



REPUBLIQUE DU BENIN



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MINISTERE DE L'ENSEIGNEMENT SUPERIEUR ET DE LA
RECHERCHE SCIENTIFIQUE

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UNIVERSITE DE PORTO-NOVO

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ECOLE NORMALE SUPERIEURE

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DOMAINE : Sciences de l'Education et de la Formation

MENTION : Professorat de l'Enseignement Secondaire SPECIALITE : Anglais

GRADE : LICENCE-BAPES

MEMOIRE DE FIN DE CYCLE

SUJET

**THE EFFECTS OF LARGE CLASSES ON
TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN
LANGUAGE: CASE STUDY OF LYCEE
TOFFA 1^{ER} .**

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ANNEE ACADEMIQUE : 2014-2015

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DEDICATION

To the most precious people in my life who inspired me and who are still contributing to the formation of my personality:

- My beloved mother Salima DRAMANE,
- My late father Aliassim IBRAHIM,

I dedicate this research work.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many great people proved helpful by contributing somehow to making this research work a reality:

- ✓ First and foremost, I wish to express my sincere gratitude to my thesis supervisor Pr. Taofiki KOUMAKPAI for his constant help, support, and valuable suggestions and advice.
- ✓ I am much indebted to my elder brother Moustapha IBRAHIM for his special care for me, his support, and encouragement and for the particular importance dedicated to my health.
- ✓ To my uncle Alassane IBRAHIM, I owe deep gratitude and thanks for carrying for me and for his tough-love.
- ✓ My heartfelt thanks to Mohamed IBRAHIM, who proved very helpful for his advice and various contributions.
- ✓ I will not forget to express my sincere thanks to my training course tutor Ms Suzanne AGBAZAOU for her support and advice.
- ✓ I am also thankful to all my lecturers of Advanced Teachers Training College of Porto-Novo, without whom my training could not come to fruition. They are so numerous that citing them would result into a long list.
- ✓ To Mr. Séraphin DEGBOKIN, my former primary six teacher, and to all my secondary school teachers who have positively influenced me.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

In this relentless world, the population is increasing overwhelmingly throughout the world. The world population was 7,244 billion according to the medium fertility estimated by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. This population is projected to reach 7,325 billion in July 2015. Africa is the second largest and second most populous continent on earth with an estimate population of 1,033 billion in 2013. By the end of century almost half of the world's children may be Africans. As for Benin, its population is so growing in high speed that, in a short time, it has gone up to ten million now. This is, in great part, related to the worldwide demographic explosion which impacted other domain of life. Undoubtedly, education as a whole and teaching English as a foreign language particularly, are not in margin of that phenomenon.

The English language is no doubt one of the most used languages today in world businesses and international affairs. As a matter of fact, its usefulness for every nation is not negligible and the government of Benin, being aware of the value of the English language, has adopted it as a foreign language in their educational system in secondary school and higher educational level in order to predict and respond to its constraints at the international level. But surprisingly, the actual implementation of English teaching goes through many difficulties.

One of the biggest issues faced by the educational system in Benin secondary schools is the huge number of students and its impacts on teaching and learning outcome. Ever since, measures that promote the registration of all children; boys as well as girls at school, have been taken, there has been a remarkable boom in school population. As a result, it is customary to notice that schools are overcrowded because there are not sufficient infrastructures to

shelter students and teaching in large classes becomes a real challenge that teachers have to overcome every day in their teaching job. Students' failure or poor academic results are often attributed to teachers' inefficiency, with no regard to the conditions in which the teaching and learning process take place in large classes in so far as teachers have difficulties to deal with large classes especially the classroom management, students' oral performance and challenges of evaluations. In the meantime, the government seems to be powerless as regard the matter of large classes which is worsening year after year and weakening the whole educational system through the different results registered in the last decades.

Although many researchers have addressed the issue of class size in various ways, that phenomenon is still so recurrent in Benin that it is worth keeping addressing that issue until satisfactory solutions could be found. In this respect, the theme of this research work deals with the *Effects of large classes on teaching English as Foreign Language: case study of Lycée Toffa 1er*. A survey is carried out on this theme in the pattern of the contribution to the resolution of the problems to which education is confronted.

This research work is divided into five chapters. The first chapter is the introduction to the study; the second chapter is about the literature review; the third chapter is concerned with the methodology; the fourth chapter presents the findings of the research and finally, in the fifth chapter, we find the summary of the research and the suggestions.

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1-The purpose of the study

The aim of this study is first and foremost to survey all the difficulties that an EFL teacher encounters while teaching in large classes. In fact, a focus is put on the negative aspects of large classes on teaching English as a Foreign Language in Benin secondary schools as a whole. In addition, this study is also meant to examine meticulously how large classes can lead to the failure in teaching EFL. It is obvious that where there is teaching, there is learning. But when the teaching process is menaced, the learning process certainly bears the burden.

Consequently, there is no balance between teaching and learning when both teachers and learners find themselves in an environment and situations that are far from favoring the teaching and learning process. That is why, this study will address the consequences of large classes on EFL learners, by showing the different aspects of class size that prevent learners from acquiring efficiently English language in secondary schools.

Another purpose of this research work, which is not the least, is to denounce the almost indifference of the authorities in charge of education in order to draw their attention to the extent to which the phenomenon of large classes constitutes a real handicap to teaching and learning EFL effectively. Moreover, this study aims at examining the impacts of large classes on some specific aspects that are mostly affected such as classroom management, group work, how discipline problems are settled, how students' oral performance is affected, how students are assessed in large classes and what are the possible influences on students' academic success. Finally, this research work is a genuine attempt to improve the teaching/learning conditions as a whole and to make it better, on the one hand, for teachers in their daily efforts to teach EFL and for learners in their efforts to acquire English on the other hand.

2- The Statement of the Study.

The rapid population growth has got many heavy impacts on different domains of life. So, the larger the population is getting, the greater the challenges to be taken up impose themselves. Consequently, people are faced with the emergencies of modern life: getting a shelter, a job, what to feed on, and other human basic needs among which education still remains an outstanding and paramount thing for the social fabric. But sadly, education itself meets some problems and bears nowadays the burden of the population growth.

In Benin for instance, decades ago, parents were reticent in sending their children to school. But continuous sensitizations, initiated by the government, in partnership with some private institutions, such as NGOs, led to a change in mentality, parents realize the necessity of sending their children to school. The government also took measures to remedy to students 'dropping out of school by making it free of charge for girls through the slogan *All girls at school*. But this was not without its consequences: the population growth has affected most of the secondary schools and colleges in Benin. Colleges are overcrowded because lacking the basic infrastructures. Thus, teachers are being confronted with large size of the classes because of the number of students which is getting higher and higher every year.

In this situation, there is no denying that teaching English as a Foreign Language go through serious difficulties. Indeed, the challenges are so enormous that the teaching/learning objectives are far from being achieved in so far as the conditions in which learners are set in the classrooms are left to be desired. Consequently, in classroom containing large number of students, the teacher has to endeavor to teach, whereas students have to strive to learn a little bit the language. What is surprising enough, is the almost indifference and incapacity of the authorities in charge of education to find adequate solutions to remedy the problem of large size of classes while the situation is getting self-defeating. It's

quite true though that the government have taken measures to encourage parents to enroll their children at school but it is noticeable that when the students yield poor result the teachers are the first blamed, irrespective of the conditions in which the teaching/learning has taken place.

