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**Effects of Overcrowded Classrooms on Teacher-Student  
Interactions**

*Case Study EFL Students at Biskra University*

A dissertation submitted to the Department of Foreign Languages  
as partial fulfilment of the requirements for the **Master's Degree** in Sciences of  
Languages

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**Academic year**  
2015

## Dedication

*To the most precious people to my heart; to the ones who gave birth and meaning to*

*my life, to the persons who gave me strength and hope,*

*To the ones who have shown me what nobody else would ever have, and have*

*provided me with their encouragement, love and understanding.*

*To my dear mother and beloved father I dedicate this work,*

*This work is also dedicated to my brothers **Bilal** and **Abderraheman***

*To my sisters **Bouthaina** and **Oumaima***

*For their whole-hearted support;*

*To all my friends with whom I shared the university life with its lights and shadows.*

*To all those who have been supportive, caring and patient, sometimes beyond their*

*strength, I dedicate this simple work.*

*To all those who love me.*

## **Acknowledgements**

This dissertation could not have been completed without the help of my teacher and supervisor Dr. Hanane Saihi Kihal to whom I would express my sincere thanks. I am grateful for her encouragement, kindness, patience and insightful advice throughout the completion of this work.

I am utterly grateful to the examining member of the jury, Mrs Said Salhi Ahlem and Mrs Benidir Samira for reading this work at a particularly difficult time of the year and for her priceless comments and observations that will surely help me enormously to polish this work.

I am also grateful to all the teachers and students whose help and collaboration in the answering of the questionnaire is invaluable.

I would like to give special thanks to my friends and mates who encouraged and helped me.

Finally, I am grateful to any person who contributed this research.

### **Abstract**

The aim behind this present dissertation is to investigate the main problems that hinder teacher-students interaction in overcrowded classes. This study focuses particularly on the problems that are being faced by both teachers and students while teaching-learning process and the methods that teacher should use in those large size classes. We hypothesise that overcrowded classes may influence teacher-students interaction in EFL classes at the department of English in Biskra University. The method of this research work is qualitative method. The data were gathered through self-completion questionnaires administered to (30) student chosen randomly from three classes in the English department at Biskra University and to (8) teachers who have also been chosen randomly from the Department of English, Biskra University. The results of this study showed the main problems being faced in overcrowded classes including noise making, lack of individual attention and classroom arrangement are issues that influence interaction in the class. Based on these results, the hypothesis was confirmed in that teacher-students interaction is effected by the number of students enrolled. Thus, the need for adoption of modern teaching aids, in addition to the methods and techniques that should be applied while teaching those classes. Furthermore, the research gave some recommendations as well.

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## **General Introduction**

Overcrowded classes have been considered one of the most challenging problems facing universities and teachers as well. A combination of an increasing population and a decrease of funding have caused class size to soar (rise). In an ideal world, class size would be capped at 15-20 student; especially for English as a foreign language classes. Unfortunately, many classrooms now regularly exceed thirty students, and it is not uncommon to be more than forty students in a class.

Overcrowded classrooms may create an obstacle in the progressive activities of classroom teaching learning process. In the classroom the primary objective of a teacher should treat each and every individual student in a proper way in order to regulate his activities and to develop his inner personality, not only that, he has to give him a widest opportunity to develop his skills, abilities and potentialities at the optimum level. However, in overcrowded classrooms, teachers may spend most of their time in demanding students' attentiveness or concentrating on classroom management activities to regulate students' activities in a proper way.

Instruction in a large group is a challenging task to any teacher who involve in teaching-learning process inside the classroom effectively. Since the number of learners in overcrowded classroom is big, teachers feel very difficult to prolong their teaching-learning process in an effective way in order to attain the specified objectives of teaching. At the same time, teacher cannot make adequate interaction among the learners in a large group. Thus, we can deduce that overcrowded classrooms may effect teacher-student interactions and as a result, the aim of this study is to make some recommendations and suggestions to reduce this phenomenon.

## **Research problem**

There is no consensus (agreement) when it comes to the effects of overcrowded classes on teacher-student interactions, but many language teachers hold a negative view on teaching English in large classes. Often we hear them saying such words as “out of control”, “hard to organize class activities” or “impossible to communicate”.

These problems can be physical, psychological but to a great extent technical. It is difficult for teachers to contact with the students sitting at the back and for students to get the individual attention, and it is even impossible to organize dynamic and creative teaching and learning sessions. Most importantly, large classes are especially daunting for inexperienced teachers. This also indicates that teachers need more technical strategies in large class.

To summarize at this point, the problem in teaching large classes, is that it is difficult for teachers 1) to discipline the class; 2) to satisfy all the needs of students who have different interests, personalities and capabilities; 3) to organize efficient class activities due to the constraints of time and space; 4) to provide equal chances for the students to participate and practice; 5) to give timely and effective feedback and evaluation.

## **Purpose of the Study**

This study aims at fulfilling three major goals: first, the research aims at drawing attention on how the large size of classes influences teachers-students interactions in the classroom. Secondly, the study aims at investigating teaching strategies teachers use to cope with their large classes and find out how they can be used in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context at the English department in Biskra university . Finally, the study intends to examine teachers’ understanding of the phenomenon of overcrowded classes and the strategies they have adopted to promote effective teaching and learning

in their overcrowded classes. In other words, the study aims at exploring the pedagogical implications which might be employed in our large EFL class contexts in order to maximize teaching and learning to benefit all the stakeholders (participants) involved.

### **Significance of the Study**

The issue of crowded classes being a real world issue affecting teachers in general and teachers of Biskra University in particular. First, the aim of this study is to explore the impact of large classes on teaching and learning and examine the effective ways of coping with those large classes in order to enhance teaching and learning after investigating the teachers and students' beliefs about the phenomenon.

Second, this study could help all the stakeholders to have a better legibility of the situation by adding to the body of knowledge about teaching and learning in large classes. Third, it intends to make suggestions and recommendations with a view to encourage the dissemination and the adoption of the results of the research across the country so that, the new teachers can reach an advanced level of understanding that can be used to address the theoretical and practical issues of teaching large EFL classes.

### **Research question**

The objectives of the investigation are guided by the following question:

What are the effects of overcrowded classrooms on teacher-student interactions in EFL classes at the Department of Foreign Languages, Biskra University?

### **Hypothesis**

This study is designed to test the following hypothesis:

We hypothesize that overcrowded classrooms may influence teacher-student interactions in EFL classes at the English department, Biskra University.

## **Research design**

The descriptive methodology will be adopted to describe and analyse the information taken from the questionnaires. Thus, the specific purpose of this study is to determine what the effects of overcrowded classes on teacher-student interactions are, via a qualitative research method.

## **Population and sampling**

The subject population of the study will be limited to English as Foreign Language students at Biskra University. The researcher chooses (30) student who are studying English as a Foreign Language at Biskra University, English Division. Students have been chosen randomly from three levels: master one, third year and second year. The researcher also chooses (8) teachers randomly from the same department.

## **Research instruments**

To get a thorough feedback about overcrowded classrooms and about classroom interaction, the researcher have used two questionnaires for teachers and students as a main tool for collecting data.

## **Limitations of the study**

While this study contributes important insights in understanding the phenomenon of overcrowding as well as its effects on teacher-student interactions, the limitations of the research also need to be acknowledged. In any kind of research, the objectives to be realized are limited by time, space, as well as population. In this case, the selected sample that consists students and teachers from the English Department at Biskra University; might not be able to provide the qualitative data support for any conclusive findings, which may be a representative of the whole Algerian student population. In addition, the short time provided in conducting this research, do not allow the researcher to analyse deeply the phenomenon being studied. Nevertheless, the results obtained from the

selected sample in this study can provide some insights in reducing overcrowding in the Algerian EFL settings.

### **Structure of dissertation**

This dissertation is divided into three main chapters. The first two chapters constitute the literature survey. Chapter One represents a review of overcrowded classrooms; the main focus of this chapter is on its definition, its relation with method of instruction, its problems and strategies to overcome those problems. Chapter Two is devoted to classroom interaction; the main focus of this chapter is on its main types, aspects and strategies to improve classroom interaction and finally the relation between class interaction and overcrowded classes. Chapter three, fieldwork, provides a detailed description of data collection as well as analysis of both teachers' and learners' questionnaires. In addition, this chapter includes a discussion of both questionnaires.

# **Chapter One**

## **Overcrowded Classrooms**

### **Introduction**

The classroom is the product of a class teaching system, where intertwined with a variety of teaching factors, and all these factors form various kinds of connections. The main function of classroom management is to coordinate, control, and integrate these teaching factors and their relationship, so as to form an ordered whole to ensure teaching activities go smoothly. However, in recent years, the size of classrooms and especially English as a foreign language classes gradually expanded and appeared big classrooms and even overcrowded classrooms. This issue, as it is known under the umbrella of classroom management, has become a popular topic in EFL studies.

Teachers of large classes, specifically EFL classes, are facing so many difficulties in their teaching process. As an example, including stressed impersonal relations between students and the teacher, limited range of teaching methods, discomfort among teachers managing large classes, as well as discipline control. Certain elements related to classroom management and overcrowded classes will be dealt with in the presented chapter; such as definition of classroom management as well as that of overcrowded classrooms, class size and method of instruction, some main problems related to large classes and finally, some selected strategies and methods of teaching overcrowded classes.

### **1.1. Definition of classroom management**

Classroom management is a term made up of two parts: classroom and management. From Oxford Learners' Pocket Dictionary, "Classroom" is defined as "a room in school, college...where classes are taught", and "Management" as "the control

or organization of something". (pp. 72-261). The two terms are interrelated to construct the word classroom management

### **1.1.1. Classroom**

The classroom refers to the physical place in the school where the teacher meets group of students to interact with subject matter and materials so that learning can take place (i.e. the physical, social, and intellectual context of the teacher and student). The classroom goes beyond the physical confines of the room to include the total school context that teachers and students inhabit throughout the school day.

### **1.1.2. Management**

Management refers to the process of planning, organizing, leading, and controlling the resources (physical, human) required to achieve the goals/functions of teaching and learning (i.e., attending to the logistics of teaching). According to (Kruger & Van Schalkwyk, 1997), the term classroom management encompasses all the activities that are required to support and fulfil the main purpose of the teaching and learning situation.

### **1.1.3. Classroom management**

Classroom management is considered an essential part of the teaching and learning process. It refers to the methods, strategies and skills teachers use to maintain a classroom environment that results in a student's learning success. Fenwick et al., (2006) define classroom management as the ability to manage, to engage, to focus, and to bring productive order to the classroom full of active students. Classroom management is connected to a process of organizing and conducting a class that includes time management, students' involvement, student engagement, and classroom communication.



## 1.2. Definition of the overcrowded classrooms

A classroom is said to be overcrowded in which the number of students exceeds the optimum level such that it causes hindrance in the teaching-learning process. Researchers argue that there is no exact definition of a large class. It differs from country to country and from one situation of teaching to another. Hayes (1997) states that there can be no quantitative definition of what constitutes an “overcrowded” class, as perceptions of this will vary from context to context. Ur (1996) sees that:

Large is, of course, a relation term, and what a large class is, will vary from place to place...a group of twenty may be considered large; in my own teaching situation 40-50... A study done by a team of the Lancaster-Leeds Language Learning in Large Classes Research Project (Project Report N° 4) of Coleman et al., indicates that an average perception of the large class may be around 50 students (p. 302).

For example, some people hold that 50 would be large enough for a class; others would argue that a large class could have as many as over 100 or even 150 students. However, most teachers generally agree that a class with 50-60 or more is 'large' enough.

Similarly, Nolasco and Arthur (1988) stated that “Teachers who are used to teach groups of 12-14 students might find a group of 20 rather threatening. Others may be relieved when they have only 40.” (p, 04)

<b>Author</b>	<b>Minimum size of large class</b>
Barker (1976)	55
Chimombo (1986)	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 & Arthur (1986)	40

**Table 1.1: Some minimum sizes of large classes**

### **1.2.1. Class size phenomenon**

Generally, teachers meet several classes in one day; their quality of teaching is influenced by the number of students in their classes. There is no agreement upon the optimum class size for the ideal learning situation. In teaching English as a foreign language, the number of students in the class should be reasonable so that the teacher can easily communicate with his or her students.

How many students need to be in a class before it can be considered large? Is a group of 30 students a large class? How about 60 students? There are no easy answers to these questions since perceptions of class size are subjective, also it depends on a number of variables.

Firstly, teachers rely on the largest size of the class that they regularly teach when making judgments concerning what makes a large class (Coleman, 1989c). In other words, if a teacher is used to teaching classes of 20 students, he or she will often say that 30 students are a large class; but for another teacher whose regular class size is 40, a large class might comprise 60 students. Despite these differences, teachers nearly always end up teaching classes larger than what they consider is ideal.

Secondly, what is being taught influences teachers' judgments of the size of large classes. At many universities for subjects other than English (and unfortunately all too often for English as well), classes for lectures may consist of several hundred students. Where the teaching involves the transfer of factual knowledge, such class sizes may not be problematic (Obanya et al., n. d.), but for the teaching of English, which requires the learning of complex skills, these massive lecture classes are likely to cause a wide variety of problems. Similarly, within English language teaching, most teachers would view the minimum size of what would be considered a large class for teaching speaking to be

smaller than for teaching reading (LoCastro, 1989). The content being taught, then, must also be considered when making judgments of the size of large classes.

### **1.3. The relationship between class size and method of instruction**

Method of instruction is one of the many variables that should be taken into account in research on class size. Ebel (1969) offers the opinion that:

Any criterion employed to assess the effect of class size is in actuality assessing the accomplishments of some method -- the method of teaching which was used in the study in question. Whether it appears to better advantage in large classes or in small classes depends upon the compatibility of the method with the size of the groups being investigated. One either is at a loss to know, with respect to virtually all the class-size literature, whether the research design specifies a method for or both of the class-size categories and whether the method specified was actually consistently employed (p. 142).

In a report published by the New York State Teachers' Association (1959), it was suggested that teachers advocate smaller classes because with smaller classes they have more time to experiment, to initiate and perfect more effective methods of instruction. Teachers felt that they were forced to use routine methods when they were assigned larger classes. It was suggested that in overcrowded classes attention became centered upon achieving a reasonable group norm rather than stimulating each student to advance according to his capacity.

