. The ringing of mobile phones, students chattering, the noise outside all prevented teachers from delivering the course effectively. Another problem was students lateness, it was a big dilemma for teachers especially with (T3) who for the first half hour, 37 students entered the class in different times which in turn disturbed students at each time they pass to sit or when asking their classmate to copy down what they have missed. The teacher did not comment on or say anything to those late students.

However, (T1) used a very practical strategies to keep his students motivate dand on the task. First, when explaining the stages of the story in literature, students found difficulty in understanding the terms 'climax, denouement' and started taking to each other and loose interest. At this point, (T1) begins to tell the story of "Sebastian Simpson" as an example denoting at each stage the previous terms. The teacher also used body language

while telling them the story by using facial expressions such as laughter, sadness or screaming. He also used humor to stimulate them. Students started to react by asking the teacher what happened next in the story and started to relate it the course topic. After that, (T1) asked his students to give him the climax of the story he tell. Students raised their hands to answer where the majority were girls especially those whose who sit in the front. Teacher tends to give special attention to those students who take an active part in the lesson. To precise, they are students who sit in the middle front rows.

Second, (T3) used praises such as good, excellent, that's correct and more. Not only that, he labeled students by some characteristics they possess such as one girl he called 'BA' referring to her hometown 'Bordj Bouariridj' and other 'Marry' as a nickname for 'Mariem'. Also, when the noise starts to rise, (T1) was using a 'Bell' in order to attract students' attention as well as in introducing new information. It was a very ice-breaking strategy to control students. finally, when explaining the role of the word 'Hero' or 'Protagonist', (T1) gave an example of the movie 'Titanic' to his students explaining that the character 'Jack' becomes a hero who dies to give life to his beloved. This aids students to better understand and grasp the meaning using their background knowledge about the topic.

On the other hand, (T2)used classroom discussion in order to exchange information with students about the topic entitled "introduction to sentence patterns". He tried to explain from the handouts while asking questions at the same time. Students participating was accepted because others prefer to not speak or even engage. However, students who answer questions receive an instant feedback on their answers. Sometimes (T3) uses the board to clarify and give some examples. Another strategy is group work techniques where the teacher asked his learners to work in pairs when he gave them activities. Nevertheless, although students worked in pairs, they took the chance and

started using their mother tongue while others were playing on their mobile phones. When students find a gap, the noise begins to rise. (T2) asked his students to keep quiet or he will be obliged to ask them out. Eventually, two students were asked to go out of the lesson.

Despite the fact that some strategies were used. However, it was a challenge for teachers especially with large number of students in class. Also, though there was some discussion between the teacher and his learners, there was insufficient interaction between them. In addition, there was no written work or assignment delivered to students before lecturing because teachers could not find enough time to cover tasks intensively.

Aspect Five: the Use of ICT Inside the Classroom

During all our observation sessions, teachers did not integrate any technological materials such as data shows, videos and pictures. They only used the chalk and board. however, the use of ICT's inside the classroom makes the students more engaged in the learning process as well as it stimulates and sustains learners to be more productive to learn a language in a real-life situation.

3.3.3. Analysis of the Observation Results

The finding of our observation revealed that both teachers and students have difficulties in establishing conducive teaching environment in large EFL classes. We draw some conclusions about the main problems encountered :

- large classes reduces the amount of individual interaction between the teacher and students where they feel neglected and not all students find a chance to express themselves in the class. As Cuseo (2007,p.5) states that in large classes ". . . it is likely that the majority of students in class will go through the entire term without experiencing a single interactive episode with the course instructor, whether it be person-to-person, verbal or a written exchange of ideas outside the classroom."

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- The physical setting of the large class limits direct intervention with teachers and students due to the limited space and ill arrangement of the classroom.

- One of the main problems observed in overcrowded classes was that of noise. This issue prevents any meaningful learning from taking place inside the classroom.