3- The Significance of the Study

This research work is relevant in so far as it provides a genuine opportunity to expose the serious problems which seem to be neglected and which are constantly challenging the educational system of the country in the secondary schools. Therefore, considering teaching English in large classes as a great problem and a real world issue which is worrying English teachers, writing about the Effects of large classes on teaching English as Foreign Language finds its *raison d'être*. This research work also offers an opportunity to tackle the problem related to the influence of class size on students 'improvement, and students' ability to carry out groups activities and use English language to communicate in real life situation.

The present research may also have its utility by contributing in the attempt to solve problems brought about by education as a whole. Moreover, this research serves as a medium of raising awareness and attracting the attention of authorities at all level so that adequate measures could be taken to solve somehow the problem of large size of classes. Furthermore, assuming that basically, large size classes constitute a prime impediment for an efficient teaching/learning, it is very important to suggest appropriate strategies for secondary schools teachers that can be applied in large classes to facilitate the teaching and to improve the teaching/ learning outcome.

Besides, this research is significant in a sense that it is destined to account for the concept of large classes in order to shed light on delusions brought about by the class size. In this respect, one would wonder whether there is an idealistic

or unanimous definition of what large class is. Another aspect is that when teachers face discipline problems, when large classes encourage treacherous attitudes on the part of the students during assessments, clearly there is room for discussing about the effects of large classes on teaching EFL.

Thus, the objective of the Competency Based Approach, which promotes the student-centered method and which gets the learners involved in problem-solving tasks is far from being achieved. In addition, getting to know all the learners in a large class is a big concern. Undoubtedly, a teacher needs to know his learners through their social and cultural background, their moods, their strengths and weaknesses, and these are as much factors which are not negligible and that should be considered while teaching an EFL class. So, it is obvious that teachers and educational authorities at all levels constitute the prime target of this research work, whereas students and teachers are the main focus of this research which is restricted to the secondary school level in Republic of Benin.

4-Hypotheses

In order to bring this research work to a successful conclusion, I found it necessary, based on researches that have been conducted previously through the exploitation of different resources and based on my own experience as a trainee during my training course in Lycée Toffa 1er, to formulate some hypotheses as follows:

- Students in large classes have less chance to effectively participate and use the target language.
- Diversity among students in large classes confuses and puts pressure on teachers.
- Classes with large number of students do not provide teachers with enough opportunity to correct students in their oral and written productions.

Therefore, to check if these hypotheses are confirmed or not, I made use of an appropriate methodology, by issuing the questionnaires designed for teachers and for students, to collect useful data.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Many scholars have been concerned about the issue of teaching in large classes. Even though up to now, a clear-cut definition of large class has not been found, there is still a variety of perspectives of how large classes constitute a real impediment to teaching/learning English as a Foreign Language. In this chapter, I am going to expose the literature through the researchers' different perceptions of the concept of large classes, of the different difficulties teachers can meet and the strategies they suggested to overcome these difficulties in order to facilitate EFL teaching/learning in large classes.

1- Concept of Large Classes.

There is no consensus definition to what constitutes a large class as material developers, teachers and students in different parts of the world have various perceptions of what frames large classes. Ur (1996) believed that regardless to the number of students in a class, it is the teachers' perceptions towards the class size in a certain context with particular tools and facilities that are provided that make classes either small or large. Hence, large classes are those with a specific number of students that teachers cannot easily handle and in which resources are not enough to facilitate the teaching /learning process and which pose serious problems for both teachers and learners. Mubryan-kyne (2010) has the same point of view when he declares that a large class is too large for effective teaching to occur (P.176). Brown (2001), on the other hand, thinks that an ideal class should not exceed twelve students. For Brown, big number of students does not offer variation and does not allow interaction between teachers and their students and among students themselves. In other words, he means that small classes provide students with enough opportunity for participating and receiving individual attention.

In addition, many researchers believe that large classes offer a few opportunity to teachers to implement quality teaching and a safe environment to students to learn (Hattie,2005; Peddler,2006).Zhang(2002)examined the effect of large classes among college students and declared that problems in large classes are first and foremost discipline problems and students' degree of motivation. This is quite true, since in a crowded class disruptive students are out of control and reluctant students find a place to hide. The same thing is pointed out by Yu (2004) who also conducted a study on college students in large classes showed that individual's variant is neglected and anxiety is class predominant. In other words, in large classes it is difficult to get satisfactory knowledge of students, that is, getting to know them individually is no easy task; so intimacy with students and remembering their names, might be a problem. Consequently, limited practice of the target language due to the large number of students hinders students from improving their oral performance. This issue of large classes becomes very interesting that Harmer (2000) confirms that large classes bring difficulties to the teaching and learning process as a whole and to teachers and students particularly as with the great number of students, teachers find it very difficult to organize effective and creative activities. Paying attention and identifying all students, especially those who tend to hide by sitting at the back becomes impossible. According to him, large classes are troubling for experienced teachers whereas they are extremely daunting for new and untrained teachers and emphasized the need for good training and sufficient technical strategies to be used in large classes.

The literature review has also showed that the number of studies conducted in the developing countries about class size is not enough as compared with those addressing the issues in the developed countries. So, Kumaravadelu (2006) believed that there is a need for a pedagogical method to investigate the features of large classes in the developing countries and that will

provide teachers with helpful strategies. For Locastro (1989), for effective language teaching to take place in large classes, appropriate methodologies and practices should be applied. Paradoxically, unlike those who think that large classes constitute a problem to the teaching/learning process, Pong and Pallas think that students perform better in large classes than in small ones. In other words, the teaching and learning outcomes have nothing to do with whether the class is small or large but with teacher's ability to cope with problems in large classes.

2-Large and Small Class from Different Perspectives

Opinions are divided about what a small or a large class is, since trying to define the notion of large class may vary from teacher to teacher and from country to country. For instance, class size is defined by Achilles, 1998; McRobbie, Finn and Harmer, (1998) as the actual number of students that one teacher is responsible for every day. It is clear that this definition poses a little problem because it is not clear-cut. According to N. Hess (2001) large classes comprise of thirty or more students and asserted that the ideal number of language students in a class is about twelve. This number is just right for many variations in the lesson such as role-play, pair work, group work, and individual work. It is necessary to note how important the individual approach of the students is; but classes which are larger do not get such attention and this is also a reason for disruptive behaviors to occur.

Hess. N (2004) declares that multilevel classes are kind of classes that are arranged by age-group with no thought to language ability. This is a crucial insight which has to be taken into consideration as teaching such groups is very demanding, exhausting but also challenging and requires special attention and good teaching management. In addition to that, some researchers believe that small classes provide ample opportunities for teacher and students to accomplish the highest level of language achievement. Miller-whitehead (2003) states that

small classes assist raising teachers' spirit and decrease most of the discipline issue. So, small classes allow teachers to identify problems quickly and then apply immediate remedial solutions.

In addition, Finn et al. (2003) revealed that class size has great effects on students' social and academic involvement in the class and on teachers' personality as well. This means that students in small classes, unlike those in large ones, are always under pressure to participate in the class activities. They are more visible and can be called upon at any time to answer questions or to participate in class works. Renwick (2003) supports the same point of view when he declares that small classes elevate students' achievements, as teachers in such context, pay greater attention to each student, leaving students with no time to be either disruptive or distracted. Similarly, Mortimore and Lon(2006) states that small classes positively influence the teaching process as they encourage teachers and allow students to be more cognitively involved in carrying out activities and offer ample time for teachers to cover the whole curriculum.

Finn and al.(2003) examined how class size affects the social behavior of students and focused on the anti-social attitudes. As a result, small classes encounter less behavioral problems than large classes. Shaman and al. (2007) supported this idea since they revealed that large classes have problems for discipline to be established.