McKenna and Pugh (1964) actually studied the degree to which instruction was individualized in small classes (10 to 20) and large classes (30 to 43). The method used in the study was field observation conducted by experienced educators. The observers used a standardized guide designed to focus attention on the criterion of the study – the individualization of instruction in the teaching and learning function.

McKenna and Pugh (1964) found that a greater number and variety of activities took place in the small than in the large groups. Moreover, a significantly greater

percentage of activities in the small classes was devoted to individual and small group instruction. However, they also pointed out that a considerable amount of instruction in the small classes was still very oriented.

Danowski (1965) carried out another study to determine whether or not teachers were taking advantage of small classes by individualizing their instructional procedures. Danowski's results revealed that only about one-half of the teachers of the small classes (20 or fewer students) used individualized teaching methods.

Evidence from the above studies indicates that not all teachers automatically take advantage of the opportunity for individualization of instruction that small classes afford. It is unlikely that the same teaching method is best for all situations. If the same teaching techniques are used in both groups, it is likely that no difference would be found in large and small classes. McKenna and Pugh (1964) suggest that teachers have been taught and have developed skills and techniques of teaching that are applicable only to large classes of pupils. When the opportunity arises to work with a small class, they are not equipped to make the most of this opportunity. McKenna and Pugh feel that special training must be provided for teachers so that they will be able to fully capitalize on the opportunities afforded in small classes.

#### **1.4. Effectiveness of English language teaching and learning in large and small class-size**

Having considered the concept of class-size and views of educationists on its influence of Teaching and Learning of English Language in relation to students' performances, the effectiveness of teaching in both class sizes need to be looked into. To determine the effectiveness of any teaching such as English, the outcome or performance of the students need to be ascertained. In terms of output, Simkins (1981) reported that output represents the immediate results of the systems activities. According to him, the

main outputs in education are expressed in terms of learning, that is changes in the knowledge, skills and attitude of individuals as a result of their experiences within the educational system. Tsang (1988) remarked that output consists of educational effects such as cognitive and non-cognitive skills which are learned by students. In agreement to this, Lord (1984) enumerated four major areas in which the measurement of output in education could be analysed. This has he listed include the assessment by the teachers; standard examinations as a measure of educational output; other standardized tests for national and local monitoring and market research techniques.

#### **1.4.1. Effectiveness of English language teaching and learning in a large class-size**

An overcrowded classroom is a class in which teacher concentrates more on management and control of the students rather than working towards the achievement of the lesson objectives. Overcrowded classrooms, therefore, based on definitions could also be referred to as a large size class. As a result of this, teachers and students tend to face difficulties in teaching-learning processes. Ijaya (1997) in her research opined that a large class-size offers nothing but noise making, restriction of teacher's movement to the front of the class and inadequate participation in the lesson by students sitting at the back. She added that the increase in examination malpractices could not be divorced from poor seating arrangement in classrooms. She finalized that the quantity and quality of interaction are likely to be adversely affected due to lack of space for moving around the class and the overwhelming number of students that the teacher have to deal with within a ninety-minute lesson.

Though many researchers have conclude that large class-size poses lots of problems, but Hess (2001) on the contrary states that large classes have many advantages. He affirms that the number of the students is so huge; it means more communication and interaction in the classroom, moreover a diversity of human assets.

In addition, outstanding students will cooperate with their weak peers. Ur (1996) in support of this clarifies that while the teacher has a big number of students and cannot provide help to all students, nevertheless students can expand strategies to be better by doing peer-teaching and group effort, thus benefiting and nurturing an environment of cooperation and mutual end.

Juxtaposing the merits and demerits of large class-sizes, it would be realized that large class-sizes forces teachers to be teacher-centered and Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) based on research is not effective when a teaching is teacher-centered. The National Capital Language Resources Council of the United States (NCLRC, 2007) identified the two major drawbacks in teacher-centered model of teaching. These are:

- a. It involves only a minority of students in actual language learning.
- b. It gives students knowledge about language but does not necessarily enable them to use it for purposes that interest them.

#### **1.4.2. Effectiveness of teaching and learning of English language in a small class-size**

Efficiencies and effectiveness of English Language Teaching and Learning of in a Small Class-Size to some extent is known. Some researchers have investigated and concluded that the class-size has nothing to do in the students' achievements, while lots of them are of the opinion that the effectiveness of teaching is high when there is a reduction in class size. The National Council of Teachers of English of United States (NCTE, 1999) has identified the following encouraging results from small class size and improving instructional methods:

1. Smaller classes result in increased teacher-students contact.
2. More learning activities take place in small class-sizes.

3. Students in smaller classes show more appreciation for one another and more desire to participate in classroom activities.
4. Smaller class sizes allow for potential disciplinary problems to be identified and resolved more quickly.
5. Smaller classes result in higher teacher morale and reduced stress.
6. Less retention, fewer referrals to special education, and fewer dropouts are the ultimate rewards of class-size reduction.

In support of small class-size, Blatchford et. Al., (2002) commented that in small classes, there exist individualization of teaching and less time spent in management or procedural activities, hence more teaching overall.

To contradict the positive influence of Teaching and Learning English Language in Small Class-Size, Bourke (1986) affirmed that smaller classes were correlated with a smaller number of teacher-students interactions and fewer questions from students. He added that there would be less lecturing from the teacher and more waiting for responses when teachers asked questions.

### **1.5. General problems of large size classes**

It is very difficult to enumerate all the problems regarding large size ELT classes. However, there are certain problems which may look small from a general point of view but may affect teaching-learning process badly. Certainly, there are certain problems that are related to all the large size English teaching classes and cannot be ignored at any time.

#### **1.5.1. Discipline**

Teachers face difficulties in controlling their students, who make noise especially when they do activities or finish before the others, then the teachers cannot stop them. A disciplined class is an ideal field for a teacher to impart knowledge. Discipline is only

possible if the strength of a class is normal. In a class of 40 students and more, it is impossible to maintain discipline. May be a teacher is very competent in his profession, his preparation is satisfactory, is smart and punctual; but will fail to control and maintain discipline in those large size classes. Hayes (1997) stated that: "...it is noisy, some students who aren't interested in class will disturb the others...when we have the activities in class, it will be difficult to control or to solve their problems." (p. 109). We can say discipline problems are common in overcrowded classes in a way that the teacher should have enough proficiency on how to prevent those problems from occurring in his class.

### **1.5.2. Discomfort**

Many teachers, as well as students, may find themselves uncomfortable when teaching/learning in an overcrowded class; they might feel unhappy and hopeless. Because of the overall hostile situation. Teachers cannot keep proper eye contact with the class. They cannot speak constantly at a high pitch. They cannot involve their students in learning activities. If they cannot do so, they get nervous, then, teaching-learning process will not be in a natural manner. Hayes (1997) argues that: "Large size of class makes me frustrated and tired and I feel hopeless to manage the class successfully." (p. 109). Thus, it is important that the class must be a comfortable place to gain successful interaction.

### **1.5.3. Individual attention**

Due to the large number of students as well as the shortage of time, teachers cannot pay attention to every individual student in the class. Ur (1996) argues that "I can't get to know and follow the progress of all the individuals in my class; they are too many of them, and they're all so different." (p. 303)

Teachers emphasize that it is impossible to concentrate on all students and therefore not enough reinforcement will be made to encourage all to participate in



different activities. Participants in Al- Jarf's (2006) study commented that "due to the size of the class they do not have enough time to pay attention to each and give every student a chance to speak and participate" (p. 24). In words, such context makes some students, especially the shy or weak, to be neglected and left behind. Kennedy & Kennedy (1996) shared a similar view, as they believed it is difficult to overcome all of what occur in class when the number of students exceeds a certain limit.

#### **1.5.4. Evaluation of students' progress**

It has been proved in various researches that is very difficult for the teachers to carry out proper evaluation in a class of large size. The teachers consider it very challenging task to supervise and give appropriate feedback to a class that exceeds forty student per class, in addition, it is hard to check all the exercises done by each student in the classroom. It becomes almost impossible to correct their mistakes. Pair work, group work, and trio work becomes impossible. It is troublesome for the teacher to mark too many scripts of home assignments. However, all this evaluation is essential in the teaching system.

#### **1.5.5. Teaching-learning process**

In a class that is overcrowded, the teaching-learning process gets very slow. There are many distractions and disturbances. The teacher is not audible to the students. Because of overcrowding, there is much noise in the class. The students find it easier to talk with each other than to ask the teacher and listening to him. As a result, the class lacks the proper teacher-student relationship and the teaching-learning process gets disturbed. Hayes (1997) points out:

...I am not sure that my students get what I have taught exactly. It is difficult to control the students and I don't know what they have learned because there are a lot of students. Some may understand, but some may be not understood and the teacher does not know what to do. (p. 109)

### **1.5.6. Teaching through lecture method only**

In large size classes, teachers are forced to depend on lecture method only. McKeachie (1980) notes that class size and method are almost inextricably intertwined. Thus, the research on class size and that on lecture vs. discussion overlap. Large classes are most likely to use lecture methods and less likely to use discussion than small classes.

Consequently, this leads to the question of how learning outcomes achieved by courses taught with the lecture method only in large class settings compare with outcomes achieved in smaller sized classes, where the discussion method is more likely to be employed.

In fact, Lecture method is not appropriate for teaching English. (Bligh, 1972) based on his extensive review of the research literature argued that “The balance of evidence favours this conclusion: Use lectures to teach information. Do not rely on them to promote thought, change attitudes, or behavioural skills if you can help it.” (p. 20).

By teaching through lecture method, teachers or rather their skills thus becomes the medium for transmitting knowledge orally and the student receives it and accumulates it. The diagram, then, becomes enlarged and proceeds.

In the lecture method, the teacher needs to make sure that the decoding of information by the student is correct and the decoded message is learned. The feeding of information by the teacher is based on the assumption that it is valid. Lecture method needs to be modified and in certain situations substituted with alternative methodologies. Therefore, we can conclude that the lecture method cannot be found suitable all the time in almost all the English language activities and lessons.

A vast of other problems of large classes typically mentioned in the literature are summarized in the table below:

<b>Problem</b>	<b>References</b>
<p><b>Learning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Less effective learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coleman (1989d) ; Ur (1996)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Management/Activities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discipline</li> <li>• Absentee students</li> <li>• Organising activities</li> <li>• Reliance on lectures and drills</li> <li>• Avoidance of some activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coleman (1989d); Dudley-Evans &amp; St. John (1998); Hayes (1997); Li (1998); LoCastro (1989); Nolasco &amp; Arthur (1986); Peachey (1989); Sabandar (1989); Ur (1996); Woodward (2001)</li> <li>• George (1991)</li> <li>• Harmer (1998); LoCastro (1989)</li> <li>• Coleman (1989e) ; Hubbard et al. (1983)</li> <li>• McLeod (1989); Peachey (1989)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Physical/Practical</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Space</li> <li>• Discomfort</li> <li>• Students can't see/hear</li> <li>• Noise</li> <li>• Timing</li> <li>• Time for student presentations</li> <li>• Provision of materials</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coleman (1989d); Nolasco &amp; Arthur (1986); Peachey (1989); Woodward (2001)</li> <li>• Hayes (1997)</li> <li>• Long (1977)</li> <li>• LoCastro (1989); Nolasco &amp; Arthur (1986); Woodward (2001)</li> <li>• Peachey (1989); Sabandar (1989)</li> <li>• Watson Todd (1999)</li> <li>• Coleman (1989d); Dudley-Evans &amp; St. John (1998); Nolasco &amp; Arthur (1986); Peachey (1989)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Affective factors</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achieving rapport</li> <li>• Impersonalisation</li> <li>• No sense of community</li> <li>• Teacher discomfort</li> <li>• Intimidating atmosphere</li> <li>• Learning names</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harmer (1998); Holliday (1996); Hubbard et al. (1983); LoCastro (1989); McLeod (1989)</li> <li>• Carbone (1996d)</li> <li>• Hubbard et al. (1983)</li> <li>• Coleman (1989d)</li> <li>• Harmer (1998)</li> <li>• Dudley-Evans &amp; St. John (1998); Hubbard et al. (1983); LoCastro (1989)</li> </ul>

<p><b>Interaction</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Few opportunities to speak</li> <li>• Giving attention to individuals</li> <li>• Focus on the action zone</li> <li>• Increased use of the mother tongue</li> <li>• Less interesting lessons</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coleman (1989d) ; Hubbard et al. (1983); Ur (1996)</li> <li>• Coleman (1989d); Dudley-Evans &amp; St. John (1998); Hayes (1997); Peachey (1989); Ur (1996); Watson Todd (1999)</li> <li>• Shamim (1996)</li> <li>• Dudley-Evans &amp; St. John (1998); Woodward (2001)</li> <li>• Ur (1996)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Feedback and evaluation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitoring</li> <li>• Giving feedback</li> <li>• Assessment</li> <li>• Marking load</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LoCastro (1989); Peachey (1989)</li> <li>• Dudley-Evans &amp; St. John (1998); George (1991); LoCastro (1989)</li> <li>• Coleman (1989d); Dudley-Evans &amp; St. John (1998); Hayes (1997); Sabandar (1989)</li> <li>• LoCastro (1989); McLeod (1989); Peachey (1989); Ur (1996) Watson Todd (1999)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Miscellaneous</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More mixed abilities</li> <li>• Getting feedback from students</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dudley-Evans &amp; St. John (1998)</li> <li>• Hayes (1997)</li> </ul>

**Table 1.2: Problems of large classes**

### **1.6. Methods and strategies of teaching in large size classes**

Teaching in classes of large size may not be a big problem as far as the scientific specialties are concerned. In such specialties, the students can easily be taught in the form of groups. However, teaching English in a class of large size is really a difficult task.

The following tools and strategies can help the English language teachers to teach in a class of large size.

#### **1.6.1. Managing pair and group work**

Pair work is an activity in which two students work together. When the number of students exceed two it is, then, called a group-work. These two types are very important

while teaching a large class. For example, the teacher through these techniques can maximize participation, make clear instructions, and give feedback. Harmer (2001) states:

Pair (and group work) will help to provoke quite students into talking. When they are with one or perhaps two or three other students, they are not under so much pressure as they are if asked to speak in front of the whole class. (p. 116)

Managing pair and group work is needed more in some activities, but teachers, in some cases, may find difficulties. So that, Harmer (2001) adds 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." (p, 117). As a result, teachers should be creative in finding different ways of making groups.