- Checking attendance is very essential in large classes. However, no teacher gave it any importance.

- Students lateness is very common in large classes. It distracts and disturbs students while learning.

- The main techniques used by teachers to handle large classes were discussions, group work, storytelling, humor, body language and illustration. It was evident that these strategies helped teachers in their lecture presentations.

- Due to physical constraints, overcrowded classes prevents teachers either from marking class assignments or providing a students with direct feedback individually.

- Large classes limit the teachers from using different teaching methods. Cuseo (2007, p.7) said that "courses taught by the lecture method (more common in large classes) were limited primarily to knowledge acquisition—for example, factual information about concepts, principles and theories."

Another major point is that ICT helps in reducing the problems created by overcrowded classes but none of the teachers utilize it. It would be preferred that teachers implement various didactic aids in order to actively engage their students in learning. According to Emmanuel & Sharndama (2013,p. 35-36) "ICT's have brought innovation in teaching and learning by transforming teacher-talking and students-listen traditional approach to interactive, explorative and collaborative learning".

3.4. Discussion of the Findings

The interview and classroom observation has unveiled much of what we wished to know about the teachers' perceptions regarding overcrowded classes, their ways of coping and the problems related to teaching and learning in those classes. We have come to a number of conclusions. First of all, the most challenges encountered by teachers are:

- Discipline particularly the noise. Having a large number of students studying in one class then the first thing you notice that everybody is talking and chatting with each other and if you cannot control this, it will become a real and a serious discipline problem.

- Another challenge probably is the interaction where teachers cannot reach all students in class.

- Evaluation and assessment, teachers find hardships in grading students work.

- The physical setting of the classroom poses constraints on both teachers and students and limits their movement, communication and amount of individual attention.

- Lack of teachers is the main reason for the large number of students in classes.

- In EFL context, the less we have; the more we progress. This means that teaching languages should be carried in small classes.

- The optimal class size that promotes conducive learning environment in Biskra in particular is 25 students per class. While large class is the one that exceeds 35 students per class.

- Teachers clearly face challenges in assessing large classes.

From the results we obtained through teachers' interview and classroom observation, the most common problems that arise from large classes is noise making, assessment, establishing teacher-students interaction and lack space in the classroom.

Therefore, teachers could not teach is such conditions where they focus more on the problems rather than on instruction time. Therefore, we can say that our hypothesis is proved because teaching large number of learners affects negatively the quality of teaching. Besides the most common strategies employed by teachers are group work activities and involving students in learning using ICT's.

Conclusion

Through this chapter , the data collected using the selected data gathering tools is analyzed. Teachers' interview and classroom observation were analyzed through stating notes and comments. Then, the analysis of each procedure results is discussed. Finally, the chapter ends with the discussion of the main finding of our study.

General Conclusion

This descriptive study is an attempt to describe how English language teaching is carried in overcrowded classes. It sheds the light on the different problems that both EFL learners and teachers encounter during the learning situation in the division of English at the University of Biskra. Also, the research is an attempt to prove that when the number of learners per class is reduced this creates positive learning environment where learners are more involved in learning using their foreign language (FL) and the opposite is correct.

In order to validate our hypothesis, teachers interview and classroom observation were used as gathering data tools. Teachers' interview was designed and distributes to EFL teachers from the University of Biskra. Whereas, classroom observation was conducted with first year EFL students at Mohamed Kheider University. The findings showed that the current phenomena of overcrowded classes bring innumerable challenges to language teachers which hampers effective communication with their students. The most voiced problems by language teachers in large classes were that of assessment, discipline particularly noise, classroom interaction and lack of space.

Another impact of overcrowded classes has shown to have an adverse impact on student learning. Typically, large classes first affect the physical environment of teaching where students do not feel at ease because they are crowded in limited spaces. Also, chances of learning are reduced were students feel neglected and do not have enough attention from the teacher. In addition, students motivation to learn is 'destroyed' due to the large number that presents a great obstacle to language learning where students get bored easily and eventually lose their interest to learn.

