

**UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR
SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT**



**“PROPOSAL TO DEAL WITH LARGE GROUPS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF
THE SPEAKING SKILL IN THE STUDENTS FROM THE ADVANCED
INTENSIVE ENGLISH II COURSE, GROUP 03, SEMESTER I, 2018, AT THE
FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT AT THE SCHOOL OF ARTS AND
SCIENCES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR”**

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LICENCIATURA EN IDIOMA INGLÉS OPCIÓN ENSEÑANZA**

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INTRODUCTION

“To have another language is to possess a second soul.” (*Charlemagne*). *In our context, learning English as a second language is seen as one of the best opportunities* teens and adults have to become successful in their jobs, careers, at school, and even in their social environment as a way to communicate with people from other cultures. At the Foreign Language Department, the importance of learning the language is well known by authorities, teachers, and a large number of students which makes the teaching-learning process a priority. Keeping that in mind, the research team decided to write this research paper focusing on the strategies used to handle large groups, so anyone willing to know and put into practice such strategies can get to know them by reading it.

This research paper is divided in eight chapters. The first chapter includes the statement of the problem, in which the researchers demonstrate the problematic situation regarding the problem of dealing with large groups in the development in the speaking skill. Besides, this chapter contains the research questions which includes one general question and three subsidiary questions. The general questions states the proposal of how to deal with large groups in the development of the speaking skill in the students from the Advanced Intensive English II, group 03, at the Foreign Language Department at the University of El Salvador and the subsidiary questions state the strategies being implemented in such group by the teacher, the strategies being implemented by teachers at the FLD and the strategies proposed by experts in the subject. All these questions are answered at the end of the paper. Added to that, the chapter includes the objectives of the research and the justification.

Chapter two presents the theoretical framework which contains the history of large classes from the teaching B.C. to nowadays. Added to that, the chapter includes a number of definitions for large class and the thoughts from well-known scholars and researchers of teaching. Besides, the teachers and students’ difficulties in large groups and the definitions of speaking are presented. The chapter also includes, a brief historical overview of the

teaching of speaking, the principles for teaching speaking and, finally the causes of English-speaking fears and the current strategies to handle large groups.

In the next chapter, it is presented the methodological design section which specifies the type of approach that will be used in the present research. Also, the researchers explain the type of research as well as the research design which is a must for carrying out this type of research. Besides, the researcher team specifies who the population under study is as well as the sample and the reason why it was chosen. Finally, this section contains the instruments that will be used to collect the data needed to get an answer to the research questions and therefore accomplish the objectives of the research.

The chapter four presents the answers to the research questions obtained from the information gotten through the instruments used during the process of gathering information and the information gotten from bibliographic and virtual sources. The next chapter includes the conclusions and recommendations reached from the analysis of the data. Chapter six lists the bibliography and webliography resources used throughout the research project and chapter seven contains the annexes and other relevant pieces of information.

CHAPTER I

1. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

1.1 PROBLEMATIC SITUATION

The Foreign Language Department at the University of El Salvador has gone through an increase in the number of students in most classes, as result of the current necessity of communicating abroad, pointed Ricardo Gamero, head of the Foreign Language Department. Consequently, there are English classes that surpass the 30 students, when according to Murphy (1998) the highest number in an English class is 25. As a result, teachers feel overwhelmed when they teach in such groups. On the other hand, students feel that they are not achieving the learning quota they should be getting at that level of studies. Also, according to students, there are many other negative factors that have a direct relationship with learning English as part of a large group.

There has been a lot of different opinions regarding the adequate number of students in a classroom. According to Hess (2001), a class is considered to be large if it has 30 students or more. Added to this, Brown (2001), believed that an ideal class should not exceed 12 students. On the other hand, Ur (1996), stated that large classes are those with a specific number of students that teachers cannot handle, and resources are not enough to facilitate the teaching and learning process and that pose many problems for both teachers and students. Hence, it is not recommended to have large classes since learners do not take the most out of them.

In order to get a general insight about this situation, a survey was handed to the students who took the subject of Advanced Intensive English II on previous years. And some relevant information was obtained. According to the results that were gotten in the survey passed to those students it could be determined that most of the students agreed that due to the large number of students in the classroom there is a negative influence of developing the speaking skill.