### **1.6.2. Managing discipline**

Discipline is very important in every class. Managing discipline in overcrowded class is not as an easy task; it demands some clear rules. Establishing a code of behaviour that is created by teacher and learners together. Kunkam et al. (2007) state that it should state clear basic rules of conduct that learners understand, such as; 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.

In addition, teachers should collaborate with the students and build up a good learning atmosphere in large classes. According to Hess (2001), in the large class working together is needed, many students value the 'safe' learning atmosphere in large classes. Therefore, teachers of large classes should take advantage of this, and build up a collaborative and lively learning atmosphere.

Furthermore, teachers should benefit from the advantage of the size of the large classes. Xu (2007) argued that when we consider a large class as a better opportunity for the teacher, we take only the positive aspects of such a class. Teaching practice and

experience of many who have ever been teaching in large classes show that it is not only possible to build up a good learning atmosphere in large classes, but also feasible to take advantage of the large class size. Moreover, (Richards and Rodgers, 2001) see that a teacher should communicate, discuss and share regularly the classroom management techniques with other teachers who are involved in large class teaching.

### **1.6.3. Managing students' anonymity**

The teacher, according to Yule (1996), must know the names of at least some of his students using different ways. He can try to find ways to be accessible to students on a personal level using different strategies, for example, arrive early and chat with students who are already there, greet students as they come in, stay a few minutes after class to answer individual questions, consider lecturing or leading discussion from different points of the classroom to give students the feeling of being in the middle of the action rather than simply being an observer, etc. When teacher asks questions, he can start on a personal level, asking students to share their own experiences with a idea, and then move to the more abstract experience. As well as students had better to know each other to not feel neglected and isolated.

### **1.6.4. Managing teaching method**

Management of teaching methods is a technique that may help English teachers maximize interaction as well as achieve better learning outcomes. Choosing the best method for teaching English as a foreign language in a large class may prevent teachers from suffering from so many problems related to overcrowded classrooms. As an example, (Richards and Rodgers, 2001) stated that remembering the characteristics of some of the worst lectures that teachers had as they were students and tries not to repeat them. These might include reading from the text or taking material straight from the assigned text only, 60 minutes of non-stop lecturing, outdated or incorrect information

presented, etc. moreover, the use of audio-visual aids should be presented in a pleasant way that keeps students focused with the lesson. At the end of the class, summarize the important points which were covered during the lecture and give the students some idea of what to look forward to for the next time.

### **Conclusion**

It can be seen that a large class is a relative concept. Problems and difficulties of teaching associated with large classes can also be found in smaller classes. Teachers need to view large classes from a different perspective and recognize that despite many disadvantages they can also provide many opportunities for teaching and learning. Class size is not the determining factor of teaching efficiency. Teachers need to enhance their innovative awareness and capabilities for developing effective ways for dealing with large classes based on the characteristics of large classes.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Classroom Interaction**

#### **Introduction**

In the field of second language acquisition, interaction has long been considered important in language learning. It requires in the process of Foreign Language Learning the presence of two or more participants who collaborate in achieving communication. Interaction is a way of learning in general and developing the language skills in particular. In this chapter, we shall deal with the notion of interaction as a strategy that takes place in classrooms, Then, We will explain the main types, aspects and principles of interaction, in addition, we may talk on the most important strategies of classroom interaction and last but not least, the role of class arrangement in classroom interaction. Finally, we will shed light on the relationship between class size and teacher-student interaction.

#### **2.1. Classroom interaction**

Classroom interaction is one of the primary means by which learning is accomplished in classroom. Interaction is occurred every day in class activities between teacher and his students'. Wagner (1994) defines the concept of interaction as “reciprocal events that require at least two objects and two actions. Interaction occurs when these objects and events naturally influence one another” (p. 8). Therefore, interactions do not occur only from one side, there must be mutual influence through giving and receiving messages in order to achieve communication as well as through comprehensible output from the teacher. Interaction commonly defines as a kind of action that occurs as two or more objects has an effect upon one another. The idea of a two-way effect is essential in the concept of interaction, as opposed to a one-way causal effect. ([www.wikipedia.com](http://www.wikipedia.com)).



The concept of interaction has a significant importance in the classroom too; it is an essential part in learning and teaching processes. Allwright and Baily (1991) argued that interaction is something people can do together i.e. collectively. Obviously, in the classroom it is considered as important for the teacher to manage who should talk, to whom, on what topic, in what language and so on. However, none of this can change the fact that classroom interaction focuses on the learners' cooperation.

## **2.2. Types of classroom interaction**

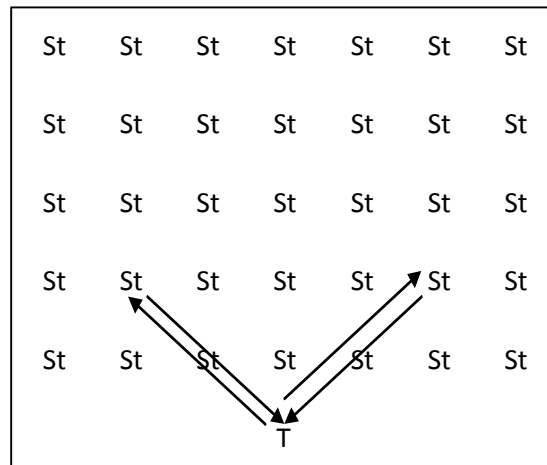
There are four types of interaction: learner-course content interaction, learner-learner interaction, learner-teacher interaction and learner-technology interaction. We shall focus in this research work only on two main types. Thurmond (2003) defines interaction as:

The learners' engagement with the course content, other learners, the instructor and the technological medium used in the course. True interactions with other learners, the instructor and technology results in a reciprocal exchange of information. The exchange of information intended to enhance knowledge development in the learning environment. (p.4)

### **2.2.1. Teacher-Learner Interaction**

This type of interaction as Coulthard (1977) mentions has received a great deal from teachers in a wide range of disciplines. It happens between the teacher and one learner or many other learners, that is to say a teacher takes a part in such interaction. He negotiates with his students the content of the course, asks questions, uses students' ideas, lectures, gives directions, criticizes or justifies student talk responses. On the other hand, the students will benefit by drawing on the experience of their teachers on how well to interact in the manner that is most effective. Scrivener (2005, p. 85) made the following

diagram to show clearly how the interaction happens between the teacher and the students.



**Figure 2.1: Interaction between teacher and student**

**Key:**

↗ Teacher interacts with student

↖ Student interacts with teacher

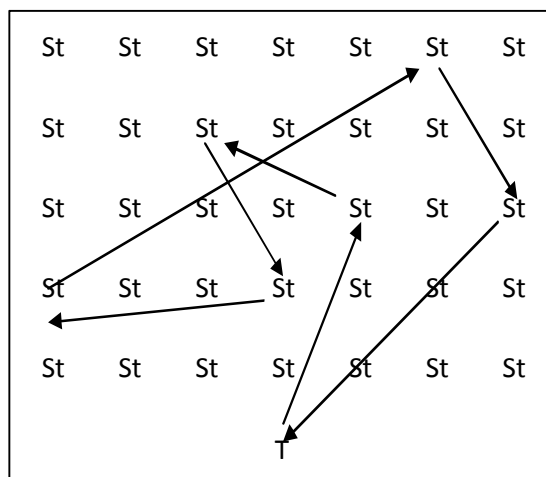
**St** Student

**T** Teacher

During teacher-learner interaction, the students seek to demonstrate their speaking and listening skills in front of their teachers that is why, he should take into account his way of interacting that is very crucial in learning and teaching. According to Harmer (2009), teachers should focus on three things when they talk with their students. Firstly, they must pay attention to the kind of the language the students are able to understand, i.e. teachers should provide an output that is comprehensible for the level of all the students. Secondly, the teachers must think about what they will say to their students, hence the teacher speech is as a resource for learners knowledge. Finally, teachers also have to identify the ways in which they will speak such as the voice, tone and intonation.

### 2.2.2. Learner-Learner Interaction

Many theories of learning maintain that knowledge is actively constructed and skills improved through interactions between learners as it is shown in the diagram in **figure 2.2** done by Scrivener (2005: 86)



**Figure 2.2: Interaction between students**

**Key:**



Student-student interaction

**St**

Student

**T**

Teacher

Johnson (1995) supports that if learner-learner interaction is well structured and managed, then it can be an important factor of cognitive development, educational achievement of students and emerging social competencies. It can also develop the learners' capacities through collaborative works. Therefore, learners will establish social relationship through this kind of interaction, where the sense of learning community is promoted and isolation is reduced in the classroom.

Naegle (2002, p. 128) adds, "Talking students with their peers about the content of the course is a powerful way for them to reinforce what they have learned." Teachers then must encourage such type of interaction between learners because it is among the fastest ways that promotes active learning and reduces passiveness between students.

### **2.3. Aspects of classroom interaction**

Classroom interaction involves two main aspects, which are negotiation of meaning and feedback, if these two elements are not available in the classroom, then we cannot speak of a successful learning through interaction. Ellis and Foto (1999:09) say, “Interaction contributes to acquisition through the provision of negative evidence and through opportunities for modified output.” Interaction then is rich of meaning negotiation where the learners can receive feedback from their interlocutors.

#### **2.3.1. Negotiation of meaning**

Studies on interaction between learners focus on the interactive discourse between learners engaged in second language learning tasks where negotiation of meaning is the focal point. Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005) define negotiation of meaning as the verbal exchanges that occur when the speakers seek to prevent the breakdown of the communication. They add that negotiation of meaning is the central discourse structure. The learners in the classroom then should make the linguistic output more comprehensible for the other learners in the class, so that they can engage with them in the interaction. However, if there is a lack of comprehension, different processes can be focused on to repair the interaction. Mackey (2007, p. 12) asserts, “Through processes of repetition, segmentation and rewording, interaction can serve to draw learners’ attention to form-meaning relationship and provide them with additional time to focus on encoding meaning.”

Repetition involves repeating the students’ exact speech as it is when the others do not understand. Segmentation is another process for repairing a negotiation; the students repeat the utterance by dividing it into linguistic segments with a rising or falling intonation. Rewording means rephrasing the original utterance, i.e. using other simple words. Therefore, instead of all these terms, clarification can be considered as an

umbrella term to cover these processes. The opportunities of meaning negotiation helps English language learners in three main ways. First, as suggested by Ur (1996), it helps learners to get comprehensible input that is to say it facilitates comprehension. One way in which this takes place, when the negotiation breaks down and learners seek to segment the input into units so that they can understand them. Second, negotiation of meaning provides learners with feedback on how to use the second language. For example, teachers very often correct students' mistakes when they discuss so that they use the target language accurately. Finally, negotiation of meaning encourages learners to adjust, manipulate and modify their personal output, because a successful negotiation occurs when learners produce outputs that are comprehensible and therefore target-like (Pica 1992, cited in Ellis 2003).

To sum up, in negotiation of meaning the students will focus on the form as well, because negotiation involves feedback and modification to input and output when the students attempt to repeat again their misunderstanding, which is sometimes due to problems with language use.

### **2.3.2. The Role of feedback**

Researchers have suggested that oral feedback is one of the key beneficial aspects of interaction which can promote learning in general. According to Mackey (2007) through interaction that involves feedback, the attention of the learners are paid to the form of errors and are pushed to create modification. In order achieve better interaction and to develop their skills, learners must notice the errors and recognize them for correction. Thus, for some researchers attention is very crucial for learning. Feedback may occur from learners, i.e. learners are able to correct and call each other's attention to the errors. In doing so, they rarely replace their interlocutors' correct form with

incorrect form. However, feedback from teachers can be different from the learners' one, because teachers employ many types of correction strategies.

Mackey (2007) suggests two forms of feedback, an explicit and implicit feedback. Explicit feedback is defined as any feedback that states overtly that learners do not use the second language correctly in their speech; it is called also metalinguistic feedback because teachers provide the learners with the linguistic form of their errors. Whereas implicit feedback, refers to the corrective feedback that includes requests for clarification or recasts, in other words, teachers rephrase the learners' utterance by changing one or more sentence component. Recently, many studies have shown that the explicit feedback is more effective than the implicit feedback, this means that in explicit feedback, the teacher draws the students' attention directly to the errors so that the students do not repeat them. However, in implicit feedback, the teacher asks students to reformulate their output to be understood and this is an indirect corrective feedback since the teacher does not point the errors directly. In brief, the feedback role of interaction is of crucial importance. Students often want to know how they are doing in relation to their peers. However, teachers should not deal with all oral production of the students and during all the time, they should make decisions when and how to react to the students' errors so that the interactive activity will not break down each time.

## **2.4. Strategies for better classroom interaction**

To have better interaction in the classroom, teachers have focus on the important strategies that reinforce it.

### **2.4.1. Asking questions**

In EFL classrooms, where learners often do not have a great number of tools for initiation and maintaining language, the teacher's questions provide necessary stepping-stones to communication. Appropriate questioning in an interactive classroom can fulfill

a number of different functions. Teacher questions give students the opportunity to produce comfortably language without having to risk initiating language themselves. (Lynch, 1991) define a question as a semantic class used to seek information on a specific subject.

Students become afraid when they have to initiate conversation or topics for discussion. Teacher questions can serve to initiate a chain reaction of student interaction among themselves. Asking many questions in a classroom will not by any means guarantee stimulation of interaction. Brock (1986) stated that certain types of questions might actually discourage interactive learning. For example, too much time spent on ‘display questions’ (question for which the answer is already known to the teacher) students can easily get exhausted of artificial contexts that do not involve genuine seeking of information.

Two major factors that has been considered in an interactive classroom is wait time, or the amount of time the teacher pauses after a question and before pursuing the answer with further questions or nomination of another student (Chaudron, 1988). Research have indicated that additional wait-time of about 5 seconds should especially allow second language learners a better chance to give their response, and it may fit better with their cultural norms of interaction.

#### **2.4.2. Students’ engagement**

Forcing students’ engagement in class is one way to keep them concentrated with the presented task in class. EFL teachers have to find the appropriate way or strategy to keep his learners more attentive, thus, fosters classroom interaction. Moreover, student engagement is viewed as the ability to encourage students to learn (Harlin, Roberts, Briers, Mowen, & Edgar, 2007). Teachers who encourage students to learn are viewed as having teaching efficacy beliefs, that is, they believe in their abilities to produce

desired student learning. (Wolters & Daugherty, 2007) found that teachers' sense of efficacy "was best conceptualized as three related dimensions reflecting teachers' sense of efficacy for instruction, management and engagement." (p. 190). Additionally, the teacher's sense of efficacy for student engagement suggests the conviction of an individual that he/she assists students to become and remain involved, invested or motivated for learning.