3-Classroom Management and Discipline

3-1-Classroom Management

Classroom management, as defined by some researchers is how a teacher organizes the class and uses procedures to create a classroom environment that helps the students to learn effectively (Zabel & Zabel). In other words, classroom management means creating a safe, supportive and challenging

environment. This means many things that the teacher does in the classroom to enable his students to learn well. This includes how the teacher arranges the chairs in the classroom, how he plans the lesson and how he handles discipline problems in the classroom (Solan,2002). For Hill (2002) classroom management involves the maintaining positive environments where each students are able learn without disturbances. According to Wong (2003) there are four remarkable things in a well-arranged classroom:

- ✓ Students are deeply involved in what they are doing in the classroom.
- ✓ Students know what is expected of them in the classroom, and they are generally successful in their learning.
- ✓ As compared with other classroom, little time is wasted, and there is little confusion or disruption in the classroom.
- ✓ Much work goes on because of the climate of the classroom is relaxed and pleasant.

From this perspective, it is clear that classroom management is not the same as discipline. Discipline is only a small part of classroom management. Therefore, successful classroom management involves not only responding effectively when problems occur but also preventing their frequent occurrence.

3-2-Discipline Problems

Among the difficulties an EFL teacher encounters while teaching in large classes is the classroom management and how to settle discipline problems. First of all, discipline problems are basically behavioral problems. This is so because most of the students in secondary schools, particularly those of the first cycle are teenagers. As a matter of fact, teenagers form a group of people who are on their turning point between childhood and adulthood. So, they undergo a

transformation that involves biological, social and psychological changes. These changes are so remarkable that they have to be taken into consideration especially during the teaching process. Because teaching teenagers can be very stressful and frustrating experience as they tend to be less motivated and unpredictable. They often do not want to be taught. On the other hand they can also be very rewarding and fun if attracted by the lesson matter.

Besides, talking about discipline and classroom management, it should be recognized that behavioral problems are usually interconnected with poor discipline. It is usually a teacher who is responsible for students' suitable behavior and blamed if this is not observed in the classroom. But the larger the class is, the less manageable it becomes. Problems with discipline constitute a "nightmare" for teachers especially for those who have just started their carrier. If a teacher does not manage to set up good discipline, his teaching will be less motivating for both himself and his students and will find himself in a vicious circle of a lack of interest and motivation towards everything connected with the language teaching. N. Hess (2003) recommends that this is the right time when behavioral problems occur, to establish cooperative and interdependent learning in which students are made to help one another and provide necessary support to their mates. According to Jonas (1977), about 50% of the class time is lost due to student's misbehavior.

Harmer (1988) highlighted that "discipline is not a series of punishments meted out to badly-behaved students; it rather refers to a code of conduct which binds the teacher and the students together so that learning can be more effective". He then identified three possible reasons for discipline problems: the teacher, the students and the institution. Firstly, the teacher's behavior and attitude count a lot in the classroom, for as Harmer advised:

- A teacher should not go to class unprepared , meaning that he has to be well- prepared and knowledgeable enough before going to class.

- A teacher should not be inconsistent in a sense that he must be firm not too permissive.
- A teacher must not issue threats because students usually get used to these threats and finally don't care about.
- A teacher must not raise his voice because this could lead to a general rising of the level of noise in the classroom.
- A teacher must avoid giving boring classes: when the class is boring students lose attention and this leads to discipline problem.
- A teacher must not be unfair: teachers should always avoid having favorites or picking on particular individuals.
- A teacher should not have a negative attitude to the learning, meaning that he has to pay attention to students' reactions to what is happening in the classroom.
- Teacher must not break the code, in a sense that he must be a model by abiding by the rules he set for the class.

In addition, the time of the day, students' attitude, adolescents' desire to be noticed" and two's company constitute other causes of discipline problems on the part of the students. Besides, it is difficult to deal with discipline problems in large classes. So some researchers recommend that preventing behavioral problems is essential. First of all, teachers must be firm at the beginning, as there is always a chance to relax later, and still the teacher's approach can be, to a certain extent friendly. So, it is necessary to establish rules which involve treating the students fairly and constantly. It is also the teacher's job to provide motivation, funny and interesting lessons. It is necessary to take into consideration students' likes and their dislikes, their moods and other signs which may disrupt the teaching process and most importantly avoid too long and senseless activities.

Besides, it is important to notice that in large classes, spending a lot of time in organizing the classroom and solving discipline problems affects the curriculum. Peddler (2006:224) confirms this when he asserts that: “In large classes, more time is needed for non-academic activities related to administrative and organizational procedures and to the management and control of discipline. Restrictions in quantity of the learning opportunities constrain teachers from achieving the necessary pace, depth and breadth of curriculum coverage as class size increases”. In other words, students in large classes, learn less as compared with those in small classes, if the teacher is really preoccupied to teach the quality. Some teachers do not care about the quality of their teaching but too in hurry to complete the curriculum.

4-Group Work in Large Classes

Firstly, it is worth mentioning the advantages of group work. Lon M. and P. Porter (1985) highlighted the advantages of group work by stating that “It increases language practice opportunities, it improves the quality of students talking, it promotes a positive affective climate and it motivates learns to learn”. To put it another way, group work offers the chance to students to produce a large output that is the actual talking they do in carrying out group activities. Harmer (1991:245) pointed out the usefulness of group work as compared with pair work by claiming that group work is dynamic and useful for oral work because there are more people to react with and against in the group and a greater possibility of discussion. From this perspective, it is clear that engaging students in challenging activities where groups compete with one another motivates students to participate.

As a result, group work increases the students talking time and opportunities for students to really use the language to communicate with each other. So, it is through the group work that students learn to work co-operatively and how to contribute to solving problems, not only in class but also in real life

situation. And this is what the constructivist approach suggests: engaging students in activities where students build knowledge through the problem solving tasks. Forming small groups also help to reduce the noise, save the time of performing a certain activity and allow teacher to concentrate on small number of groups instead of focusing on many individuals.

However, next to all these advantages of group work mentioned above, there are some problems which teachers, especially those teaching in large classes, should bear in mind and take appropriate measures when they occur. In large classes, teachers have difficulties to form groups especially in classes with no sufficient furniture. Thus, it is difficult to decide about the group size. It is obvious that the larger the group is the more disobedience the teacher can expect. According to some didactic materials, the ideal number of students in group is four to six. Anything higher than this number would certainly cause problems concerning both discipline and organization. In addition, it is often difficult to perform group work as some students tend to be disconnected from the whole class, devoting their time to noise making.

Another problem is that a lot of teachers form groups where weak and strong students are mixed together. This is quite normal, but there is a risk for weak students to be empowered by stronger ones. In such situations, they will participate and leave the stronger students to do the whole work; some will even find the group as a place to hide in order to pass unnoticed. So, teacher's role as a controller and supervisor is very important, by going from group to group explaining and encouraging all the group members to participate. Appointing group leader, who is entitled to act as a group organizer: making sure that a task is properly done, that information is properly recorded or collected, and as a mini-teacher where a student could conduct a drill or a dialogue, might also be a good alternative.

5-Students' Oral Performance in Large Classes

If it is clear that there are many reasons why people use verbal language to communicate, it is also clear that there are reasons to teach or to learn a language. Like any language, English is taught in order to be spoken. So, there are some reasons for teaching the oral skills to EFL learners. First of all, “speaking activities provide rehearsal opportunities” in a sense that they offer students a chance to practice real life speaking in the safety of the classroom. In other words, “speaking should be designed to prepare the students to be able to engage themselves in casual conversations”, to be able to “establish and maintain social relations”, “to share and pass information”, “to discuss options and solve problems”. Secondly, involving students in speaking tasks by using grammar, vocabulary and functions helps teachers minimize the teacher talking time and promote the student talking time.