Besides, all the students that took the survey agreed that their handle of the language and the learning of the language per se could improve if the classes were given in a personalized way. On the other hand, due to the reduced space in the classroom and with a large number of students in them, most of the students were in agreement that they could not make the activities in an appropriate way. Therefore, the learning was affected in a negative way. Another question that was made to the students was related with one of the most important aspects in the learning process which is the feedback done by the teacher when speaking evaluated activities and oral tasks were done.

In response to this problem, the present study aims to present a “proposal to deal with the factors that affect the development of the speaking skill in the students from Advanced Intensive English II course, group 03, semester I, 2018 at the Foreign Language Department at the Schools of Arts and Sciences at the University of El Salvador’’. This study is mainly focused on outlining a side proposal to deal with the large number of students in this course and the factors that affect negatively the development of their speaking skill.

1.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1.2.1 General Question

- What is the proposal to deal with large groups in the development of the speaking skill in the students from the Advanced Intensive English II course, group 03, semester I, 2018, at the Foreign Language Department at the School of Arts and Sciences at the University of El Salvador?

1.2.2 Subsidiary Questions

- Which are the communicative strategies being implemented to develop the speaking skill in the Intensive English II course, group 03?
- Which are the communicative strategies being implemented by teachers in a large group to develop the speaking skill at the Foreign Language Department?
- Which are the communicative strategies proposed by experts to handle large classes?

1.3 OBJECTIVES

1.3.1 General Objective

- To propose strategies to deal with the difficulties the students have in the development of the speaking skill due to the large number of students in class at the Foreign Language Department at the School of Arts and Sciences at the University of El Salvador.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

- To outline the strategies to help the development of the speaking skill in the students from Advanced Intensive English II course, group 03 at the Foreign Language Department due to the large number of students.
- To list the current strategies being implemented in a large group to develop the speaking skill at the Foreign Language Department.
- To outline the strategies proposed by experts to be implemented in a large group to develop the speaking skill.

1.4 JUSTIFICATION

In recent years the number of students at the FLD has increased. So, the main focus of this research is to find strategies that can help the development of the speaking skill in a large class. The researcher team has decided to focus in the students from the Advanced Intensive English II course, group 03, at the Foreign Language Department at The University of El Salvador due to the large number of students and the advanced speaking level they might have. Having many people in this course make teachers both minimize the speaking activities and give fewer opportunities to participate to all of them due to the large number of students in the classroom.

We have chosen this topic to present an alternative to help students with the development of their speaking skill since the researchers have noticed that because of the large number of students in the classroom they present a lack of use of their speaking skill. A diagnostic was made to check whether being in a large class affect the development of the speaking skill. The students feel there is not enough time to use the language due to the large number of students in the classroom. Besides, the teacher does not have sufficient time for every student and the atmosphere is not appealing not only for the students but also for the teacher.

This research will contribute both teachers and students from the Foreign Language Department to deal with large classes in the development of the students speaking skill. In order to obtain the information, the research team is looking towards, a number of instruments and procedures to gather the necessary information were used. This all with the aim of proposing strategies and techniques to help the students' improvement of their speaking skill.

CHAPTER II

2.1 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this section of the research profile, the research team presents first the theory behind the study which is the constructivist approach. After that, the researcher team presents the theory regarding class size. Besides, it contains a historical overview of teaching English and specifically teaching speaking as well as how the number of students in classroom have been changing through the previous decades. Next, the researcher team provides some of the most popular definitions for large class according to different authors followed by what the scholars and researchers with knowledge on the matter think regarding the large number of students in the classroom and the methods used to handle it. Finally, the strategies proposed to deal with a large class are presented.

To begin with, it is important to talk about the constructivist approach which is the base of the research per se. This approach focuses especially on innovative activities and on the acquisition and construction of pure knowledge and therefore, the students' academic results of constructivist classrooms are more positive than those which are not. Another aspect to regard is that the learner is viewed as an information constructor and learning is merely seen as a constructive process. Based on that, the research team will be working along the investigation having this approach as fundamental to let people know about the results specifically, a proposal including activities, tasks and large group management ideas taken from the existing theory and from various experts in the matter to deal with large groups and the development of students' speaking skill.