Students who are not engaged and not interested in learning are easily discouraged; therefore, teachers who can motivate them to learn are needed. A great deal of English as a foreign language research emphasizes motivation's importance for engaging students in learning tasks. Motivated students are focused and engaged as they learn. The ability to motivate involves "knowing what kinds of tasks support and feedback encourage students to put forth effort and strive to improve" (Darling and Baratz-, 2006, p.8). Engaging students in learning is important; various researchers agree that students should participate and make decisions that will benefit them in their careers. Fredericks, Blumenfeld, and Paris (2004) classified 44 studies of engagement into three categories: behavioral engagement encompasses doing work and following the rules; emotional engagement includes interests, values, and emotions; and cognitive engagement incorporates motivation, effort, and strategy use.

Engaging students into the learning process, can reduce a great amount of certain problems teachers are facing the class especially in overcrowded classes. As an example, it can reduce noise making, because when students are focused in the lesson there will be less noise. In addition, class engagement can empower teacher-student interaction.

Students' engagement can be achieved through the use of different strategies from the part of the teacher, as a controller of the class. As Ramaley & Zia (2005, p. 8) suggests that successful, student-engagement often, combine these aspects:



1. Learning that is relevant, real, and intentionally interdisciplinary – at times moving learning from the classroom into the community.

2. Technology-rich learning environments – not just computers, but all types of technology, including scientific equipment, multi-media resources, industrial technology, and diverse forms of portable communication technology.

3. Positive, challenging, and open – sometimes called “transparent” learning climates – that encourage risk-taking and guide learners to reach co-articulated high expectations. Students are involved in assessment for learning and of learning.

4. Collaboration among respectful “peer-to-peer” type relationships between students and teachers (horizontal organization model); Professional Learning Communities working together to plan, research, develop, share, and implement new research, strategies, and materials.

5. A culture of learning – teachers are learning *with* students. Language, activities and resources focus on learning and engagement first, and achievement second.

## **2.5. Classroom seating arrangement and its role in classroom interaction**

Changing the room’s physical layout may make the classroom a more attractive place to study since it may also make cooperative work easier, revitalize fatigued students, reduce stress within the classroom and facilitate learning.

For each activity, teachers undertake in class, they should consider what grouping; seating and standing arrangements are most suitable. It is difficult for students and especially for young learners to sit still for a long time. It is essential to include activities that involve some movement. However, teachers should be aware of a constant movement every five minutes that might be, for most students, uncomfortable (Scrivener, 2005).

The organization of the classroom is of great importance. In the past in many classrooms, desks were arranged in neat rows facing the teacher's desk. This traditional way of organization limited student interaction and made group activities more challenging. Luckily, these days are gone and teachers are more imaginative in setting the classroom. However, placing tables in orderly rows still occurs in classrooms, particularly in college and upper elementary through to high school settings.

There are a number of approaches to seating arrangements in the classroom. Harmer (2001) suggests the following types of seating:

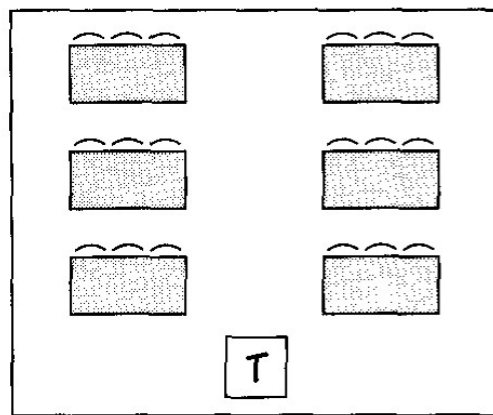
**Orderly rows:** when the students sit in rows in the classroom, there are obvious advantages. It means that the teacher has a clear view of all the students and the students can all see the teacher. It makes lecturing easier; enabling the teacher to maintain eye contact with the people he or she is talking to. Orderly rows imply teachers working with the whole class. Some activities are especially suited to this kind of organization: explaining a grammar point, watching a video, using a board etc.

**Circles and horseshoe:** In a horseshoe, the teacher will probably be at the open end of arrangement since that may well be where the board, overhead projector or tape recorder are situated. In a circle, the teacher's position – where the board is situated – is less dominating. Classes that are arranged in a circle make quite a strong statement about what the teacher and the students believe in. With all the people sitting in a circle, there is a far greater feeling of equality – the teacher has a much greater opportunity to get close to the students.

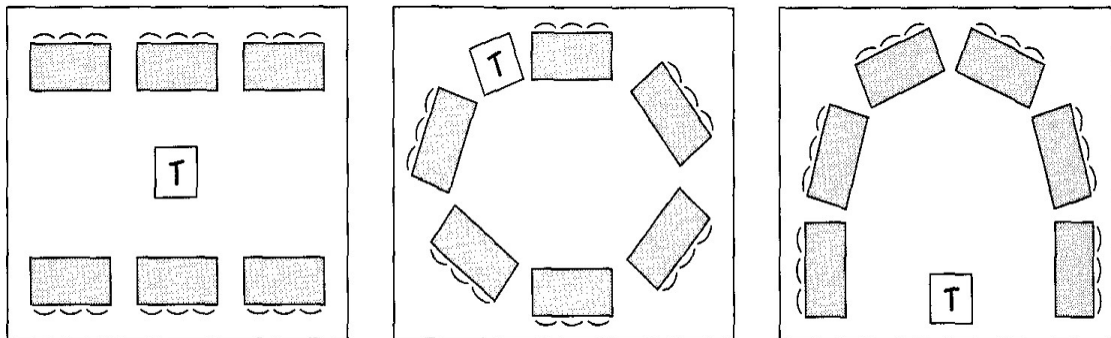
**Separate tables:** When students sit in small groups at individual tables, the atmosphere in the class is much less hierarchical than in the other arrangements. However, this arrangement is not without its own problems. Primarily, students may not always want to be with the same colleagues, indeed their preferences may change over

time. Secondly, it makes “whole-class” teaching more difficult, since the students are more diffuse and separated (p. 19-20).

Scrivener (2005) states that changing students’ arrangements has many advantages and help students cooperate with different people. He also agrees that in a circle or a horseshoe there is a much greater sense of equality and it increases student interaction. Moreover, in these seating arrangements, weaker students have less chance of hiding themselves and therefore the stronger students dominate less (p, 87-88).



**Figure 2.3. Traditional row-based seating plan. (Source: Scrivener, 2005, p. 88).**



**Figure 2.4. Alternative seating plans. (Source: Scrivener, 2005, p. 88).**

Although there are many ways of arranging classroom seating, most researchers agree that there is no universal correct room organization. Pitner (2013) further adds that the best arrangement is one that fits the teacher’s style, fits the classroom dimensions, and feels comfortable to the students.

Another important factor, which is related to seating arrangement, is the teachers and students movements. Generally, a teacher moving around the classroom is more alert and is able to organize the classroom events more effectively (Lemlech, 1999). Walking around the classroom helps teachers motivate students to participate in classroom activities, it also helps maintain attention and discipline. However, Gower, Phillips and Walters (2008) point out that too much movement from the teacher might distract students especially shy one. An important point to remember is that students should also be allowed to move around in order to do work that is more active and to enable cooperation with others.

## **2.6. Effect of class size on teacher-student interaction**

Interaction between teacher and students may be affected by many aspects; class size is one of the most important aspects that influence this process. Limited physical space due to large classes results in an increase in student misbehavior, increase in safety issues, and decrease in instructional activity variety (Blatchford et al., 2007). Adding to the research regarding class size and classroom management many studies are analyzing how the interactions between teachers and students are affected by larger numbers. Previous studies on the issue have argued that in smaller classes, teachers were able to interact more with their students and prevent discipline problems from occurring.

Student-to-teacher interactions are affected by class size, which affects the instruction of students and the classroom management of students. In large classes, teachers are not able to build the relationships that they are able to build in smaller classes (Erdogan et al., 2010). Being able to interact with their students helps teachers decrease the amount of time they have to devote to classroom management issues and increase the amount of time they can devote to instruction. By simply reducing the number of

students, educational leaders could enhance the learning process because teachers will be able to devote more time to instruction.

Teacher-to-student interactions were also found to be affected by class size (Blatchford et al., 2007). Large number of students may distract teacher's attention to all students, he may not be able to interact to a great number of student thus interaction between him and his students is reduced.

## **Conclusion**

Teaching English in large classes is presently still not being preferred by the most of teachers. In other words, many teachers choose not to, but have to teach in large classes, because they take it for granted that many problems arise along with the increase in class size. The large size of the class should not be an excuse of not to search for an appropriate methods and techniques to create an effective teaching or to apply for solutions for improving teaching-learning process. However, teachers besides their need to serve a great effort to choose then to apply the appropriate method in such activity, they need mainly the cooperation of the students in this task. In managing large size classes, where the individual attention to the students as individuals and to the interaction between them and the teacher absent, the need to a fieldwork has emerged.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Field Work**

#### **Introduction**

The present study is about eliciting teachers and students' opinions about overcrowded classrooms and its effects on teacher-student interaction. Since teachers and students feedback about the two variables is crucial to test the stated hypothesis, the researcher have addressed two questionnaires for both teachers and students.

This chapter is devoted to the analysis of both teachers and students' questionnaire. First we will describe both questionnaires, than we will explain how the questionnaire was administered, after that we analyze the results and finally we interpret and discuss those results, lastly we finish with a small conclusion to the chapter.

#### **3.1. Students' questionnaire**

To understand more fully whether overcrowded classes has an effect on teacher-student interaction, a short questionnaire was designed to gather opinions of thirty (30) student chosen randomly from the department of English at Biskra university.

##### **3.1.1. Administration of the questionnaire**

The questionnaire was given in English and run by the researcher during the lecture with the assistance of the teacher; since most of the questions are close one, students took approximately 10-15 minute to answer it. Thus, all the questionnaires were answered and handed back to the researcher.

##### **3.1.2. Description of the questionnaire**

This questionnaire is largely conceptualized based on the review of literature described in the theoretical part pf the present research. The questionnaire is simple and straightforward so that it can be answered by everybody. It consists of 14 question

divided into two sections, the researcher have mainly used the technique of close-ended questions because they are easy to answer and their coding tabulation is straightforward and leaves no room for subjectivity.in this type of questions, respondents are asked to choose from pre-determined answers. In addition to this type, the researcher have used follow-up questions in the form of clarification such “please specify” or “justify your answer”. The researcher avoided open-ended questions because they take more time and concentrate and they are generally left unanswered mainly by less proficient students.

### 3.1.3. Analysis of students’ questionnaire

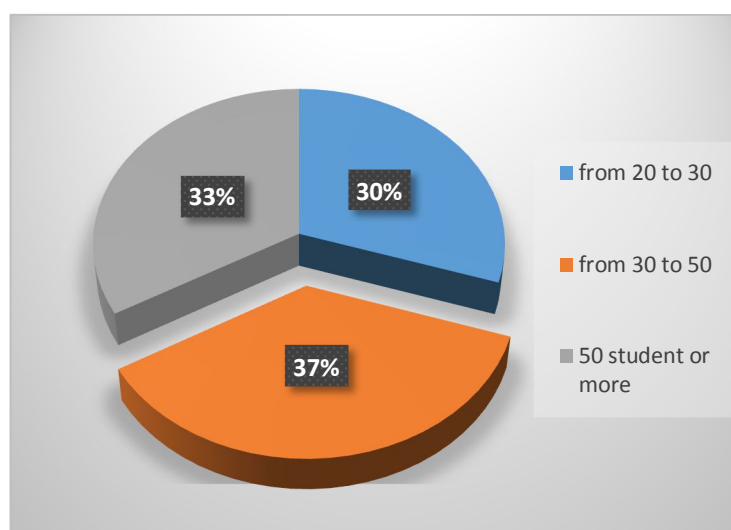
Students’ questionnaire is consisted of 14 question divided into two main sections: section one is overcrowded classrooms and section two is classroom interaction.

#### Section one: overcrowded classrooms

##### Question 1

How many students are there in your class (group)?

- a. From 20 to 30
- b. From 30 to 50
- c. 50 student or more



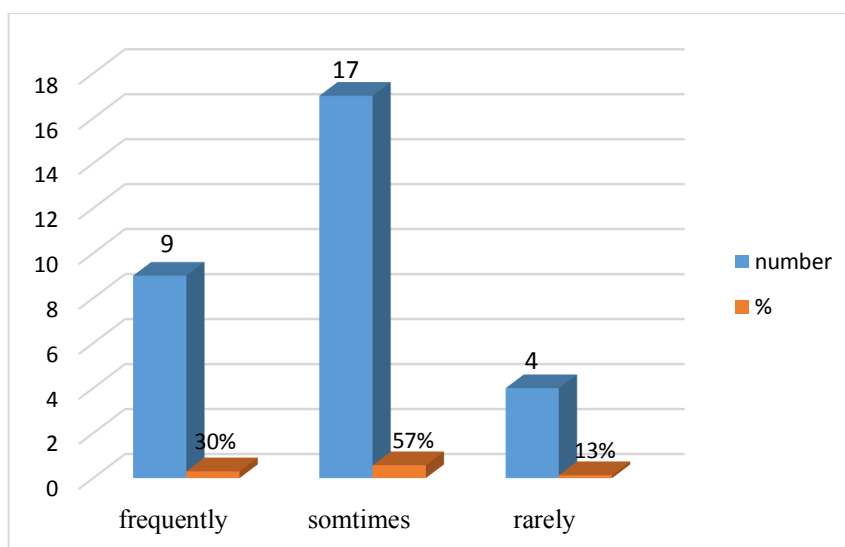
**Figure 3.5. Number of students in class**

It can be seen from the figure 3.5. (37%) of students claim that there are between 30 to 50 student in their class which is remarkably a huge number for EFL class, in the other hand,(33%) of students argued that there is 50 student or more on their class. The remaining students, which represents 30%, state that there is between 20 to 30 students in their class.

### Question 2

Do you feel comfortable in a crowded class?