However, in large classes it is difficult for teachers to engage all the students in speaking activities because this is considered to be time consuming. As a matter of fact, there are some factors which hinder the students from speaking in the classroom:

- **Inhibition:** Unlike the other skills, the speaking skill is a skill that requires from the student the use of the language to face an audience. Some students simply do not want to speak because they are either shy, they fear making mistakes or they fear to be criticized. This happens mainly in large classes where the teacher is unable to identify those among the students who tend to hide and to avoid being pointed out.
- **Being dumb:** some students are unable to speak because simply they cannot find what to say. They are not motivated enough to express themselves while deep down, they have something to say.

- Low participation: this has a relation with some students' domination while carrying out the group work for example. In other words, some students do not speak at all in the classroom or they speak much less especially when the number of students is huge.
- Mother-tongue interference: the case here is when the class or a number of students share the same mother-tongue, so they may use it for its easiness or they feel comfortable and spontaneous as they use it.

So, what should teachers do to involve all the students in speaking activities that prepare for a real life communication? To answer to this question teachers are advised to use some activities to promote the oral communication skills. Riggensbach and Lazaraton suggest four types of oral activities for EFL classrooms. These are linguistically structured activities, performance activities, participation activities and observation activities.

Firstly, “linguistically structured activities” are those in which student are involved in manipulative activities, that is activities mainly focused on one language item. This language item may be a grammatical structure or a function. The teacher’s role here is to provide a model and have students repeat, then he pays attention to accuracy and corrects.

Secondly, “performance activities” are those in which student prepare beforehand and delivers a message to a group. So, students may be asked to simply tell a story from their own experience in a casual social setting. In addition, performance activities also include role-play and drama. Debates can also serve as an opportunity for a classroom performance. In this case students are given a topic and the time to plan their research and gather sufficient information before the debate occurs. To give the feedback, the teacher may use the peer evaluation since the audience, which is the performer’s mates, becomes more than simply passive learners.

Thirdly, “participation activities” are those in which students participate in some communicative activities in a “natural setting”. These activities include the guided discussion which consists in providing a brief orientation to some problem or controversial topic. Students’ role here is to discuss the topic in small groups by suggesting possible solutions. Students can also be asked to retell or report the story or opinion in their own words. Another alternative is the oral dialog where students speak spontaneously on an audiotape on a given topic.

Fourthly and finally, “observation activities”: in these types of activities students are asked to observe and record if necessary verbal and nonverbal interaction and use the language they know to interpret or comment. This technique is useful for building student appreciation and awareness of the language as it is actually used in real world.

CHAPTER III: Methodology of the Study

3-1-Introduction

In this chapter, we are going to present the methods, procedures and techniques used to collect the data by describing, the setting, the participant and research instruments on the one hand; and the data collection and data analysis procedures on the other hand.

3-2-Setting of the Study

This research work is carried out in the pattern of teaching English as a Foreign Language in Benin secondary schools. The survey has been carried out in Lycée Toffa 1er which is located in the town of Porto-Novo at Adjaradokodji, not far from the town hall and CEG Davié. In fact, we have chosen Lycée Toffa 1er as a case study of this research work for having attended our training course in that school. Lycée Toffa 1er is a boarding school constituted exclusively of young girls, some living in the dormitories and others outside in the town. There are many teachers with different status intervening in this school and the majority of them are women and the administrative board is composed of women in majority. Among these teachers, there are teacher advisors, qualified teachers, part time teachers and untrained teachers.

3-3-Participants

Since the study is about the *Effects of large classes on teaching English as a Foreign Language*, the teaching and learning process occur in presence and interaction of two partners: the teacher and the students. That is why they constitute the main focus of this research work and also constituted the main source of data collection. So, teachers and students of Lycée Toffa 1er of Porto-Novo, especially those of the first cycle, have been sampled to give their point of view and appreciations about the theme.

3-3-1- Teachers

By definition, a teacher is person whose profession is teaching. In this respect, he is in charge of students whom he models for further social integration. He is very important because he is the centre of the teaching and learning process where he plays many roles as “a controller, an assessor, an organizer, a prompter, a participant and as a resource”.

In the pattern of this research work, EFL teachers are given particular attention as far their teaching in large classes is concerned. In Lycée Toffa 1er, there are many teachers with different status in a sense that among them some are certified, some are teacher advisors while others are untrained and part time teachers, all both men and women.

3-3-2-Students

First of all, it is worth mentioning that this research work is concerned about the students of secondary schools since trying to define the word student seems a little ambiguous because one would wonder whether this word used here, refers to a person studying at University. So in the teaching and learning process, after the teacher, the student is the second main actor. There is an interaction between him and the teacher.

Thus, a student also known as a learner is a person of a specific age, background and interest, to whom knowledge and skills are inculcated. In Lycée Toffa 1er which is a boarding school, the students are exclusively girls; some students live in the dormitories while others live outside. So, students of the first cycle have been sampled to answer to the questionnaire issued to them.

4-Research instruments

The questionnaires have been designed and issued to teachers and students in order to have credible information about how large classes can affect the teaching and learning English as a Foreign Language in Lycée Toffa 1er.

4-1-Questionnaire to teachers

Teachers 'questionnaire is made up of sixteen questions investigating three main areas: general information on teachers, that is their status and their seniority; the classroom environment and climate, that is the comfort and motivation; and tests and evaluations.

The first question is about teachers' qualification, their degree so as to know their status. The second question is to know how long the respondent has been teaching, that is his seniority in order to know whether he has any experience in teaching or he is a beginner. The third question is about the number of students the respondent teaches. The fourth question is to check teachers' point of view and preference as far as large and small classes are concerned. The fifth question is whether the teacher carries out group work. The sixth question is to know if the teacher encourages all the students to do the talking. The seventh is to know if the respondent has any difficulties to know all his students.

The eighth question is to check the difficulties the respondent meet in managing their classes. The ninth question is to know if the class is often noisy. The tenth question is about students 'actively involvement in class activities. The eleventh question is about what the teacher does to motivate his students. The twelfth and the thirteenth questions are about discipline problems in class and how these problems are handled. The fourteenth and fifteenth questions are about how students are assessed and when they get teachers' feedback. The sixteenth and the last question are to know if the teacher completes the curriculum.

4-2-Questionnaire to students

Like teachers' questionnaire, students' questionnaire is made up of sixteen questions so that there should be a balance in the amount of data to be collected. The first question is to know in which form the students responding is. In the second question student is asked if there are many students in his class. In the third question the student is asked to say whether he learns better in small or large class and to provide justifications. The fourth question is to know if the respondent feel comfortable in the classroom. The fifth question is about the number of students per table. The sixth question is to know if the respondent takes part in group work. The seventh question is to know if the students are offered opportunities to practice the language.

The eighth question is concerned about noise in the class. The ninth question is to know if students get motivated by their teacher. In the tenth question the respondent will say if he often witnesses disruption on the part of his mates. The eleventh is about what the teacher does to restore order in the classroom. The twelfth question is if the student is informed beforehand about the attitude to adopt in classroom. The thirteen and fourteen questions are about how and how often students are evaluated. The fifteenth question is about when students get their papers after evaluation. The last and the sixteenth question is to know if the respondent mates cheat during evaluation.