Hence, we often accuse that lack of achievement is due to overcrowded classes. However, this is not always the case. Based on our study, we concluded that the main

cause behind large classes is because lack of teachers. As a result, when learning in overcrowded classroom there a lack of exposure, unbalance in the distribution of the skills. Because quality of teaching is affected by overcrowded classes, so students cannot receive an efficient teaching.

Admitting the negative impact of overcrowded classes on the teaching-learning process we can say that language classes should be reduced because of the nature of learning a foreign language. That is to say, there is no possible teaching and learning in overcrowded EFL classes because the learning process to which the learner has to be exposed, if one of the skills is reduced in terms of exposure. Obviously, there is no learning of languages. Based on this, we can say that our hypothesis is proved.

We finish our study by a saying that "each learner needs a whole village to be educated". This shows the importance of giving students all attention, care and rights. Not only that, it is more complex when we deal with EFL learning. Teaching mechanisms are more complex than others. For instance, in other subjects learner can assimilate only through listening. However, in EFL, he should be trained on the four skills which are interrelated. One of the competence in one of the skills indicates the performance in other skills. That's why overcrowded classes are the basic problem that inhibits EFL learning. In other words. EFL learning is not the same as other subject learning.

Remedies

Since we did not reach the level of PHD work to advance recommendations. However, we expect a large number of learners next year. So, we think that the radical solution for our issue is to introduce new technological equipments notably ICT. We advise teachers and learners to integrate ICT while teaching large classes. We consider that the problem of large classes stays a problem unless teachers introduce ICT in teaching. Because ICT is a group and individualized means of work. That is to say, the information targets the learner whatever the number. In addition, we suggest other strategies using the technical equipments such as computers, videos, IWB (Interactive White Board) and many other types of equipment.

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Appendices

Appendix One

Classroom Observation Checklist

Name   Date

Class observed   Time

Rating system   Teachers' name

Subject   English department

N°	Aspects of Overcrowded Classes	Yes	No
1	Does the teacher attention cover all the learners?		
2	Are all the learners attentive to their teacher?		
3	Can the teacher move around students to check their comprehension?		
4	Can teacher and learners see each other?		
5	Are students at ease inside the classroom?		
6	Teacher gives and checks Assignments before lecturing.		
7	Can all students speak during the lecture?		
8	Noisy class.		
9	Less time to cover tasks intensively.		
10	Is there enough space for mobility round the class?		
11	Is there adequate lighting in the classroom?		
12	Is there sufficient furniture for all students in the classroom?		
13	Does the teacher use collaborative learning during lesson (discussions, pair and group work)?		

14	Is teaching done through lecture method only?		
15	Is attendance checked regularly?		
16	Can students easily ask and answer questions?		
17	Do positive teacher-student interactions exist?		
18	Do some students use avoidance strategy?		
19	Are the best students given more attention?		
20	Does the teacher attention is directed to girls?		
21	Does the teacher attention is directed to boys?		
22	Does the teacher know the most of the students' names?		
23	Is the number of girls larger than boys?		
24	Learners have books/notebooks.		
25	Does the teacher use ICT?		
26	Is there any teaching aid available except the blackboard?		
27	Does the teacher assess learners?		
28	Students receive feedback in time.		

Comments

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Appendix Two

Teachers' Interview Transcription

Interview Transcription of Teacher "A"

Student : which subjects are you teaching?

Teacher : written expression

Student : how many students have you got?

Teacher : 42 students

Student : do you consider that number as a large class?

teacher: somehow

student : in your opinion, what a large class means to you?

Teacher : for me, an overcrowded class is the one that exceeds 25 students.

Student : do you think that large classes inhibit learning?

Teacher : yes, of course.

Student : how do you manage overcrowded classes?