- Frequently
- Sometimes
- Rarely



**Figure 3.6. Students' attitudes on crowded classes**

As the graph shows, only (9) students frequently feel comfortable in their classes justifying their answers that they get used to the teacher, classmates as well as the whole environment in the class so they do not pay attention to the crowd. However most of students (17) claim that sometimes feel comfortable; on the other hand, (4) students stated that they rarely feel comfortable. Therefore, a total of (21) student do not always feel comfortable in the class; they justified their answers through stating many reasons, noise,

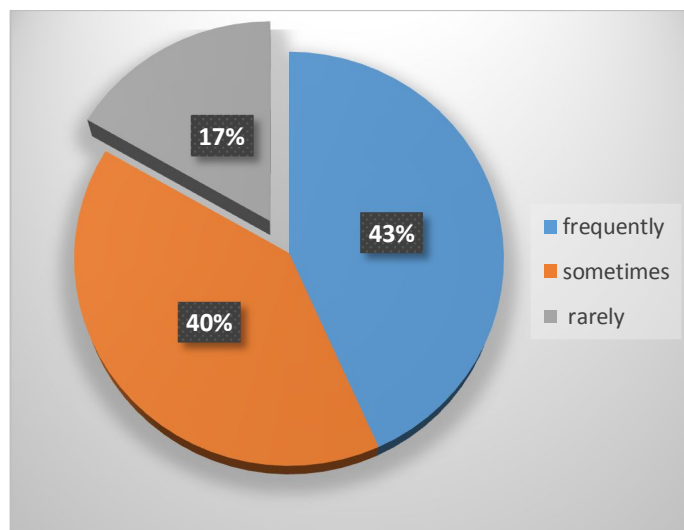


bad organization and arrangement of tables, lack of individual attention and appropriate feedback from the teacher are the most common answers between them.

### Question 3

Is there noise in the class?

- a. Frequently
- b. Sometimes
- c. Rarely



**Figure 3.7. Students' perceptions on the noise in the class**

It is clear from the graph that 43% of students argued that frequently there is noise in their classes; other 40% stated that sometimes there is noise and the least percent 17% claim that rarely hear noise in their class. We can result from these statistics that 83% of overcrowded classes are noisy thus many students do not feel comfortable as stated in the previous question.

### Question 4

In this question, students are asked to tick the response that they agree with most.

<b>Statements</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Total</b>
1. Larger class sizes contribute to a decrease in student achievement.	8	12	8	2	<b>30</b>
2. Mode of instruction can be a factor in student achievement.	11	17	2	0	<b>30</b>
3. Larger classes have more discipline problems.	12	13	4	1	<b>30</b>
4. Language teachers have difficulties grading the large number of students' work, including essays and papers.	13	14	3	0	<b>30</b>

**Table 3.3. Students' degree of agreement**

As illustrated by the table, (12) student agree with the first statement that says that large classes contribute to decrease students achievement,(8) students strongly agree with the stated statement; on the other part, a total of (10) students did not agree with it, (8) students have disagreed whereas the remaining (2) students were strongly disagree. In the second statement, which says that mode of instruction can be a factor in students achievement, we can notice that the majority of students which constitute (17) student agree with the statement, other (11) student strongly agree thus they are aware that mode of instruction have an important role in students achievement. (2) Students disagree with the idea stated whereas no student had strongly disagree.

(12) Student strongly agree that large classes have more discipline problems, furthermore, (13) student agree with the third statement, however, (4) students disagree and just (1) student who strongly disagree. For the fourth statement, no one have strongly disagree, but (3) respondents disagree that large classes have more discipline problems. The results of the fourth sentence, which says that teachers face difficulties in grading the large number of students' assignments, were not surprising. The highest number of students (14) responded that they do agree with the statement, only (3) students disagree

with it, however (13) respondent strongly agree with the proposed sentence, in contrast no student strongly disagree.

### Question 5

In question five we have asked respondents how effective the proposed teaching method for them.

Nº	Teaching method	Very effective	Fairly effective	Not very effective
1	lectures	10	14	6
2	tutorials	8	16	6
3	language lab work	19	6	5
4	pair-work	13	13	4
5	group-work	10	11	9
6	discussions	18	5	7

**Table3.4. Students' opinions about teaching methods**

From the table 3.4. We notice that (10) students find lectures very effective method, yet (14) student find it fairly effective; in contrast (6) respondents find lectures method not very effective way of teaching. In other part, the same results as gained in lectures, (6) students state that tutorials is not very effective way. In addition, we tabulate from the above table that (16) student claim that tutorials are fairly effective way, but (8) students find it very effective method.

For language lab work, the highest number of students (19) argue that it is very effective as a method, whereas, (6) respondent stated that is fairly effective, in contrast (5) students claim that language lab work is not very effective at all. For pair work, (13) student choose very effective as an answer to the question, the same number (13) is noticed for the second choice "fairly effective", the remaining students (4) argued that it is not very effective way. For group work as well as discussions, the obtained results are somehow different; (10) students state that group work is very effective, in contrast, (18) student claim that discussions are very effective method, but just (5) students answered that discussions are fairly effective, in comparison, (11) student view group work as fairly

effective method of teaching. While (9) students view group work as not an effective method, only (7) respondents argue that discussions are not effective.

### Question 6

In this question, students are supposed to tick the appropriate box (yes or no).

N <sup>o</sup>	Questions	Yes	%	No	%
1	Does the teacher give individual attention?	12	40%	18	60%
2	Are most of the modules taught through the lecture method?	20	67%	10	33%
3	Is attendance checked regularly?	15	50%	15	50%
4	Can you easily ask and answer questions?	12	40%	18	60%
5	Does proper teacher-student interaction exist?	8	27%	22	73%
6	Do the weak students feel ignored?	16	53%	14	47%
7	Are good students given more attention?	19	63%	11	37%
8	Are the back zone students neglected?	15	50%	15	50%
9	Do the front zone students dominate the entire class?	18	60%	12	40%
10	Do the teachers know most of the students' names?	13	43%	17	57%
11	Are sufficient assignments given?	12	40%	18	60%
12	Can the teacher check all the assignments?	10	33%	20	67%
13	Is there any other teaching aid available except the blackboard?	12	40%	18	60%

**Table 3.5. Students' opinions on the atmosphere of the class**

It can be seen from the table 3.5 that the majority of students (60%) agree that the teacher do not give individual attention to all of them, while (40%) of students argue that the teacher provide all students with an individual attention. (67%) of students state that most of their modules are taught through lecture method, the other (33%) state that there are other methods in which their modules are being taught and not only lecture method. In statement number three in which we have asked students if the attendance is checked regularly; an equal answer was given by the respondents, that is to say that (50%) said yes and (50%) said no. After that, we asked students if they can easily ask and answer questions, the results were respectively as the following: (60%) answered no and (40%) answered yes. In the following question, we have asked them if proper teacher-student interaction exist in the class; the answers showed that a high percentage (73%) of students

argue that they lack adequate interaction in class and only (27%) reveal that there is interaction.

In statement six and eight, answers were approximately close, students answered respectively that (53%) and (50%) of weak students as well as the back zone students feel ignored. Whereas, (47%) of students stated that weak students do not feel ignored as for the back zone students (50%) of students claim that they are not neglected. However, in question 7 and 9, (63%) of students state that good students are given more attention and (60%) of students state that the class is dominated by the front zone students. On the other hand, for number 7 (37%) said that good student are not given more attention than others and in number 9 (40%) of students said that the front zone do not dominate the whole class. For number 10, (43%) of students reveal that the teacher know most of students' names, however, (57%) of students argue that the teacher do not know most of students names; and this is due to the large number of students so that the teacher cannot remember all the names.

In number 11, (60%) of students state that no sufficient assignments are given by the teacher, on the contrary 40% said that the teacher gives them enough assignments. From the table above we can notice in question number 12, (67%) of respondents claim that the teacher cannot all the assignments, the other students (33%) say yes he can do so. Finally, in number 13 we notice that (40%) said yes, there are other teaching aids available, others (60%) said no there is no extra teaching aid used in the class except the blackboard.

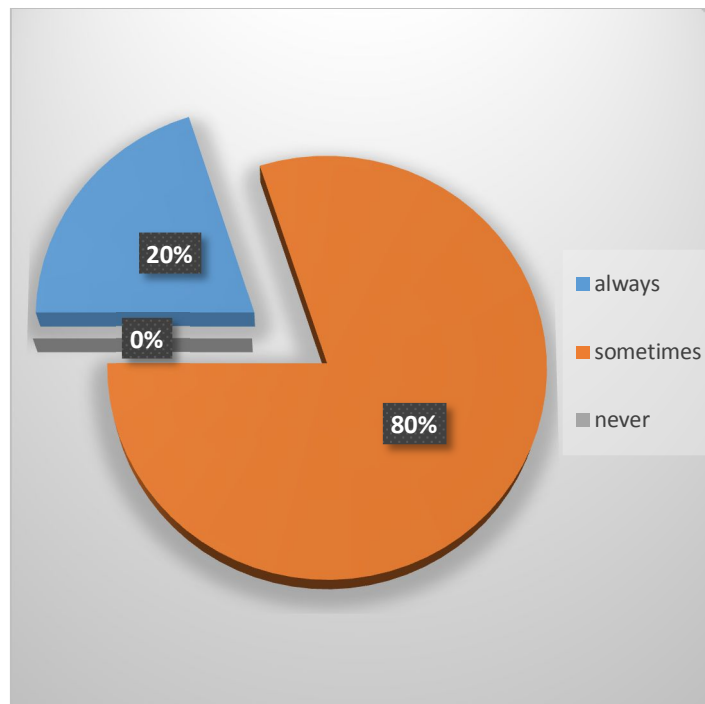
## **Section Two: classroom interaction**

### **Question 7**

How often the teacher gives you the opportunity to interact with him?

- a. Always

- b. Sometimes
- c. never



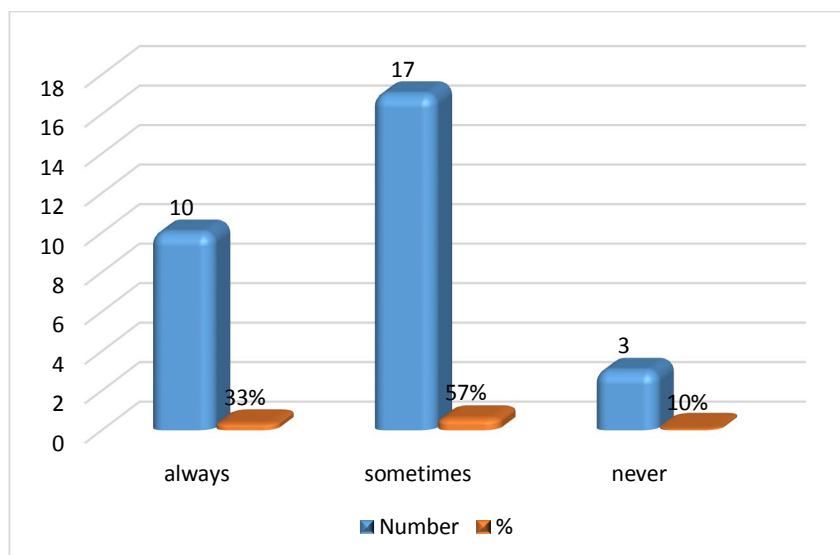
**Figure 3.8. Frequency of teacher-student interaction**

(80%) of students state that they sometimes given the opportunity to interact with their teachers, in the other hand, those who say that they always interact with the teacher represents (20%) of the total number. However, no student answered that the teacher never give them opportunity to interact with him do not represent any percentage (0%) among the total number of students.

### **Question 8**

How often do you interact with your classmates inside the classroom?

- a. Always
- b. Sometimes
- c. Never



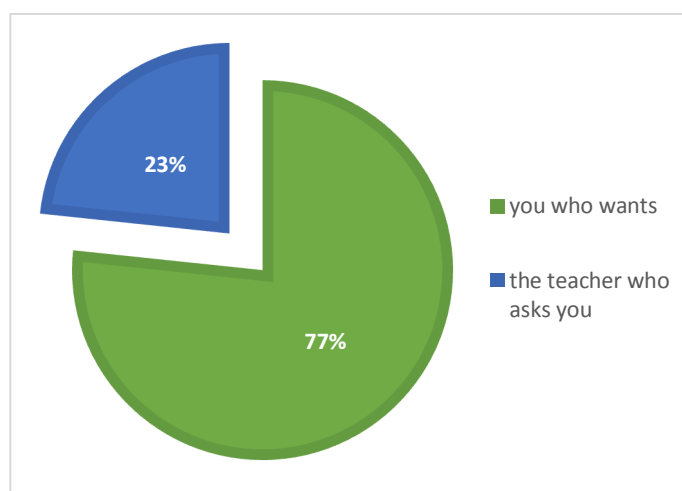
**Figure 3.9. Frequency of learner-learner interaction**

As the graph show, (57%) of students sometimes interact with each other inside the class, whereas (33%) of respondents state that they always interact with their classmates inside the class. The remaining number (10%) claim that they never interact with other learners in class.

### Question 9

When you interact in the classroom, it is

- You who wants
- The teacher asks you



**Figure 3.10. Students' Contribution in Interaction**

It can be seen from the graph 3.10 that the majority of students (77%) interact when they want to, but (23%) students state that they do not interact unless the teacher asks them to do so.