4-3-Classroom observation

Classroom observation has been a useful and credible method for data collection. It has been a very important opportunity during the training course to be an eyewitness of how the teaching/learning is processed. During this training course, the most striking aspect which attracted my attention was the class size especially in first form (6è) where the number of students is overwhelming and

where group formation was quite impossible. So, I emphasized mostly on how the teacher manages her class, how she calls for attention, how she handles discipline problems and how she motivates her students. At the end of each session, we usually had a thirty minutes discussion where I got an ample occasion to ask questions to my training course tutor. Whenever she provided explanations and justifications, I jotted down information that appeared important to me.

5-Data collection and data analysis procedures

In order to get credible information, I found it necessary to explore a variety of sources of information by reading books related to the topic. The questionnaires issued to teachers and students have allowed me to collect useful data.

5-1-Data collection procedures

To get credible information, I found it necessary to distribute questionnaires to teachers and students. So, twenty (20) questionnaires have been sent to EFL teachers. Then, they were giving necessary time to answer to the questions. When all the questions were answered, the twenty (20) questionnaires have been collected back, that is a rate of 100%.

As far as students are concerned, they were distributed forty (40) questionnaires and given a time to answer the questions. When all the questions have been answered, only thirty-two (32) questionnaires have been collected back, that is a rate of 87, 2%.

5-2-Data analysis procedures

After the data have been collected through the use of the different instruments, they were organized, classified and presented in the statistical tables

divided into three columns: the question, the number of respondents and the percentage, respectively. Some questions are combined in the same table according to the aspects they deal with. Then we proceeded by calculating the percentage rate of each question. Firstly, teacher's answers were presented and analyzed and then we proceeded in doing the same thing for student's answers. Below each table, the results were discussed and commented before possible conclusions could be drawn.

CHAPTER IV: THE FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH

Introduction

In this chapter, I am going to display the findings of this research work. Each table represents one of the sixteen questions answered in the questionnaire. I first proceeded by presenting and interpreting the answers provided by teachers and then presenting and interpreting students' answers.

1-Presentation and analysis of teachers' answers

Table 1: Qualification and seniority

| Question n°1 | Number of respondents | Percentage |
|---------------------|------------------------------|-------------------|
| DUEL | 0 | 0% |
| LICENCE | 10 | 50% |
| BAPES | 2 | 10% |
| MAITRISE | 6 | 30% |
| CAPES | 2 | 10% |
| Question n°2 | Number of respondents | Percentage |
| 2 Years | 7 | 35% |
| 4 Years | 6 | 30% |
| 6 Years | 4 | 20% |
| 10 Years | 3 | 15% |
| More | 0 | 0% |

The first question is asked to enquire about the respondents' degree and qualification and among the twenty teachers surveyed, 50% of them hold a Bachelor Degree, 10% of them hold a BAPES Degree, 30% of them hold a Master Degree and 10% of them hold a CAPES Degree. As a conclusion, 80% of teachers surveyed are not professional by training. The second question is asked to know how long the respondent has been teaching. And the twenty teachers surveyed, 35% of them have been teaching for two years now, 30% of

them have teaching for four years now, 20% of them have been teaching for six years now and 15% of them have been teaching for ten years. Thus we can conclude that more than 65% of them are beginners and therefore lack experience.

Table 2: Class size and teachers' preferences

| Question n°3 | Number of respondents | Percentage |
|---------------------|------------------------------|-------------------|
| 45 to 55 | 7 | 35% |
| 55 to 65 | 13 | 65% |
| More | 0 | 0% |
| Question n°4 | Number of respondents | Percentage |
| Large class | 3 | 15% |
| Small class | 17 | 85% |

The third question is asked to know the number of students the respondent is in charge of in the classroom. 35% of teachers surveyed teach in classrooms the comprise 45 to 55 students. While 65% of them teach in classrooms of 55 to 65 students, that is large classes. The four question is asked to enquire about whether teachers prefer teaching in large or small classes. 15% of the teachers surveyed prefer teaching in large classes because small classes may be made of only weak students whereas 85% prefer teaching in small classes because they think that they are easier to teach.

Table 3: Involving students in group work and Promoting the communication

| Question n°5 | Number of respondents | Percentage |
|---------------------|------------------------------|-------------------|
| YES | 20 | 100% |
| NO | 0 | 0% |
| Question n°6 | Number of respondents | Percentage |
| YES | 7 | 35% |
| NO | 13 | 65% |

As showed in the table, 100% of the teachers surveyed involve their students in carrying out group activities in order to foster communication and lighten the burden put on the teacher. But they also recognize that all the students do not participate in these activities. As a conclusion, teachers do not succeed in getting all the students involved in group activities in large classes.

The sixth question is asked to know whether teachers encourage or promote students' communicative skills by getting all the students do the talking through a variety of speaking activities. The result in the table shows that 35% of teachers encourage students to practice oral communication, whereas 65% of teachers responded that though they try hard to encourage their students to do the talking, it is difficult to get them all involved in speaking activities because of the large size of the class. Thus we can conclude that in large classes, students do not have enough chance to practice orally the language.

Table 4: Knowing the students

| Question n°7 | Number of respondents | Percentage |
|---------------------|------------------------------|-------------------|
| YES | 5 | 25% |
| NO | 15 | 75% |

Here, the question is asked to know if teachers succeed in knowing or recognizing all their students in large classes. As showed in the table, 25% of the respondents just answered that they know their students and that this can be easy if those students were their former students in the previous years. On the other hand, 75% of the respondents have difficulties to know all the students through their name because all of them do not participate and attract teacher's attention. But they may be familiar with some face of the students. As a conclusion, it is difficult to know and recognize all the students in large classes unless it takes a certain period of time.

Table 5: Managing large classes

| Question n°8 | Number of respondents | Percentage |
|---------------------|------------------------------|-------------------|
| YES | 17 | 85% |
| NO | 3 | 15% |

The eighth question is asked to know if teachers have difficulties to manage large classes. Among the respondents, 85% of them have difficulties to manage large classes because of the shortage of furniture available which leads to difficulties to form adequate groups and because of the diversity among students which make it difficult for teachers to manage them. Besides, 15% of the respondents think that it is easy to manage large classes by just resorting to group formation. So, large classes are difficult to manage.

Table 6: Students' motivation and participation rate

| Question n°11 | Number of respondents | Percentage |
|----------------------|------------------------------|-------------------|
| Songs | 10 | 50% |
| Slogans | 8 | 40% |
| Games | 0 | 0% |
| Jokes | 2 | 10% |
| Question n°10 | Number of respondents | Percentage |
| 25% | 10 | 50% |
| 50% | 8 | 40% |
| 75% | 2 | 10% |
| 100% | 0 | 0% |

The question is asked to know what teachers do to motivate their students. As the result shows, 50% of the respondents use songs, 40% of them use slogans and only 10% of them use jokes in order to motivate their students. So they do not use games for motivation. As a conclusion, most of the teachers do not use motivational activities that could help students be really motivated. The tenth question is about students' participation rate and as shows the results, the participation rate is estimated to 25% by 50% of the respondents whereas 40% of them estimate that the participation rate is at 50%. And 10% of them think that the participation rate is at 75%. Then we can conclude, as the majority of students do not take part in the activities, that the participation rate in large classes is low.

Table 7: Discipline problems

| Question n°12 | Number of respondents | Percentage |
|----------------------|------------------------------|-------------------|
| YES | 20 | 100% |
| NO | 0 | 0% |
| Question n°9 | Number of respondents | Percentage |
| YES | 20 | 100% |
| NO | 0 | 0% |

This question is asked to know whether teachers face discipline problems in their teaching. Apparently, 100% of the respondents answered that discipline problems occur in their classes. So, it is obvious that large classes bring about many discipline problems. The question is asked to know if large classes are often noisy that is if the teachers have to call to silent every time during the class. In fact, 100% of the respondents answered that large classes are often noisy. So, we conclude that large classes are noisy as teachers have to strive to call for silent when the teaching is on process.