2.1.1 History of Large Classes

The class size concerns of today did not begin yesterday, they have a long history in teaching. Back in time, around 392 B.C.E., Isocrates opened an academy of rhetoric in Athens to train Athenian generals and statesmen in which he insisted on enrolling no more than six or eight students in his school at a time. A historian who backed up Isocrates' ideal

class size was Edward J. Power. He explained that Isocrates admitted "only a few students to his classes because of his extraordinary concern for care." Furthermore, Quintilian, a rhetorician writing in the Roman Empire around 100 CE, cited the practices in Isocrates school as evidence that a caring education required small class sizes. He also argued in *Institutes of Oratory*, that "care had nothing whatever to do with discipline. In other words, it meant simply that only a few students at a time could be taught effectively."

Another known historian to talk about the class size concerns was Erasmus, the Dutch Humanist, who wrote in his 1529 study of education ‘*De Pueris Instituendis*’ about the advantages of private tutoring over ecclesiastic and public schools, where he believed classes had grown too large. He recognized that most parents would have to choose large class sizes because of the financial costs of such tutoring. Starting the 20th century, the theorist John Dewey stated that in his ideal school, class sizes should be very small and as he stated, “for the purposes of convenience, the children are divided into small groups of eight to twelve according to the kind of work and the age of the children. It is expected that the teacher will give attention to the specific powers and deficiencies of each child.”

2.1.2 Defining a large class

There is no global definition of what large class is. “The concept of what constitutes a large class is difficult to define because it is not a tangible construct; but rather it is subjective and depends on many variables” pointed Shamin, Negash, Chuku & Demewoz, (2007). Therefore, researchers’ viewpoints varied about large class definition. According to Hensley & Oakley (1998, p144) “Forty students in a foreign language class may well qualify as a large class”. Also, Mulryan-Kyne (2010), referred to a large class as “a class that is too large for effective teaching to occur” (p.176).

As consequence, it is quite known that overpopulation is one of the biggest problems that affect the teaching-learning process not only in the present time but also in the past and future. Nevertheless, reduction of large classes does not seem to be an option in the current educational system. Therefore, “teachers must use a wide range of strategies and teaching

techniques to ensure student's language learning, that is why it is more than a necessity to find out the effective approaches to maximize teaching and learning in large classes in general and in large EFL classes in particular", Madrid & McLaren (2001) stated. Giving a glance at the University of El Salvador, the number of students in most of the subjects taught at this university exceeds the number established by experts in teaching a foreign language.

This is one of the biggest issues that schools and teachers are getting used to facing nowadays in which a combination of an increasing population and a decrease in funding has caused class sizes to increase dramatically. Hypothetically speaking, class sizes would contain from 15 to 20 students per group, yet many classrooms now regularly exceed thirty students, and it is not uncommon to see more than forty students in a single class. Added to this, classroom overcrowding has sadly been accepted as normal and it is not likely going to go away anytime soon. So, schools and teachers must create workable solutions to make the best out of this situation making learning appealing for everybody.

“Individual students do not have much of chance to say anything on their own. Communication between individuals is more difficult in a group of twenty or thirty than it is in groups of four or five.”

— Harmer (1992) (P.143)



Considering Harmer's quote mentioned above, in large classes, it is quite difficult to get a satisfactory knowledge of student's needs. Just to list some situations, building rapport with students and remembering their names might be some of the problems that both teacher and students face every day. For instance, teachers at the University of El Salvador who have more than three groups with 50 students in each of them may find hard to remember more

than a hundred names. Another situation of having a large number of students is the noise level which is inevitably high making teachers experience stressing moments. Furthermore, teachers are daily facing different problems such as, the part of speaking, monitoring and giving feedback and as per Christensen, (1994) stated “there are difficulties for teachers when moving around classroom and paying attention to students.”

Another challenge for teachers related to the learning process is when organizing, planning and presenting lessons for large groups. In fact, engaging learners actively in the learning process may not be easy in a crowded class for classrooms present an impersonal and ineffective learning atmosphere. Frederick (2002) pointed that “teachers cannot identify problems properly and give feedback”. Consequently, as per Blatchford (2007) all of this will become a negative stimulus and cause students to lose their interest and be unwilling to cooperate with the teacher in class.