### Question 10

If you do not interact in class, it is because

- a. You are not talkative
- b. The topic is not interesting
- c. The teacher do not motivate
- d. Overcrowded classrooms

<b>Options</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
you are not talkative	4	13%
the topic is not interesting	6	20%
the teacher does not motivate	5	17%
overcrowded classrooms	9	30%
option a+d	1	3%
no.answer	1	3%
option b+c	2	7%
option b+c+d	2	7%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 3.6. Students' Reasons Behind not interacting**

One can notice from the results shown in the table that (30%) of students do not interact in classroom because they are overcrowded, others (20%) do not interact because the topic is not interesting for them. Whereas (17%) of students state that do not interact because the teacher do not motivate them; on the other hand (13%) claim argue that they are not talkative that is why they do not interact a lot in the class. Since this question is

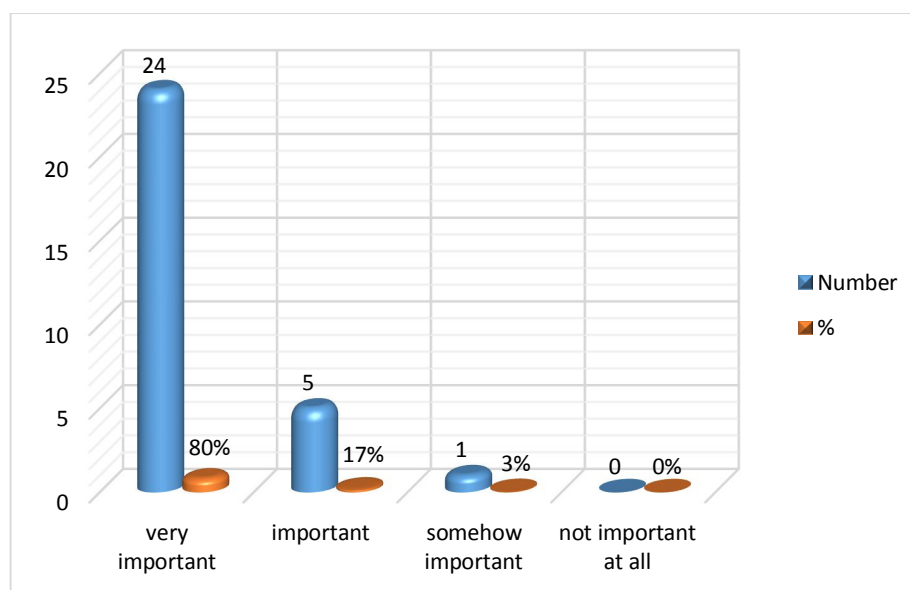


multiple-choice question, some students chose more than one answer. (7%) of students chose answer b and c, also the same percentage of students (7%) chose option b, c and d. (3%) of students tick option a and d. only one student did not answer this question at all.

### Question 11

For you, what is the importance of teacher's feedback in empowering teacher-student interaction?

- Very important
- Important
- Somehow important
- Not important at all



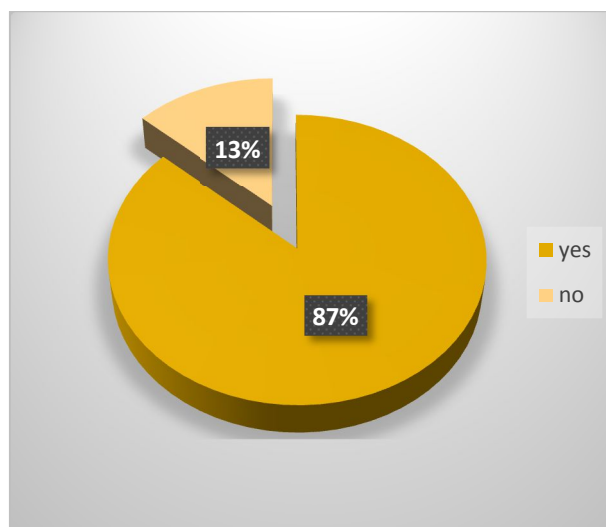
**Figure 3.11. Students' perceptions on teacher's feedback**

The graph 3.11 indicates that (80%) of students state that teacher's feedback is very important, thus they are aware of its role in interaction. (17%) of students argue that it is important, whereas none of them state that teacher's feedback is not important but a few number, which constitute (3%), say that it is just somehow important.

**Question 12**

Are teacher's questions during the lesson helps you to stay engaged (focused)?

- a. Yes
- b. No



**Figure 3.12. Students' opinion about teacher's questions**

As illustrated by the graph, (87%) of students find that teacher's questions during the lesson helps them to stay focused, whereas (13%) of students say that teacher's questions do not help them to stay engaged in the lesson.

**Question 13**

Do you think that arrangement of stuff in the class have a role in teacher-student interaction?

- a. Always
- b. Sometimes
- c. Do not have a role

Options	Number	%
Always	22	73%
Sometimes	5	17%
Do not have a role	3	10%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100%</b>

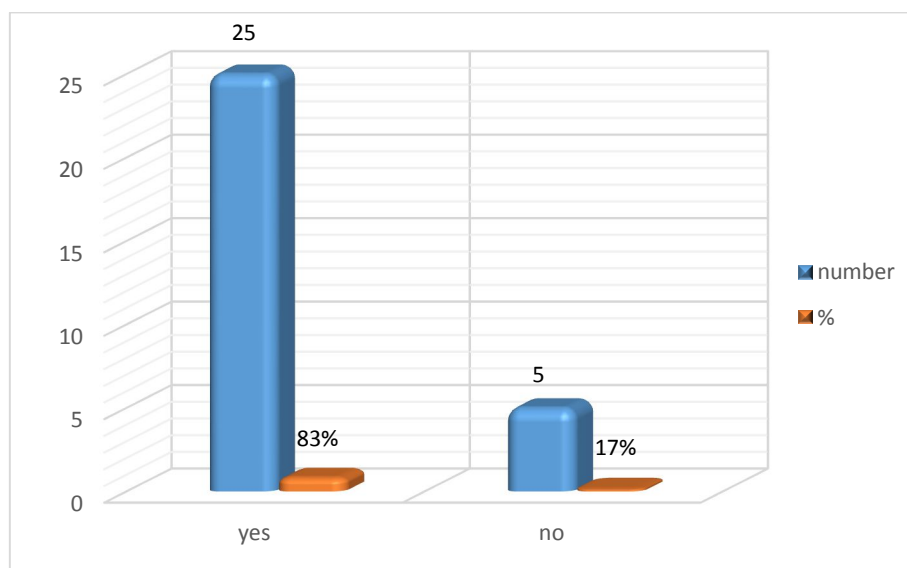
**Table 3.7. Students' perceptions on the role of class arrangement**

The table reveals that a great number of students are aware of role of classroom arrangement in fostering interaction, though (73%) of respondents argue that the organization of stuff in class always have a role in teacher-student interaction. While (10%) of students claim that class arrangement do not have a role in interaction; (17%) of them state that sometimes stuff arrangement has a role in interaction.

#### Question 14

Do overcrowded classrooms affect your interaction with the teacher? (With justification)

- a. Yes
- b. No



**Figure 3.13. Students' opinion on the effect of overcrowded classroom**

The answers tabulated above reveal that (17%) of students state that overcrowded classrooms do not affect their interaction with the teacher, while the highest percentage of students (83%) claims that overcrowded classrooms hinders them from interacting properly with the teacher.

Students who said “yes” justified their answers that because of noise, the teacher feel angry, loses his concentration though he will not perform well, and focuses only on keeping noisy student quitter. In contrast, in small classes the teacher feel comfortable

and more concentrated so he will explain better. Other students said that due to the large number of students, the space between tables as well as between students is very restricted so the teacher cannot move around to check the assignments and give them the appropriate feedback. Some other students state that there is a lack of control and adequate management strategies by the teacher impede the interaction in class. On the other part, students who answered “no” argue that interaction in class depends on students’ level of motivation and abilities to exchange ideas with the teacher; others said that interaction is up to them the number of students do not matter for them. Furthermore, some students said that if the class is well managed, then other factors are not problem.

#### **3.1.4. Discussion of results**

In the first question of section one, the researcher asked respondents how many students are there in in their class. The results obtained in this question reveal that a total of (21) student state that there is more than 30 student in their class (11”b”+10 “c”) thus we can deduce that this number is huge for an English class. Second, we have asked students if they feel comfortable in their class, the majority of them (57%) argue that they sometimes feel comfortable however, (13%) student rarely feel comfortable. Most of students justified that they do not feel at ease because the class is crowded and not organized concerning seating arrangement, also the class is very noisy because of the large number of students thus it makes it difficult for them to hear the teacher especially for those who sit in the back. In addition, students do not feel comfortable because they lack effective feedback from the teacher. For the third question, we want to know from students if there is noise in class, the results were not surprising for the researcher because the results of this question are nearly related to the previous ones. As well, the data obtained in this questions reveal that most of the classes are noisy, so that (43%) of

students answered that frequently there is noise in class; and this is not a good atmosphere for learning a foreign language as English.

Fourth, (12) students in question 4 agree that large classes contribute to decrease in their achievement, as well as students agree that large classes have more discipline problems and the teacher face difficulty in grading students assignments (S3 “13” S4 “14”). Moreover (17) students agree with the second statement which indicates that mode of instruction can be a factor in students achievement. Furthermore, for question 5 the majority of students (19) find that language lab work is very effective method for them, whereas (13) student state that pair-work is a very effective method. Others (18) argue that discussions are effective, while a total of (18) student said that the effective method for them is tutorials (8) or group-work (10) and so for lectures (10). As for question 6, the researcher asked students a set of sub-questions to get their opinion about the atmosphere of the class. 60% of student confess that the teacher cannot supervise all of them, as well as, he cannot provide them with sufficient number of assignments. The same percentage of students agree that there is no variety in teaching aids used during the lesson, also 60% of them claim that they cannot ask and answer questions easily, because of the large number many of them may feel unconfident. The highest number of students (73%) agree that they lack proper interaction with the teacher, though 53% of weak students and 50% of the back zone students feel ignored.

Question 7 which is the first question in section two, the researcher aim to know the frequency of teacher-students interaction; though, the highest percentage (80%) reveal that they sometimes interact with the teacher, the other (20%) state that they always given the opportunity by the teacher to interact with him. So one can deduce that there is a lack of interaction between the teacher and students. A considerable percentage of students (a “33%” b“57%”) in question 8 state that they always/ sometimes interact

with each other, this indicates that students are aware of the importance of student-student interaction. It seems in question 9 that many students (44%) prefer to interact in class by their own and not to be pushed by the teacher to do so.

Students' reasons behind not participating and then not taking a part in any interaction (question 10) are different. (20%) of learners state that the topic is not interesting, this shows clearly that the chosen topic is crucial for a successful interaction. On the other hand (17%) of them say that the teacher does not motivate his students, in such case even the strong participators will show no interest to interaction; but do to the large class, it is time consuming to focus only on motivating students. Other (30%) of the learners do not participate because of the overcrowded classroom, sometimes they cannot hear teacher's questions so that they cannot participate. The remaining (13%) of the students are not talkative; this is because they used to keep silent all of the time and maybe they feel anxious to participate in front of a huge number of classmates.

In question 11, the researcher asks respondents if teacher's feedback important in fostering teacher-student interaction. (24) students state that feedback is very important, whereas, (5) students find just important but only one student state that feedback is somehow important. Thus, most of students know the crucial role feedback plays in empowering their interaction with the teacher. The results obtained in question 12 show that teacher's questions during the lesson really helps them to stay focused and 87% of students agree about that. In contrast 13% claim that teacher's questions have no role in their engagement. Classroom arrangement play an important role in classroom interaction. In question 13, 73% of students confess that the organization of the class always have a role in teacher-student interaction. while 17% state that sometimes class arrangement have a role in interaction, but 10% of students agree that it does not have a role at all. Finally, the researcher asked students if overcrowded classrooms affect

teacher-student interaction or not, 25 students said yes and just 5 students said no. their justifications were close to each other and they are stated as the following:

Noise in class makes teachers stressed and angry so that they focus on keeping students quiet, in addition, with the large number of students, the teacher will be restricted on just finishing the programme and he cannot give a variety of interesting activities thus his interaction with students will be lessened. Furthermore, lack of enough space between tables keeps teacher on the front of the class so that he do not provide them with adequate feedback, which is one type of interaction. Likewise, many students lose attention because the class is no well controlled.

### **3.2. Teachers' questionnaire**

To understand more fully how teachers think about overcrowded classrooms as well as about classroom interaction, also to gain thorough overview about what the relationship between crowded classes and teacher-student interaction is, we have designed a short questionnaire for eight (8) teachers of different modules randomly chosen from the department of English at Biskra university

#### **3.2.1. Administration of the questionnaire**

As stated above, the questionnaire was given to eight (8) teachers of English randomly chosen. Some teachers answered the questionnaire in the same day, others preferred to take it with them .Yet they returned it in the same week but in deferent days.

#### **3.2.2. Description of the questionnaire**

Teachers' questionnaire consists of 10 questions organized into two main sections: in section one we aim at obtaining teachers' perceptions on overcrowded classrooms; however, in section two our purpose is to know their opinion on classroom interaction and its relation with large classes. The questionnaire is a mixture between yes or no

questions and multiple-choice questions as well as we have used follow-up questions where the teachers are supposed to justify their answers.

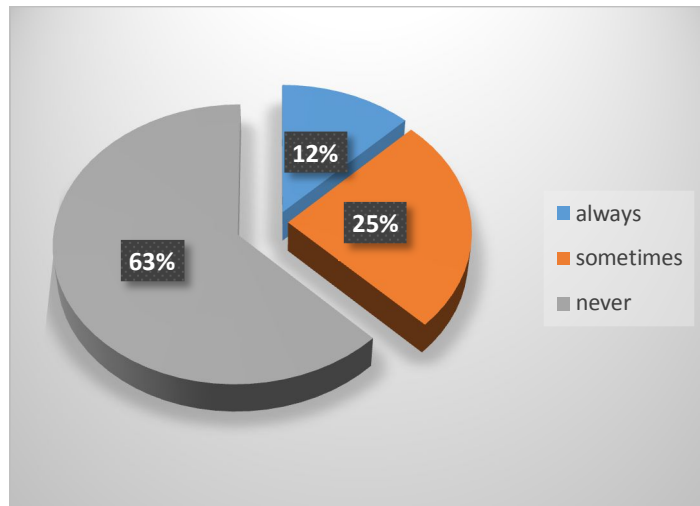
### 3.2.3. Analysis of teachers' questionnaire

#### Section one: overcrowded classrooms

##### Question 1

Do you feel comfortable while teaching large classes?