Table 8: Handling discipline problems

| Question n°13 | Number of respondents | Percentage |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------|
| Punishments | 7 | 35% |
| Sending out disruptive students | 5 | 25% |
| By warning | 8 | 40% |

This question about how teachers handle discipline problems whenever they occur.35% of the respondents punish their students, 25% of the respondents send the disruptive students out and 40% of them proceed by warnings or

issuing threats. As a conclusion, the majority of teachers have difficulties in handling discipline problems.

Table 9: Assessing and correcting students' productions

| Question n°14 | Number of respondents | Percentage |
|----------------------|------------------------------|-------------------|
| Individually | 5 | 25% |
| In groups | 9 | 45% |
| To be done at home | 6 | 30% |
| Question n°15 | Number of respondents | Percentage |
| YES | 8 | 40% |
| NO | 12 | 60% |

As the table shows, 25% of the respondents assess their students learning individually, 45% of them evaluate them in groups and 30% of them submit their students to assessment to be done at home. Clearly, the question deal with formative evaluation. And the conclusion is that the majority of teachers carry out assessment in groups to lighten the burden of paper correction. The fifteenth question is asked to know if teachers correct and provide appropriate feedback to their students. The result shows that 40% of the responds succeed in correcting and giving adequate feedback to the students. As a conclusion, in large classes, students do not usually get adequate feedback.

Table 10: Completion of the curriculum

| Question 16 | Number of respondents | Percentage |
|--------------------|------------------------------|-------------------|
| YES | 11 | 55% |
| NO | 9 | 45% |

This question is to know if teaching in large classes constitute an impediment to the completion of the curriculum. 55% of the respondents think that large classes do not facilitate the completing of the curriculum. 45% of them think that large classes do not prevent them from completing the curriculum. So, we can conclude that large classes can be one of the reasons which could prevent teachers from completing the curriculum.

2-Presentation and analysis of students answers

Table 1: Students' grade level

| Question n°1 | Number of respondents | Percentage |
|---------------------|------------------------------|-------------------|
| 6è | 15 | 46,875% |
| 5è | 7 | 21,875% |
| 4è | 2 | 6,25% |
| 3è | 8 | 25% |

As shows the table, 46,875% of the students surveyed are in 6è, 21,875% of the students surveyed are in 5è, 6,25% of them are in 4è and 25% of them are in 3è. As a conclusion, beginner classes are classes with big number of students.

Table 2: Class size and students' preference

| Question n°2 | Number of respondents | Percentage |
|---------------------|------------------------------|-------------------|
| 45 to 55 | 13 | 40,625% |
| 55 to 65 | 19 | 59,375% |
| More | 0 | 0% |
| Question n°3 | Number of respondents | Percentage |
| Large classes | 11 | 34,375% |
| Small classes | 21 | 65,652% |

This question checks about the number of students in the respondents class. 40,625% of the respondents are in classes of 45 to 55 students, whereas 59,375% of the respondents are in classes of 55 to 65 students. So, most of the students surveyed are in large classes. Students are asked if they prefer large or small classes. As shows the table, 34,375% of the students prefer large classes whereas 65,652% of prefer to be in small classes. As a conclusion, the majority of the students find that small classes offer ample opportunities for leaning efficiently.

Table 3: Classroom comfort and availability of the furniture

| Question n°4 | Number of respondents | Percentage |
|---------------------|------------------------------|-------------------|
| YES | 8 | 25% |
| NO | 24 | 75% |
| Question n°5 | Number of respondents | Percentage |
| Two | 19 | 59,375% |
| Three | 13 | 40,626% |
| More | 0 | 0% |

Students are asked if they feel comfortable in large classes. As the table shows, 25% of the respondents answered that they feel comfortable in large

whereas 75% of them find that large classes are not comfortable. As a conclusion, the majority of the students do not feel comfortable in large classes. This question is about how students are set and arranged in classroom according to the availability of classroom furniture. It justifies the previous question. As shows the table 59,375% of the respondents are set in pairs, whereas 40,626% of the respondents sit three students per desk. In conclusion, there is remarkable lack of sitting equipments in large classes.

Table 4: Participation in activities and opportunities for oral practice

| Question n°6 | Number of respondents | Percentage |
|---------------------|------------------------------|-------------------|
| YES | 10 | 31,25% |
| NO | 22 | 68,75% |
| Question n°7 | Number of respondents | Percentage |
| YES | 8 | 25% |
| NO | 24 | 75% |

Students are asked if they take part in the classroom activities. As shows the results, 31, 25% of the respondents answered that they participate in the activities. On the other hand, 68, 75% of the respondents answered that they do not participate in all classroom activities. In conclusion, the majority of the students do not take part in all the classroom activities. Here students are asked if they are offered opportunities to practice English orally in the classroom.25% of the respondents recognized that they practice the English orally, whereas 75% of the respondents declared that they do have opportunity to practice English language. So, we can conclude the large classes do not provide opportunities for all students to use orally the English language.

Table 5: Disruption and noise level

| Question n°8 | Number of respondents | Percentage |
|----------------------|------------------------------|-------------------|
| YES | 25 | 78,125% |
| NO | 7 | 21,875% |
| Question n°10 | Number of respondents | Percentage |
| YES | 19 | 59,375% |
| NO | 13 | 40,625% |

The eighth question is about the level of the noise in the classroom. The purpose is to know whether teachers always have to call for silent and attention of the students making noise. The result shows that 78,125% of the student's respondents declared that their classes are usually noisy; whereas 21,874% of them answered that their classes are less noisy. Thus we can conclude that classes with big number of students are often noisy. The purpose of the tenth question is to know whether some students' disruption prevents other students from learning. This table shows that 59,375% the students' respondent recognized that some of their classmates are disruptive, while 40,625% of them declared that their classmates are not disruptive. As a conclusion, in large classes some students can prevent their classmates from learning effectively English.

Table 6: Teachers' attitude towards students' disruption and motivation

| Question n°11 | Number of respondents | Percentage |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------|
| Changing places | 15 | 46,875% |
| He punishes | 12 | 37,5% |
| Sending out badly-behaved students | 5 | 15,625% |
| Question n°9 | Number of respondents | Percentage |
| YES | 18 | 56,25% |
| NO | 14 | 43,75% |

This question's purpose is to know how teachers react to students' disruption. The results shows that 46,875% of the respondents change the place of the disruptive students by setting them with new mates.37,5% of them resort to punishments and 15% of them simply chose to send out disruptive students. The question is asked to know if students are motivated by their teachers in learning English.56, 25% of the respondents declared that they are motivated by their teachers whereas43, 75% of them declared that they lack motivation from their teachers.

Table 7:students'awareness of the attitudes to adopt in classroom

| Question n°12 | Number of respondents | Percentage |
|----------------------|------------------------------|-------------------|
| YES | 9 | 28,125% |
| NO | 23 | 71,875% |

This question is about student's awareness of the attitudes to adopt in classroom, that is students' knowledge of the institution (the rules and regulations) to which they should abide by. As the result shows in the table, 28,125% of respondents declared that they are informed about the rules and

regulations, whereas 71,875% of them declared they ignore the attitudes to adopt in the classroom. As a conclusion, the majority of the students misbehave because they are not instructed about what attitude to adopt in the classroom.