Teacher : first, we have to create a healthy atmosphere where students feel that the lecture is interesting. Second, we have to make good preparation of the lecture. Third, we have to involve all the students to show them that their collaboration is interesting.

Student : are learners noisy in these classes?

Teacher : sometimes

Student : how about learners motivation?

Teacher : it depends on the lecture/ the prior knowledge they possess about it.

Student : how do you assess large classes?

Teacher : it's too hard to assess large classes but teachers have to be keen enough to know the capacities of each individual in order to be fair to some extent. Teachers do their best to be fair when assessing large classes but in vain.

Student : which is better an essay or an M.C.Q?

Teacher : M.C.Q because is more time consuming and easier to correct.

Student : learners complain about marks because they are badly marked or marked hurriedly. What do you think?

Teacher : most of the time are right. Both types of giving them marks.

Student : do you think that overcrowded classes in mainly due to large number of learners or reduced number of teachers?

Teacher : large number of learners. In our case, there is no selection of students who want to learn English.

Student : any comments to add?

Teacher : no.

Interview Transcription of Teacher 'B'

Student : which subjects are you teaching now?

Teacher: actually I teach three modules social sciences, oral expression and civilization.

Student: how many students have you got?

Teacher: I have a great number. I have one thousand three hundred students (1300)

Student: to be specific, how many students you have in regular classes?

Teacher: in TD class, I have just one TD class. I have thirty three (33).

Students: is that large number for you?

Teacher: no. thirty three (33) isn't a large number.

Student: in your opinion, what is a large class?

Teacher: a large class is a class that exceeds 35 students in one group.

Student: do you think that large classes inhibit learning?

Teacher: definitely, to a very great extent yes I do.

Student: I noticed that you use a bell.

Teacher: a bell, yes I do.

Student: what do you use it for?

Teacher: it's actually to attract their attention and to introduce a new, an important information , that's all.

Student: how do you manage overcrowded classes?

Teacher: well, it's very difficult to manage large classes. I try to involve them in the teaching by asking questions, drawing, telling stories, jokes.

Student: like the story you just used.

Teacher: yeah, I tell them stories to keep them attracted to me.

Student: in terms of assessment, how do you assess those classes?

Teacher: it's very difficult, really. So, I try to focus on multiple choice questions because with 1300 students, it's huge number. It's time consuming so MCQ seems fair to me.

Student: in terms of correction.

Teacher: and even information.

Student: do you think overcrowded classes is mainly due to large number of learners or reduced number of teachers?

Teacher: that's a very good question. But actually it's the problem of the output in the Baccalaureate exam. Our Baccalaureate is political rather than academic. Students get the Baccalaureate, pass the BAC not because they are able to go to university but because there is a political circumstance that pushes the government to let everybody pass. So, its political

Student: do you these classes noisy?

Teacher: yes , they are.

Student: how about their motivation?

Teacher: we can say some of them are very motivated but most are not.

Student: how do you motivate them?

Teacher: I try to give them meaningful information which help them understand or make sense of the world.

Student: sometimes students complain about marks, do you that because they are badly marked or marked hurriedly?

Teacher: I think we test them wrong. We test them in the wrong way. We don't test what they know and what they can do but we test their memory and here is the problem. We test their memory, how much they memorize information.

Student: is there any you would like to add?

Teacher: oh yes. If we would like to control or handle a large class we need to have equipment such as data shows, ICT's and we should manage the number by dividing them into manageable groups. This is it. And also, there something interesting its, we need to have more work days such as Saturday because if we have Saturday's as working days we will have less crowded classes and less crowded schedules.

Interview transcription of Teacher 'C'

Student: which subjects are you teaching?

Teacher : actually it's about grammar and more exactly sentence patterns.

Student: do you teach other modules.

Teacher: I have also culture of the language first year and cognitive psychology third year.

Student: how many students have you got?