- a. Always
- b. Sometimes
- c. Never



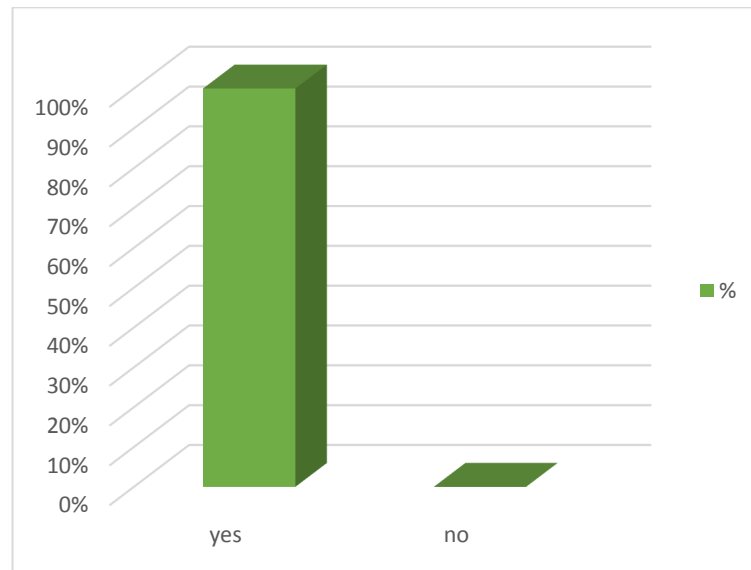
*Figure 3.14. Teachers' attitudes on overcrowded classrooms*

It can be seen from the graph that highest percentage of teachers (63%) never feel comfortable while teaching large class; however, (25%) of them sometimes feel so. Only (12%) of teachers always feel comfortable.

##### Question 2

In a large class, can you pay individual attention to all of them?





**Figure 3.15. Teachers' opinion on individual attention**

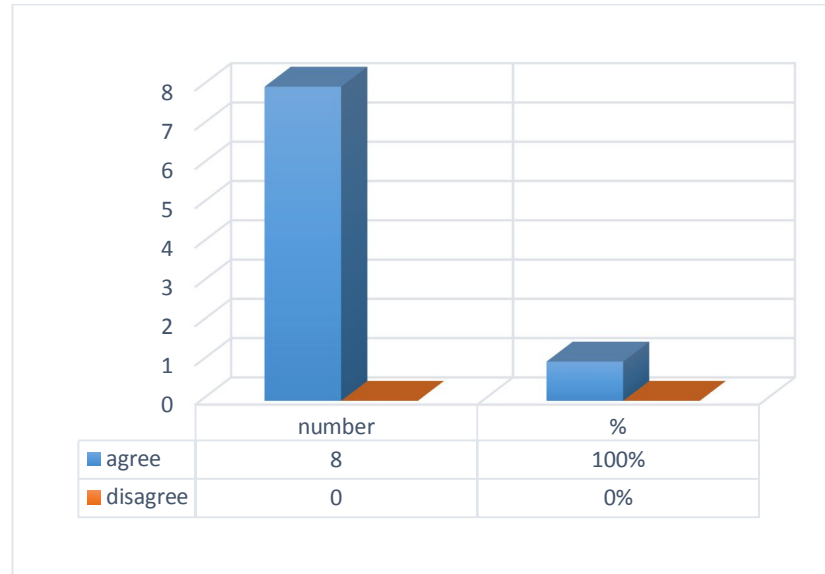
The graph shows that the common shared answer between all teachers that they cannot provide each student with individual attention. Yet we can observe that (100%) of them answered no and none of them chose yes.

Teachers justified their answers as the following: some of them say that it is beyond their capacity because it take time and effort, other teachers say that they cannot provide individual attention because the session is short (around 65 student and 90 minute); also, the nature of session has a role, whether it is tutorial or a lecture. Some teachers say that the large number of students hinders organization of the class.

### **Question 3**

Do overcrowded classrooms influence your choice of teaching method?

- a. Agree
- b. disagree



**Figure 3.16. Teachers' agreement with crowded class and teaching method**

As illustrated in the graph above, all the teachers (8) that overcrowded classrooms influence their choice of teaching method. However, none of them disagrees with it.

#### Question 4

Do you like the arrangement of tables in the classroom?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Somehow

Option	Number	%
Yes	0	0
No	5	62%
Somehow	3	38%
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 3.8. Teacher's perceptions on classroom arrangement**

As the table shows, most of teachers do not like the arrangement of tables in their class (62%). In the other hand, (38%) of teachers somehow like classroom organization;

however, no one totally like it. Thus, we can deduce that most of teachers face problems in the arrangement of their classes.

### Question 5

In this question, we have asked teachers what they can do if they had an ideal number of students in class. All the teachers say that with an ideal number of students, they can teach at ease, have more practice and organize more activities. In addition, they can check individual achievement, give them opportunity to practise the language and give special attention to each of them as well as help them develop their abilities. Furthermore, teachers agree that with an ideal number they can use various ways of evaluation and encourage fieldwork for a small group of student. Other teachers say that with a small number, they can organize the class in different shapes for example C or U shape. Finally, all teachers argue that if number of student is small, they establish a good atmosphere for better learning, thus classroom interaction will be more effective and teacher's objectives will be easily achieved.

## Section Two: classroom interaction

### Question 6

Do you know the value of classroom interaction?

- a. Yes
- b. No

<b>Option</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
Yes	8	100%
No	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>100%</b>

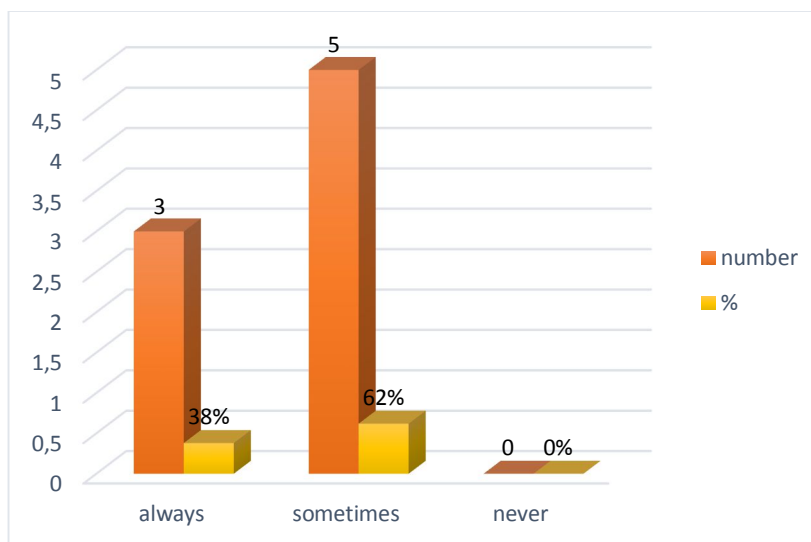
**Table 3. 9. Teachers knowledge about classroom interaction**

The common shared answer between teachers (yes) show that all of them know about the value of classroom interaction. In addition, the researcher asks them to specify some of its characteristics. All the eight teachers stated some of them. Classroom interaction is an integral part in language teaching because it fosters a healthy relationship between teacher and his learners also it fosters learner's self-confidence and self-esteem. As well, it enhances students' communicative skills and level of analysis and argumentation. In addition, it lessen their inhibition especially shy students, as well as to be more motivated, engaged, and fosters cooperation among learners.

### Question 7

How often do you invite your learners to interact with each other?

- a. Always
- b. Sometimes
- c. Never



**Figure 3.17. Students' Frequency of Engagement in Classroom Interaction**

When asking teachers about learner-learner interaction, a clear majority of teachers (62%) claim that they sometimes invite their students to interact with each other. on the other hand only (38%) who said they always invite students to interact together. Some

teacher state that they always invite students to interact together in non-crowded classrooms but they sometimes do so in an overcrowded class.

### Question 8

What do you do to make silent students interact in class?

- a. Design group and pair work
- b. Choose interesting topics
- c. Add additional marks
- d. Use other means (please specify)

Option	Number	%
design groups and pairs	3	37%
choose interesting topics	1	12%
add additional marks	0	0%
use other means	0	0%
a+b	2	25%
a+b+c	1	13%
a+b+d	1	13%
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>100%</b>

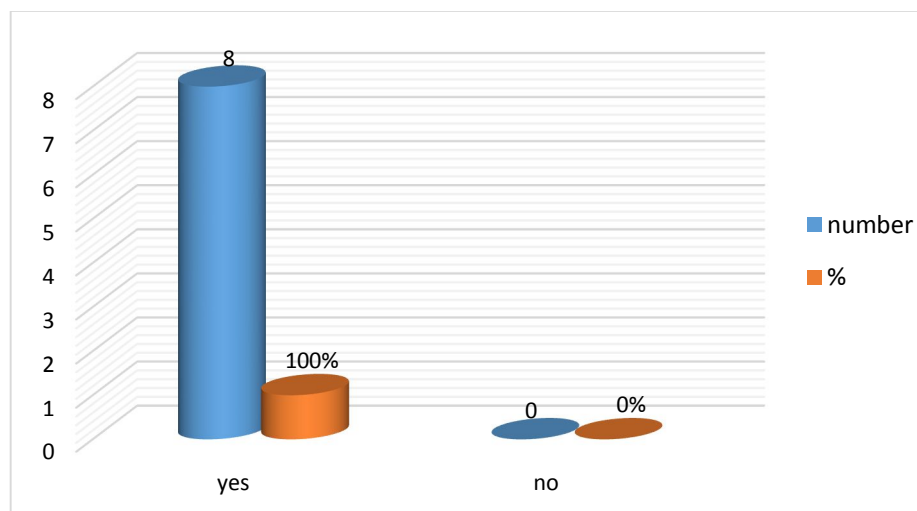
**Table 3.10. Teachers' Decisions to Make Silent Students Interact**

It is clear from the table 3.10 that 37% of teachers prefer to design group and pair work to make silent students more engaged in the lesson. Whereas 25% of teachers claim that they design groups and pairs as well as choose interesting topics to enhance silent students interaction. 13% choose a+b+d option that is to say that besides group work and interesting topics, some teacher try to provide them with individual attention whenever possible. Another 13% of teachers prefer to add additional marks besides designing groups and choosing interesting topics. The remaining 12% of teachers tries only to choose more fresh interesting topics to make silent students more active and interact more.

**Question 9**

Do you feel that the number of students in your classroom affects classroom management?

- a. Yes
- a. No



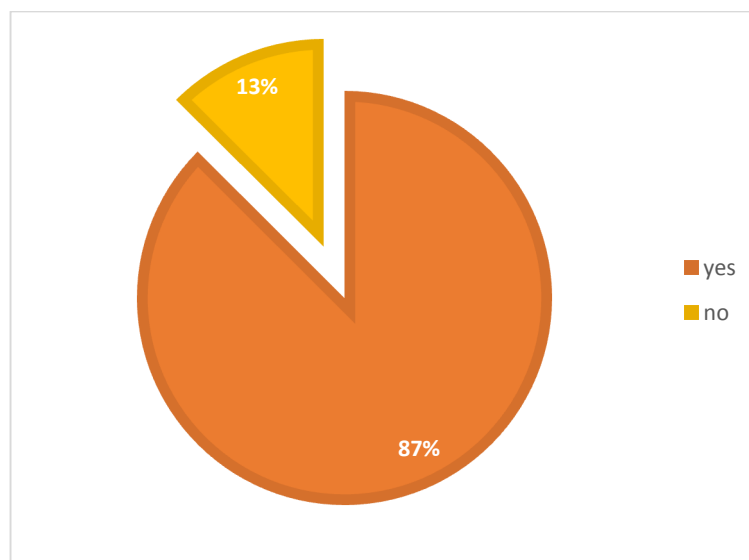
**Figure 3.18. Teachers' attitudes on the role of classroom management**

The graph demonstrates that 100% of teachers agree on that classroom management is affected by the amount of students in class. Therefore, whenever the class is small, the teacher can be able to manage and control the class effectively.

**Question 10**

Is class size a main factor that is closely related to classroom interaction? (Specifically teacher-student interaction)

- a. Yes
- b. No



**Figure 3.19. Teachers' opinions on the effects of class size on interaction**

As shown by the table, the majority of teachers (87%) state confess that class size have a role in their interaction with their students. On contrast (13%) state that class size has no role in interaction.

87% of teachers justified that the shortage of time, very difficult working conditions for discussion, and nearly impossible to use ICT tools are factors that impede them to not have effective interaction with students. In addition, large classes do not allow for smooth teacher-student interaction because it is too noisy, if the number of students is small, the level of noise is lower and this impact positively class interaction. As well, it becomes difficult to overcome the lesson plan and attain the proposed objectives. On the other part, 13% of teachers who answered “no” argue that there are other factors that hinders interaction such as students' level of motivation, time allocation, and students' interests.

### **3.2.4. Discussion of results**

Teachers' feedback on overcrowded classrooms and classroom interaction is a very crucial for the completion of this research as well as for testing the stated hypothesis. Ten

questions were asked to teachers to obtain their opinions about the main variables of research.

In question 1, the researcher wanted to teachers' attitudes on teaching crowded classrooms. Yet the results of this question reveals that the majority of them (63%) never feel comfortable while teaching large class, whereas, (25%) of teachers state that sometimes feel comfortable. Consequently one can confess that overcrowded classes is an important factor that hinders teacher' performance and makes them all the time uncomfortable. In question two, teachers were asked if they could pay individual attention in large class. The highest percentage (100%) state that is impossible to do so because it take much time and effort and this is beyond their capacity. Also they claim that it depends on the nature of the session (lecture or tutorial). All teacher (100%) agree that overcrowded classrooms have a role in their choice of teaching method (question 3). Concerning the arrangement of tables, the great majority of teachers (62%) state that they are not satisfied with it in their class, (38%) of them claim that somehow do like the arrangement of table in the class, whereas, no one teachers are totally satisfied the arrangement of tables in class( question 4). Therefore, we can inference that the most of classes in English department are in bad condition concerning the organization of class.

In question 5, all teachers agreed that they can do a lot of things if they have an ideal number of students. An ideal number helps them to practice and organize more activities because they will comfortable; thus, they will feel at ease. In addition, they can give the opportunity to all students to practice the language as well as give them a thorough feedback and check individual achievement. Furthermore, teachers state that with an ideal number they can use different ways of evaluation and organize students' seating in different shapes.



For section two, the researcher asked teachers a couple of question about classroom interaction. This section starts from question 6, which aims at knowing teachers' point of view about the value of classroom interaction; the whole number (100%) state that they know the value of classroom interaction. according to the teachers, classroom interaction is an integral part in language teaching because it fosters learner's self-confidence and self-esteem. Besides it higher students' level of motivation and fosters cooperation among them. As well, classroom interaction helps in enhancing communicative skills and increases their level of analysis and argumentation. 62% of teachers sometimes invite their students to interact with each other, while 38% of teachers always invite students to interact together (question7). The vast majority of teachers (37%) design groups and pairs to make silent students more active, other teachers prefer to choose more topics that are interesting so that they enhance students' level of motivation and let them more focused. Some others use other means such as provide them with individual attention whenever possible so that they do not feel neglected. Teachers also claim that they design groups, choose interesting topics, and add additional marks (question 8).