Table 8: Frequency and nature of tests and evaluations

| Question n°13 | Number of respondents | Percentage |
|----------------------|------------------------------|-------------------|
| Once | 0 | 0% |
| Twice | 26 | 81,25% |
| Three times | 6 | 18,75% |
| Question n°14 | Number of respondents | Percentage |
| Individually | 12 | 37,5% |
| In groups | 16 | 50% |
| To be done at home | 4 | 12,5% |

The thirteenth question is about how often students 'earnings are tested or evaluated with an emphasis on formative evaluations. Thus 81, 25% of the respondents answered that they are evaluated only twice whereas 18, 75% of them are evaluated three times. As a conclusion, teachers avoid testing and evaluating regularly large classes. The fifteenth question about the nature of the tests and evaluation submitted to students. In the table, 37, 5% of the respondents declared that they are evaluated individually, 50% of declared that they carry out evaluation in groups, and 12,5% of carry out evaluations to be done at home.

Table 9: Delay in receiving teacher's feedback

| Question n°15 | Number of respondents | Percentage |
|----------------------|------------------------------|-------------------|
| Early | 5 | 15,625% |
| Belatedly | 27 | 84,375% |

This question is concerned about the delay in receiving teacher's feedback after each test or evaluation. The result shows that 15,625% of the respondents answered that they get teacher's feedback early, whereas 84,375% of them responded that they do not get teacher's feedback early.

Table 10: Treacherous attitudes during assessments and evaluations

| Question n°16 | Number of respondents | Percentage |
|----------------------|------------------------------|-------------------|
| YES | 20 | 62,5% |
| NO | 12 | 37,5% |

This question is about treacherous attitudes during evaluation that is whether it happens that students cheat during evaluation. In the table, 62, 5% of the student's respondents recognize that some of their classmates cheat during evaluation. As a conclusion, large classes facilitate cheating because it is difficult to invigilate them.

**CHAPTER V: SUMMARY OF THE
RESEARCH AND SUGGESTIONS**

1-Summary of the research

The findings of the research, as presented in the different tables, are focused on some specific points such as teachers' qualification and experience in teaching, the class size, teachers and students preference as far as large and small classes are concerned, the classroom management, teachers' knowledge of students, the opportunity for practicing and using English language, students' real participation and motivation, discipline problems, and testing and evaluating students.

In fact, the survey reveals that the majority of the teachers investigated are not trained teachers and most of them are beginners in the teaching job. This accounts for the fact that they have difficulties to teach classes with big number of students. Therefore, training and experience greatly count in teaching and the more teachers acquire experience in teaching, the more they get used to overcrowded classes and find appropriate techniques to teach and handle problems.

In addition, most the teachers surveyed prefer teaching in small classes because they think they are easier to teach and provide ample opportunities for students to be really involved in class activities and minimize the teacher talking time. But the minority of them prefers teaching in large classes because small ones may be made up of only weak students. This is obvious because small classes also have their shortcomings. Nevertheless, overcrowded classes impose a huge burden on teachers as regard the management of the classroom. The results show that the majority of the teachers have difficulties to manage their classes. This is in great part due to the fact that teachers and learners are put in an environment which is quite uncomfortable especially in classrooms which suffer from a lack of furniture. Thus forming groups becomes a nightmare or even nearly impossible in some classrooms and it is difficult to decide the number of students in group.

Moreover, another important aspect is students' individual variant. Many teachers declare that it is difficult for them to know all the students in large classes especially by their names. But it is worth mentioning that for a teaching and learning to be efficient, teachers have to take into consideration the diversities of their students through their social, cultural and even economical and religious background. The results also revealed that overcrowded classes are well-known for the level of noise and discipline problems. So, teachers spend too much time for non-academic issues such as calling for silence and handling discipline problems. Undoubtedly, this affects the teaching and learning process and may constitute a handicap to the completion of the curriculum, since the majority of the teachers find it difficult to complete the whole curriculum.

Besides, although some teachers try hard to motivate their students by all means, the majority of the students lack motivation and as a result do not take part in all class activities. As regard the rules and regulations by which both teachers and students should strictly abide, we found that generally, students ignore these institutions that govern the teaching and learning process. Consequently, when students do not know or are not informed about what attitude to adopt in class, there is great chance for disruption to occur.

Furthermore, the findings of the study prove that tests and evaluations in large classes are most of the time incredible, owing to the fact that teachers do not provide an adequate feedback to their students output. This can be accounted by the fact that teachers often have some of their colleagues or other people help them correct their students' papers. Thus there is no objectivity in such kind of evaluations. Another thing which renders evaluations much more subjective is students' treacherous attitude during tests and evaluations. Many students acknowledged that some of their classmates cheat during evaluations. This is greatly due to the fact that large classes are difficult to invigilate. Students also declared that their teachers' feedback is often delayed. This means that students

do not have their teachers' feedback on time for further adjustments and improvements of their learning output. To sum up, it obvious that teaching large classes is too demanding and require special attention and strategies for effective teaching and learning to occur.

2-Suggestions

- **To the Government**

There is no denying that education is the key and for this reason it should be given a priority. Thus the government should have an efficient policy of education through the building of the basic infrastructures namely the classrooms equipped with resources so as to create a comfortable environment for both teachers and students. An emphasis should be put on the training and recruitment of teachers in quantity and quality in order to minimize the problem related to the lack of teachers on the ground. It is urgent today, as regard the scope that the problem of large classes is taking throughout the country, to take realistic measures that could help solve the problem of large classes.

Today nobody can pretend to ignore how important the English language is in world and this language has been introduced in Benin educational system for students to learn and use it communicatively in real life situation as suggests the competency based approach. If the competency based is criticized to be responsible for students 'low performance, it is because it cannot be implemented efficiently in large classes, in so far as it promotes students' learning constructively and creatively by carrying out problem-solving tasks, which cannot be efficient in large classes. So, instead of investing huge amount of the money in the building of the social houses, the government should dedicate this to school buildings according to the speed of the school population growth, in order to reduce the number of students in classes and ease the teaching and learning process to both teachers and students. The government

must also encourage teachers teaching large classes by raising their salary in order to motivate them to properly do their job.

- **To EFL Learners**

Today, it is high time EFL learners realized the importance of English language and that bilingualism is an important asset. Therefore, English language should not be regarded as a mere subject, but rather a language that must be learnt with great enthusiasm to be spoken. So, large classes should not hinder students' English learning, yet it should rather be an area of exchange where students produce and receive a large input and output of English, since we are a French speaking country where the opportunities for linguistic emersion are limited or nearly not offered. Then, students have to learn in cooperative to assist one another. They should also know that EFL learning does not develop automatically but it requires cognitive effort on the part of the students. In addition, students should know that their teachers are not made to be knowledgeable enough to spoon-feed them with information. They are made to guide students, to control and prompt them for a better learning. In this respect, students have to help their teachers to create a propitious atmosphere in teaching and learning process. Consequently, they should be organized and show discipline. They should adopt correct attitudes which facilitate the language learning and they should also be aware of the fact that motivation must be reciprocal between teachers and students. In other words, they should encourage and motivate their by showing interest to English language learning.

- **To teachers**

With the number of students which is increasing every year in secondary schools, and the limited basic infrastructures available, reducing students number seem to be impossible. Therefore, many scholars have proposed shifting from concentrating on class size to seeking more realistic and effective ways of

coping with the situation and exploring the kind of teaching, either in large or small classes. In order to reach this goal some of the advice mentioned in their literature will be considered.

Teachers should know that there is no one way to teach large classes. Therefore, for an effective teaching and learning in large classes, teachers have to consider the following elements: course objectives, the characteristics of the students and their teaching style. But concerning students' characteristics, it poses problems to teachers because of the big number of students and their diversity. Generally, it is not the class size that affects the learning process but it is the teacher's quality and methodology that greatly count. Even though teachers believe that it is extremely important to reduce the number of students in classes, they should be aware and convinced of finding alternative teaching methodologies that are beneficial for elevating the language learning in large classes.