Teacher: normally I have two groups in grammar. A whole section in the culture of the language. It means, the average four hundred(400) students. And I have the whole promotion of third year which is four hundred (400). It means that the total is about nine hundred (900) students.

Student: to be specific, in the TD course, what's the number of learners?

Teacher: normally I have two groups officially are one hundred twenty (120) students.

Student: for you is it a large class?

Teacher: yes.

Student: do you think that large classes inhibit learning EFL?

Teacher: yeah, if we consider it is a TD class it's very difficult to manage. It's not a matter of discipline but it's a matter of organization, and if sometimes we need to work with individual students is very very hard to manage. I think this is the only one problem that we have . also, if we can add the problem of evaluation and assessment. This is also a very big dilemma. We cannot have a very clear idea about good, average or excellent students in a large class.

Student: how do you assess those large classes?

Teacher: frankly I'm not doing individual assessment. The only one test is the official test.

Student: for you, which is better an exam or an MCQ?

Teacher: both or a combination. We cannot. It depends on the nature of question but I prefer to have both of them especially for first year grade maybe third year yes an essay is good kind of examination but for first grade I think a combination of both.

Student: learners complain about marks because their badly marked or marked hurriedly. What do you think?

Teacher: as a teacher I think is not the case. The exams, models are very highly designed simply to fit all levels and in the case there is a kind of misunderstanding or kind of let's say an issue about marks, scale or about evaluation. This has to be discussed between the students and the teacher directly. It's not a matter the whole class or the whole promotion. There is what we call isolated cases which have to be discussed between the students and the teacher directly. I think, this is my personal point of view.

Student: for you what's the maximum number that you think it is a large class?

Teacher: more than thirty (30) for me.

Student: do you find those classes noisy?

Teacher: yes; all the tome. I have some issue with third year even they have a learning experience better than first grade. I have some issue to manage let's say discipline matter with third year but for me it's not big problem.

Student: what about their motivation?

Teacher: some of them yes. But we have noticed this last year that they are here just to take the handouts but there is no big participation or kind of interaction between student and the teacher only with some elements which are the excellent ones.

Student: do you that the problem of overcrowded classes are mainly due to the large number of learners or reduced number of teachers?

Teacher: both. I believe that we have very respected teaching staff because of many reasons. It looks like teachers of English are very scared to these times. And second the choice of learning English now is very important for newcomers to the university due to I don't know maybe to the easiness of the field or kind of job about the job market which now needs people who have more than one language. Yes, this is the main why English now is very important for learners.

Student: do you have any specific strategies to handle those classes?

Teacher: generally, it is direct intervention, to led them follow the lesson, to led them focus. And I try mainly to involve them into the lesson by asking questions, by giving them opportunity to share ideas, to share question, to share informations, whatever. This how I try to manage a noisy class.

Student: for example, do you use collaborative learning strategies?

Teacher: sure. In case of discussion because giving example of lectures of culture. We always start by a discussion. A discussion can be between the learners and the teacher or the learners themselves. Then, we share information with the whole class.

Student: do you have anything to add or comment?

Teacher: yes. I think in reality it's not a problem since we are managing this situation but I mean sometimes is a matter of choice more than a matter of number. Now, there is some learners that are interested in learning English and those who aren't. we need kind of filter before they are officially learners of English. We need to filter them for those who wants really to go further into learning English and those who are here just to change maybe their situation or to do English as a second diplomat or as I think newly is a kind of political matter since people wants to develop the English language and make it as an official language and ...so there is many kinds of reasons for this. And I hope we could have more opportunity to work better and in a better conditions.

Interview Transcription for Teacher 'D'

Student: which subjects are you teaching?

Teacher: I'm teaching pragmatics and didactics.

Student: how many students have you got?

Teacher: about five hundred students (500).

Student: and in regular classes, how many students do you have?

Teacher: well, about fifty (50). Forty (40) -fifty (50) students.

Student: do you consider that number a large class?

Teacher: yeah. It's a large class.