(100%) of teachers agree that the large number of students in class affect their management strategies (question 9). This percentage reveals that whenever the class is crowded, teachers may lose control of class and face many discipline problems. The last question in the questionnaire (question 10) was the most important one because it deals with the relationship of the two main variables. The answers of this question were not surprising for the researcher because as a relation to the previous questions, teachers are facing some problems while teaching large class. The top number of teachers (7) which constitutes (87%) of them, find that class size is a main factor that effects interaction in class. Whereas, a small number of teachers (1) find that there is other factors may effect

class interaction other than class size. Teachers' justification were related to each other. They argue that the difficult working conditions for discussion and the lack of authentic materials are one of the factors that hinders teacher-student interaction. Teachers also identified noise making as most serious problem of overcrowded classrooms because it do not allow for smooth class interaction. Any teacher (experienced or novice) would agree that very little meaningful learning, if at all, could take place in a noisy environment. Noise making implies that such students are not paying attention to the ongoing lesson. Besides, noise making has been considered as a barrier to effective communication and effective teaching. All those reasons are some of the problems that affect interaction in class. Many instructors noted that large classes required greater investment of time and resources for up-front class preparation, that an instructor was required to be much more organized and structured in teaching a large class. It was felt that anything that went wrong in a large class would have repercussions for many students, whereas in smaller classes, the effect would not be as far reaching, and there were greater opportunities for improvisation. A negative consequence of this need for structure in large classes is the lack of spontaneity to make last minute changes in response to current circumstances or events.

## **Conclusion**

Statistical analysis has indicated that noticeable problems exist while teaching and learning in large size English classes. These problems create challenges to both teacher and students. According to the questionnaire's results, both of them agree that the teacher-student interaction in overcrowded classes is missing. Thus, the research hypothesis has been confirmed by the questionnaires.

A significant number of teachers and students highlighted various problems and challenges they are facing in large classrooms. From one hand, teachers face difficulty

while managing such classes; they find that it is hard to apply almost all the appropriate tasks for fostering interaction, especially the individual attention and to interact with all the students. Sometimes they fail to maintain discipline which is mostly a serious problem in large size classes since this problem itself may results other problems. From the other hand, students, in this very level, need a proper learning atmosphere to acquire and develop good skills in learning English language.

## **General Conclusion**

Overcrowded classrooms have been considered as one of the most challenging issues facing teaching and learning English as a foreign language. The lack of interaction between the teacher and his students is one of the problems that large classes may cause. In the presented study, the researcher have dealt with large classes and classroom interaction as two main variables of the study.

At the beginning of this dissertation, the researcher tried to demonstrate the concept of classroom management, than, we shed light on the concept of overcrowded classrooms as a phenomenon that comes under the umbrella of classroom management. We tried also to identify the effectiveness of teaching and learning English in large classes as well as in small classes. In addition, we have also tried to show identify some problems related to overcrowded classes as well as some strategies to manage those problems. Coming to the second chapter of the presented dissertation, the researcher have tried to demonstrate the meaning of classroom interaction, its types and aspects. Additionally, we have tried to propose some strategies for better interaction in class and finally, the relationship between large classes and teacher-student interaction.

The researcher have used two questionnaire one for teachers and the other for students as a tool to gather data for this research. The analysis of the two questionnaires showed that most of the classes in English department at Biskra University are overcrowded and most of teachers and students do not feel comfortable while teaching/ learning in those classes. In addition, the findings gathered from the questionnaires confirm that due to the large number of students, the class becomes very noisy and the teacher cannot provide students with adequate feedback. Teachers and students showed a considerable awareness about the impact of overcrowded classrooms on their interaction with each other. Both respondents argue that the difficult working (learning)

conditions, lack of ICT tools and noise level are factors that do not allow for smooth interaction in the class. Therefore, the results of the questionnaires confirm our hypothesis which says that overcrowded classrooms may effect teacher-students interaction.

## Recommendations

Reducing class size seems to be an obvious way to facilitate learning and increase achievement. Therefore, teachers of large classes should encourage students' interaction either by pair or group work; provide opportunities for students to learn from each other and through more meaningful feedback from their teachers. Based on the discussion and the conclusions, the researcher would like to recommend the following ways to reduce the negative effects of overcrowded classes on EFL students at the English department, Biskra University.

- 1-** Workshops or seminars should be held to bring together teachers from various schools, colleges and universities for the purpose of comparing methods and exchanging ideas about their own experiences in dealing with the problems which are associated with the teaching of English in crowded classes.
- 2-** The administration should deal with the problems of overcrowded classes by increasing the number of groups in order to give the students more opportunities to learn effectively and interact properly with the teacher.
- 3-** In cases where overcrowded classes could not be broken down as a result of factors beyond the Administrators and teachers control, the English teachers should focus on grouping the students. This will give room for efficiency, monitoring the students' participation in the class, identifying the deviant students, identifying students' individual differences and make the available instructional materials to circulate.
- 4-** It is worth mentioning that despite the disadvantages of teaching English in large classes, not all students dislike learning in large classes. Therefore, teachers should know the characteristics of teaching English in large classes and vary their teaching techniques accordingly, in order to ease the problems of teaching, and

assessing large classes which result from the lack of teaching aids, facilities and space.

- 5-** Enhance Students' Interdependent Learning in Large Classes via Small Group Work.
- 6-** Integrating Technology into Classroom context to Promote Effective Learning
- 7-** English teachers should not be keen about one particular teaching method.
- 8-** Teachers in an overcrowded classroom must be exceptionally organized. They have to be well prepared for every day. Problems can be magnified in large classes, but they can also be dealt with effectively.
- 9-** Every lesson must be attractive, energetic, and fun. It is easy for students in any class to be distracted and lose interest, but this is especially true in a large classroom. Lessons must be fast paced, unique, and full of attention grabbers.
- 10-** Do everything possible to get to know your students. A positive relationship with your students builds a willingness on their part to actively participate in class.
- 11-** Move around the class when talking – this engages students more actively, and it can reduce the physical and social distance between you and your students.
- 12-** Give a background questionnaire or a diagnostic test to check the content of your lessons and the knowledge and skills of your students, to identify those students that need special attention, as well as to make connections to students' life experiences.
- 13-** Recognize the attention duration of students is limited: 15 minutes of lecture followed by an activity and then additional lecture if needed is an ideal timeline. Determine what information can be delivered in a form other than lecture and develop these methods. For instance, group work, role-playing, student

presentations, outside readings, and in-class writing can be excellent ways to vary classroom routine and stimulate learning.

Although big classes bring problems for the teachers, these can be overcome by their effort, fresh approach, variety of learning styles, feedback, fun, respect, good organization of the lessons and using English naturally.



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## Appendices

### Appendix I

### Student's Questionnaire

**Dear students,**

You are kindly requested to fill in this questionnaire which is an attempt to gathering information needed for the accomplishment of a master dissertation. We direct this questionnaire to investigate about **The Effects of Overcrowded Classrooms on Teacher-Students Interaction**. We would be so grateful if you could sincerely answer the following questions, so please, give as precise answers as you can. Tick (✓) your answer (s) in the corresponding box (es), and make a full statement whenever necessary. Be sure that the answers you provide will certainly remain confidential and will only be used for research purposes.

**Thank you for your time and for your collaboration**

#### Section one: overcrowded classrooms

**Q1.** How many students are there in your (class) group?

- |                       |                          |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| a. From 20 to 30      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. From 30 to 50      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. 50 student or more | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**Q2.** Do you feel comfortable in crowded class?

- |               |                          |
|---------------|--------------------------|
| a. Frequently | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. Sometimes  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. rarely     | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Why?

.....

.....

.....

**Q3.** Is there noise in the class?

- a. Frequently
- b. Sometimes
- c. rarely

**Q4.** Please tick the response that you agree with most

<b>Statements</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>
1. Larger class sizes contribute to a decrease in student achievement.				
2. Mode of instruction can be a factor in student achievement.				
3. Larger classes have more discipline problems.				
4. Language teachers have difficulties grading the large number of students' work, including essays and papers.				

**Q5.** In general, how *effective* at helping you learn do you find the following teaching methods?

<b>N°</b>	<b>Teaching method</b>	<b>Very effective</b>	<b>Fairly effective</b>	<b>Not very effective</b>
1	lectures			
2	tutorials			
3	language lab work			
4	pair-work			
5	group-work			
6	discussions			



**Q6.** Please, put a cross (x) in the appropriate box.

N°	Question	Yes	No
1	Does the teacher give individual attention?		
2	Are most of the modules taught through the lecture method?		
3	Is attendance checked regularly?		
4	Can you easily ask and answer questions?		
5	Does proper teacher-student interaction exist?		
6	Do the weak students feel ignored?		
7	Are good students given more attention?		
8	Are the back zone students neglected?		
9	Do the front zone students dominate the entire class?		
10	Do the teachers know most of the students' names?		
11	Are sufficient assignments given?		
12	Can the teacher check all the assignments?		
13	Is there any other teaching aid available except the blackboard?		

### Section Two: Classroom interaction

**Q7.** How often the teacher gives you the opportunity to interact with him?

- a. Always
- b. Sometimes
- c. never

**Q8.** How often do you interact with your classmates inside the classroom?

- a. Always
- b. Sometimes
- c. Never

**Q9.** When you interact in the classroom. It is

- a. You who wants
- b. The teacher who asks you

**Q10.** If you do not interact, it is because:

- a. You are not talkative
- b. The topic is not interesting
- c. The teacher does not motivate
- d. Overcrowded classrooms

**Q11.** For you, what is the importance of teacher’s feedback in empowering teacher-student interaction?

- a. Very important
- b. Important
- c. Somehow important
- d. Not important at all

**Q12.** Are teacher’s questions during the lesson helps you to stay engaged (focused)?

- a. Yes
- b. No

**Q13.** Do you think that the arrangement of stuff in classis have a role I teacher-student interaction?

- a. Always
- b. Sometimes
- c. Do not have a role

**Q14.** Do overcrowded classes affect your interaction with the teacher?

- a. yes
- b. no

Please justify your answer

.....

.....

.....

**Thank you for your collaboration**

## Appendix II

### TEACHER'S QUESTIONNAIRE

**Dear teachers,**

You are kindly requested to fill in this questionnaire which is an attempt to gathering information needed for the accomplishment of a master dissertation. We direct this questionnaire to investigate about **The Effects of Overcrowded Classrooms on Teacher-Student Interaction**. We would be so grateful if you could sincerely answer the following questions, so please, give us precise answers as you can. Tick (√) your answer (s) in the corresponding box (es), and make a full statement whenever necessary. Be sure that the answers you provide will certainly remain confidential and will only be used for research purposes.

**Thank you for your time and for your collaboration**

#### Section One: Overcrowded Classrooms

**1. Do you feel comfortable while teaching large classes?**

- |              |                          |
|--------------|--------------------------|
| a. Always    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. Sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. never     | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**2. In a large class, can you pay individual attention to all the students?**

- |        |                          |
|--------|--------------------------|
| a. Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. No  | <input type="checkbox"/> |

If no, Why?

.....

.....

.....

3. Do overcrowded classrooms influence your choice of teaching method?

a. Agree

b. Disagree

4. Do you like the arrangement of tables in the classroom?

a. Yes

b. No

c. Somehow

5. With an ideal number of students in my class, I could

.....

.....

**Section Two: Classroom Interaction**

6. Do you know about the value of classroom interaction?

a. Yes

b. No

If yes, could you specify some of its characteristics?

.....

.....

.....

7. How often do you invite your students to interact with each other?

a. Always

b. Sometimes

c. Never

8. What do you do to make silent students interact in the classroom?

- a. Design groups and pairs
- b. Choose interesting topics
- c. Add additional marks
- d. Use other means (please specify)

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

9. Do you feel that the amount of students in your classroom affects classroom management?

- a. Yes
- b. No

10. Is class size a main factor that is closely related to classroom interaction?

(Specifically teacher-student interaction)?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Please explain.

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR COLLABORATION**

### المخلص

الهدف من وراء هذه المذكرة الحالية هو اكتشاف المشاكل الرئيسية أثناء تدريس أقسام اللغة الإنجليزية المكتظة بالطلبة. تركز هذه الدراسة بشكل خاص على المشاكل التي يواجهها كل من الأساتذة وكذا الطلاب أثناء عملية التواصل فيما بينهم والأساليب التي ينبغي أن يستخدمها المعلم في تلك الأقسام. وكانت الفرضية تتمحور حول المشاكل وكذا التحديات التي يواجهها كل من الأستاذ والطلاب في الأقسام المكتظة بالطلبة. قد أجريت هذه الدراسة بشكل رئيسي على ثمانية (8) أساتذة وثلاثين (30) طالبا وطالبة للسنة الأولى ماستر، السنة الثالثة وكذا السنة الأولى بقسم اللغة الإنجليزية بجامعة بسكرة. وجاء هذا البحث على حد سواء النوعية وكذلك الكمية. وقد تم تصميم نوعين من الاستبيانات؛ استبيان للأساتذة وآخر للطلاب. استعملت هذه الاستبيانات كأداة موثوقة لهذه الدراسة. وقد كان رد جميع المشاركين بشكل إيجابي، كما أبدوا 100 ٪ من الاهتمام. وقد تم تحليل البيانات التي تم الحصول عليها عبر منهج التحليل الوصفي والذي تعتبر مثالي لتحليل البيانات الاسمية. وأظهرت نتائج هذه الدراسة المشاكل الرئيسية التي يواجهها الأساتذة والطلاب أثناء عملية التواصل في الأقسام المكتظة أثناء تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية بما في ذلك الانضباط، والاهتمام الفردي، خصوصا تجاه الطلاب الضعفاء، والعلاقة بين الأستاذ والطالب، وضرورة اعتماد الوسائل التعليمية الحديثة، بالإضافة إلى الأساليب والتقنيات التي يجب تطبيقها أثناء تدريس تلك الأقسام بوجه خاص. علاوة على ذلك، قدمنا بعض النصائح والتوصيات التي تعنى بهذه المسألة.