One way that is considered to be significant is to set good relation between teachers and students and among students themselves which will help to minimize the anxiety and make all the students feel as being part of same learning context. In spite of the different constraints large classes have on teaching and learning outcome many teachers should improve their level of teaching by using multiple techniques such as team teaching, group work and the whole class discussion. So, forming small groups of students help reduce the noise, save the time of performing certain activities and allow teachers to concentrate on small number of groups instead of focusing on many individuals.

The teachers are advised to treat their students as adult even though it is still significant to remember that they are children and need special and individual attention. Last but not least, praising good work and highlighting positive things is also very important in order to motivate students. It is pointless for teachers to raise their voice on students. Teachers are also recommended to bear in mind

that individual approach is not always necessary as students should get space to work creatively and independently even if it is sometime time-consuming and demanding. As told above, teachers must treat their students fairly. They should not show that they like some students than the others as this is a very sensitive field because students note quickly such affection. It is also obvious that if a teacher requires that students have to work hard they must show themselves that they are well-prepared and their attitude to teaching, students and to language itself has to be positive inspiring and challenging. Consistence of lessons is crucial as well, lessons have to follow each other in a logical order, and students should feel themselves that they are making progress and be aware of the meaningfulness of the activities they carry out.

It is a useful technique to bring the distractions to the lowest limit by involving every student in the learning process. In other words engaging students in challenging activities where the students compete with one another would bring positive effects of large number in classes. Moreover, creating interesting activities that make students effectively occupied at the same time will increase students' on-task behavior, minimize students' boredom and bring loafing to its lowest level and promote the language learning. Because active learning involves "students in doing things and thinking about the things they are doing".

Another beneficial remedy to overcome any problem that tends to occur in large classes is to allow students to play an active role in class and involve them in all decision making about the classroom life as controlling the noise level or handling any disciplinary problem by setting rules and punishment among groups or individuals because students are willing to abide by the rules they set themselves and they will make sure that these rules are effectively applied. In other words, this is expected to be useful in possible growth of some fruitful and compatible strategies in order to maximize the level of learning.

Pleasure in the job puts perfection in the work, so the saying goes. What we would like to highlight here is how important teachers must love their job because if teachers really love the teaching job they will be ready enough to face its constraints. So, teachers should be also patient, because patience also counts a lot in the teaching and learning process. In fact, an EFL teacher has to play the role of leader and not only should they control what students are doing but also their expression in a friendly way. They should coordinate the different activities in order to have a coherent progression leading to a great performance of interaction among students. Then teachers' purpose is to see that students know what they have to do. Therefore, for teaching/learning to be successful, teachers have to consider the following points:

- Create a safe classroom atmosphere by motivating the students through the use of performance activities to make your class vivid and alive.
- Show interest to each student by calling them by their names.
- Carry out group activities and make sure that all the students are really involved and circulate from group to group. If it is impossible to form groups, dispose the desks in rows and have the students do the pair work. This is easy and fast to organize.
- Use songs, slogans, games and jokes to motivate your students.
- Be a model for your students and don't issue threats.
- Evaluate your students learning and provide useful feedback.
- Never have other people correct your students' papers.

CONCLUSION

All things considered, large classes constitute a real impediment to teaching and learning English as a Foreign Language. The main causes of this phenomenon are first and foremost due to the lack of a good educational policy on the part of the government so as to solve the problem related to class size. So, not only are schools deprived from necessary infrastructures, but also there are not sufficient human resources in quality and quantity in terms of the recruitment of teachers.

As a consequence, large classes negatively affect the teaching and learning process and teaching and learning English as a Foreign Language become a real challenge to overcome for both teachers and students. It is quite clear that for an effective teaching and learning to occur, some conditions should be fulfilled. This includes the classroom, that is, the physical environment in which the teaching/learning takes place. So, comfort in classroom allows teachers to teach successfully and learners to learn easily.

Yet, large classes are a source of hindrance to EFL teaching and learning, in a sense that teachers have difficulties to manage and organize their classrooms. They also have difficulties to know all their students, which is an aspect that should not be neglected because at secondary schools level, students are not intellectually mature enough to learn by themselves, even though some effort is required from them, they need teachers' guidance in terms of error correction and teachers' feedback.

In addition, through the results of the research, it implies that, not only do teachers meet problems to manage large classes, but also it is difficult for

them to get all the students involved in class activities, especially in speaking activities. In other words, it results that in large classes, students have less chance to effectively participate and use the target language. This is much more due to the fact that students lack the necessary motivation and teachers' attention. So, we can draw the conclusion that diversity among students confuses teachers and puts pressure on teachers. This is accounted by the fact that they spend much time for non-academic issues namely handling discipline problems, which affects the normal course of the teaching process and the completion of the curriculum.

In a nutshell, large classes negatively influence the teaching and learning English as a Foreign Language and the academic output as a whole. Therefore, it is imperious for the government and all the authorities in charge of education, to look into the issue of large classes in Benin secondary schools in order to improve EFL teaching/learning.

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APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE TO TEACHERS

Dear Sir, dear Madame, I am carrying out a study in order to write my BAPES thesis about the “Effects of large classes on teaching English as Foreign language”. For this purpose, I found it necessary to address you this questionnaire. Based on your own experience in teaching EFL, please answer the following questions.

1-What is your qualification?

DUEL LICENCE BAPES MAITRISE CAPES

2-How long have you been teaching?

2years 4years 6years 10years

3-How many students do you have in your class?

a)-45to55 b)-55to65 c)-more

4-Which classes do you find easier to teach? Why?

a- Large classes b-)Small classes

5-Do you have your students work in groups?

Yes No

6-Do you get your students do the talking?

Yes No

7-Do you know all your students in large classes?

Yes No

8-Do you have difficulties in managing your class?

Yes No

9-Is your class often noisy?

Yes No

10-Are all your students involved in the activities?

Yes No

11-What do you do to motivate your students?

Yes No

12-Do you face discipline problems in your class?

13-How do you handle them?

Punishments Sending out disruptive students

14-Do you assess your students' learning? If yes, how?

Individually in group to be done at home

15-Do you ask for help in correcting your students' papers?

Yes No

16-Do you perform the whole curriculum?

Yes No

QUESTIONNAIRE TO STUDENTS

Dear students, I am carrying out a study in order to write my BAPES thesis about the “Effects of large classes on teaching English as a Foreign Language”. For this purpose, I found it necessary to address you this questionnaire. I will be very pleased if you help me by answering the questions bellow.

1-In which form are you?

6è 5è 4è 3è

2-Are there many students in your class? If yes, how many?

45to55 55to65 more

3-In which class do you learn better? Give your reasons.

a)-large classes b)-small classes

4-Do you feel comfortable in your class?

Yes No

5-How many are there per desks?

Two three more

6-Do you participate in group work?

Yes No

7-Do have the chance to speak English in class?

Yes No

8-Is the class often noisy?

Yes No

9-Are your English teacher's lessons motivating?

Yes No

10-Are some of your mates very disruptive?

Yes No

11-What does your teacher do to put order in classroom?

Issuing threats punishment sending out badly-behaved students

12-Are informed about what attitude to adopt in class?

Yes No

13-How often does your teacher evaluate you?

Once twice three times more

14-How are you evaluated?

Individually in group to be done at home

15-When are your papers given back to after evaluation?

Early belatedly

16-Do many of your mates cheat during evaluations?

Yes No