Student: for you what is the maximum number that you perceive as a large class?

Teacher: in fact, there is one usual size that is visible with which people work , not more than thirty (30). About between twenty (20) and thirty (30) students.

Student: do you think that large classes inhibit EFL learning?

Teacher: yeah in a way. In EFL context, large classes may constitute very serious problem to the teachers and to the learners.

Student: how do you manage these classes?

Teacher: well, in fact I do divide them into sub-groups sometimes and I prepare activities that are adapted to large classes.

Student: how do you find learners motivation in those classes?

Teacher: well, in fact their motivation is very low first and second it's not organized because of the number so there are times where the participation is not organized because of the number.

Students: are they noisy?

Teacher: yeah. Of course. Large classes are very often very noisy classes. It depends on the teacher himself . generally, they are noisy because they lose attention and motivation.

Student: is there any specific assessment for large classes?

Teacher: I have got two types of assignments . Most of the time I rely on written assessment , written evaluation because I can't evaluate them orally because of the number .

Student: which types of test is better an essay or an MCQ?

Teacher: generally speaking , with large classes we adopted very easy technique which is the MCQ because it's easier to correct. Essays are very difficult to correct and generally you get bad answers.

Student: do you think that learners complain about marks because they are badly marked or marked hurriedly?

Teacher: in fact, they are right. They are always hurriedly marked because of the number so the teacher doesn't have enough time to evaluate each and every student so there is kind of injustice because of the number of course.

Student: do you think the cause behind large classes is due to large number of learners or reduced number of teachers?

Teacher: in fact, it is the number of teachers that is the cause. We don't have enough teachers, EFL teachers especially in English. So, this is why we have large classes.

Student: do you have anything to add?

Teacher: yes I can have many comments in fact. But the first comment is that there should be a kind of classroom management as far as this overcrowded classroom with mixed ability classes. The teacher has to adopt himself to that situation because there is no other solution , to adopt himself, to prepare tasks and activities that are suitable and appropriate for this type of classes.

Interview Transcription of Teacher 'E'

Student: which subjects are you teaching now?

Teacher: oral expression, culture of the language and literature.

Student: how many students have you got?

Teacher: all in all, for first year about like four hundred (400) and so. For second years it's a section also so it's like about two hundred (200) or something. In TD's I have thirty three (33) students per group.

Student: do you find that number adequate for teaching EFL?

Teacher: for first years no. It is not. Second years it's acceptable.

Student: for you is it a large class, I mean 33 students in a class?

Teacher: first year, I teach whole section but it's very very very large section.

Student: for you, what is the maximum number that you consider as a large class?

Teacher: a large class. More than twenty five (25).

Student : do you think that a large class inhibits learning?

Teacher: of course.

Student: how do you manage overcrowded language classes?

Teacher: well it depends on the subject to be taught. If for example if it's a subject that can be taught in a form of workshops, why not! I divide them into small groups and I monitor every group and give them task to do etc etc ...this way I can handle it. If the subject to be taught is for instance, oral expression if it's a large class for me it's better if I divide the class into two groups . I'd rather teach more than the due hours for teaching than teaching a large group in oral expression. For example, if I have two groups instead of teaching them as full groups that is four sessions two session for each groups in oral expression. I'd rather teach eight session in week . this way I divide the group into two groups than I teach them oral expression because they need to speak and participate. So, it depends on the course.

Student: are these classes noisy?

Teacher: yes, noisy. It depends on students. For example, for first years it's a large number sometimes we have noise. But we try the maximum we can do to control that noise.

Students: how about their motivation?

Teacher: of course, a large number is great obstacle for them. For first years for example they are very very very motivated but since it's a large group I can't just listen to all of them, all their answers so they get bored, they no longer how to say they are they are no longer interested in participating because even if they , I don't have the time ask every and each one of them to answer a question or to comment on something so it is a problem.

Student: how do you evaluate large classes?

Teacher: for me this year, I teach second years it's not large classes they are like thirty (30) and they don't all attend so some of them are not I mean you know those with credit as we say so at least I mean not more than twenty five (25) students attend in the classroom. For first years I don't really teach groups, small groups I mean.

Student: what do prefer to use if you have large groups, an MCQ or an essay?

Teacher: I think the essay is easier if they are good. Because the MCQ sometimes is tricky even if it seems easier. But out of experience when I give them the MCQ they don't get good marks the way they get them in essays because in essay they write whatever they need to write and what they want. But the problem of the essay is the language, the understanding of the question so both of them are tricky.

Student: most of the time learners complain about marks because they are badly marked or marked hurriedly. What 's your opinion?

Teacher: they complain because they want the marks no matters how! That's why they complain. All they want is to pass pass pass so, this is not a good way to think about being assessed.

Student: do you think that the cause of overcrowded classes is the large number of learners or reduced number of teachers?

Teacher: both.

Students: do you have anything to add?

Teacher: for me, it would be better if they don't accept this large number in first year and of course recruiting more teachers.

Interview Transcription of Teacher 'F'

Student: which subjects are teaching?

Teacher: well in fact I'm teaching two courses namely written expression and oral expression. However, I taught didactics and academic writing during the first semester.

Student: how many students are there in your classes?

Teacher: well, in second year I have round thirty, thirty five students (30-35). Third year I think the number is less from twenty five to thirty (25-30) I'm not sure of the exact number of students.

Student: do you perceive that number as a small or large class?

Teacher: well, I think twenty, twenty five (20-25)is an ideal number. More than that it is an overcrowded class. In EFL context, I consider a class that contains more than thirty (30) students is an overcrowded class.

Student: do you think that overcrowded classes inhibit learning?

Teacher: yeah, for sure. There are certain courses where overcrowded classes are really a problem like oral expression course for instance. If you have like thirty, thirty five (30-35) till forty (40) students in oral expression course then as a teacher you may have lot of challenges for instance, to talk to everybody in class, to ensure that everybody is participating, to evaluate all of them fairly. In written expression, the problem could be even worse because sometimes you ask them to write something and you need to check it up, you need to monitor the task and because the number is incontrollable, you in one hour and half you can just monitor or check like half of the class only.

Student: in terms of assessing them, what types of essays do you give them?

Teacher: since I'm teaching second year students, in written expression the whole program is about paragraph writing and accordingly the assignments I often give to students is writing a paragraph. Sometimes we do it in class, sometimes we start the task like generating the ideas and elaborating the topic sentence in class and I ask them to finish the paragraph at home. And in certain cases, I give them assignment as a home work where they need to accomplish the whole task at home.

Student: so you give them different tasks.

Teacher: yeah, I try group work and pair work but unfortunately I think the majority of students do not feel at ease when they work together. They prefer individual tasks. As I told you we try to write a paragraph in pairs and in groups. Some students told me that they did it themselves , there wasn't a collaboration from other partners. This is the main problem.

Student: others see it as a chance when see the group work they do not contribute?

Teacher: they do not contribute, once they see a member who is writing or who started writing the first sentence they rely on him or her they do not participate, they do not engage in the task , this is probably one of the challenges in working in groups. That's why I told you earlier that I preferred individual tasks since I can really measure or evaluate everybody's' skills in writing. In oral expression, the assessment is a bit different since you need as a teacher to know everybody's' oral proficiency or communicative competence in different contexts I mean individual speeches, dialogues and pair conversations, classroom discussion. So, everytime I use assessment according to or I rely on certain assessment criteria according to the task and according to the objectives of the course.

Student: what about learners motivation?

Teacher: for sure, I mean overcrowded classes affect negatively students motivation.

Student: how do you manage those problems?

Teacher: I usually set rules at the beginning of the lecture or the course. At the beginning of the year I usually tell students to follow the instructions as much as they can otherwise the course won't be smoothly accomplished. Fortunately many of them follow these instructions and I can't remember that I have had a serious discipline problem with students. So I think setting regulations and classroom policy at the beginning of the course is an effective solution. The second thing is I try to make pauses for students to give them pauses to relax. So every twenty to twenty five minutes we change the rhythm of the course probably I tell a story or joke. I change the whole focus of the task I give them the chance to participate, many things but not certainly linked to the task so they can have some time to relax. And I always tolerate some noisy class, I cannot keep telling them keep quiet, keep quiet all the time so some noise or some personal chatting is not big deal for me since they are not affecting the whole flow of the course.

Student: most of the time you find learners complain about marks, do you think that because they are badly marked or marked hurriedly?

Teacher: sometimes this happens in oral expression course for instance where for example I don't associate the name with the person and I don't for example remember that person participating a lot in class and I sometimes as you said I do not score him or give him for example his right mark simply because I couldn't remember his face if you'd like to say. If I have less number of students in class then I can remembered more but because they are many I cannot remember all students so I can fairly assess them. I try to be fair as much as I can, that's why I said every time I use different tasks probably I can reach all students.

Student: do you that the problem of overcrowded classes is mainly due to large number of learners or reduced number of teachers?

Teacher: I think it's both. Like in our case, we don't have sufficient number of teachers and at the same time we have large number of students coming every year. so, we couldn't manage this number. That's why the administration grouped students in overcrowded classes I mean this is the only solution we have. Sometimes in first year for example you find ten or twelve groups where certain courses for example should be taught in TD sessions but because of the lack of teachers they are done in a form of a course 'a lecture'. Like grammar and phonetics in first year. I think that affects negatively students achievements.

Student: do you have anything to add?

Teacher: overcrowded classes it's like a. It is a phenomenon that exists everywhere, it's not only in Algeria but I think if we have for example equipped classes with technological tools then we can reduce this problem. If we have for example data shows in every class , students like to be taught in equipped classes probably we can reduce this problem. If we opt for, for instance if we seek help from other teachers even if they are substitute teachers probably we can solve also the problem. Or if we have an entry test for baccalaureate students coming to the

department of English, this test also will lessen the number of students, will help in the selection of students who intend to subscribe or enroll in the department of English.

الملخص

أدت عولمة اللغة الإنجليزية إلى تزايد كبير في تسجيل الطلاب الذين يدرسون اللغة الانجليزية كلغة ثانية أو لغة أجنبية من مختلف البلدان الغير الناطقة بالإنجليزية ,وقد أدى هذا إلى زيادة عدد الصفوف المكتظة بالطلبة على المستوى الجامعي. ترتكز هذه الدراسة   الوصفية على تحديد المشاكل التي يواجهها أساتذة اللغة الانجليزية في جامعة محمد خيضر أثناء عملية تعليم الصفوف المكتظة بحوالي 60-50 طالب والاستراتيجيات التي يستخدمونها لتحقيق نتائج محددة في تلك الأقسام. لذا من اجل التوصل لفهم أعمق حول اثر الأقسام المكتظة على عملية التعلم وتعليم اللغة الانجليزية كلغة أجنية, تم تصميم وإجراء مقابلة مع ستة أساتذة ممن يدرسون الانجليزية كلغة أجنبية. إلى جانب الملاحظة الصفية التي أجريت مع أقسام السنة الأولى للغة الانجليزية. أظهرت نتائج أدوات البحث أن   صنع الضوضاء، التقييم، التفاعل بين الطالب والمعلم وضيق المساحة هي المشاكل الأكثر شيوعا.   و بناء على النتائج ،   فرضيتنا تأكدت ومنه تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية يجب ان يكون في أقسام لا تتجاوز 25 طالبا و هذا لخلق بيئة ملائمة لتعلم اللغة كلغة أجنبية.