Something of great relevance for both teachers and students is the number of students in the classroom since all the students are given the same opportunities to participate and to get feedback when necessary. Blatchford (2002) found that in large groups, students have less active roles and interactions with their teachers. Furthermore, a large class provides students with poor individual attention, focusing more on active students than on the shy ones, putting these students in the state of passive learners or audience.

Moreover, the ability of teachers to organize classrooms and manage the behavior of their students is critical to achieving positive educational outcomes. Although sound behavior management does not guarantee effective instruction possible. On the other hand, highly effective instruction reduces, but does not eliminate, classroom behavior problems (Emmer & Stough, 2001). Hayes (1997) summarized the problems with teaching in large classes as follows: discomfort, lack of control, individual attention, evaluation, and learning effectiveness.

2.1.3 Teachers and Students' Difficulties in a Large Class

Among the known disadvantages of being part of large groups, there are three main ones that students identify in an English Foreign Language Large Class such as, student's interaction, limited physical space and student's misbehavior. DhORITY & Jensen (1988) thought that an overcrowded classroom with more than a hundred students restricted an important part of the learning process which is "forming relationships". It is really challenging to form relationships, and to know each other. In addition to this, it is uncomfortable to interact in a room where there is not enough space to move out, where the teacher's voice cannot be heard at the back, where students are chatting, bored, yawning, and cell phones are ringing anywhere.

In most cases, teachers complain that in large classes students show very little respect for each other and begin chatting as soon as discussions are about to begin. So, to avoid this problematic situation, Wisman & Cordes (1995), mentioned an excellent way to engage students to participate by asking them a lot of questions that they can respond at once. Also, Murylan Kyne (2010), outlined the importance of participation by emphasizing how much impact engaging students has on listening to their teacher and peers when they talk, because students get a high percentage of their knowledge from their peers. Moreover, by doing these, students quickly develop new concepts, understanding and acquire skills.

2.1.4 Definition of Speaking

As a general concept, according to (Carter & McCarthy, 1995), language is a means of thinking and transferring culture from one generation to another as well as from one nation to another; and, also, a means of communication among people. For this reason, many countries emphasize teaching other languages than the native language to its citizens. Nowadays, English is used for different purposes. Just to give some examples, it is the language for international communication, science, commerce; advertising, diplomacy and transmitting advanced technology.

Going beyond the language use, there is an important skill which is relevant for students to communicate and that is the speaking skill. This is one of the four language skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking). Moreover, it is the means through which learners can communicate with others to achieve certain goals or to express their opinions, intentions, hopes and viewpoints. In much more technical words, speaking is defined as the production of auditory signals designed to produce differential verbal responses in a listener. Burns & Joyce (1997) define speaking as an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing, receiving and processing information.

2.1.5 Historical Overview of the Teaching of Speaking

Something of great relevance to be mentioned is the evolution of the speaking skill through history. From the grammar translation method to the communicative approach, there have been many approaches in the teaching history. Although, the practice of speaking in the classroom is a key element in the development of the second language, oral skills have not always been central in second language teaching methodologies. For instance, the grammar-translation method traditionally focused on reading texts and sentences, just translating them from the L1 to the L2 and vice versa (Schmidt, 1994; Ellis, 2001). Since this method focused mainly on grammatical rules, syntactic structures and the memorization of vocabulary, the speaking skill was not a priority.

Other important methods to highlight are the direct method and the audio-lingual method since both of them focused on repetition and instant correction as a way of learning the target language, Bygate (2009) believed. When talking about the direct method, it takes oral communication as fundamental and pronunciation is emphasized from the outset; as opposed to the grammar-translation method, the students' native language is not used in the classroom, whereas the audio-lingual method emphasizes language structures with vocabulary and grammar structures tending to be presented through dialogues which are learned by imitation and repetition.

In addition, both communicative language teaching and the silent way share a focus on personal communication and are thus oriented towards learners' individual learning processes and personal communication. For instance, in the silent way, the personal aspect of speech can be seen in the focus on the use of language for self-expression and on developing independence from the teacher (Roslyn Young, 2000). Besides, personal communication is also relevant in the communicative approach and indeed the focus of this method lies on becoming communicatively competent to use the language appropriately in given communicative contexts.

Being more specific, the communicative approach takes the position that linguistic competence must develop along with the ability to convey intended meaning appropriately in different social contexts (Bygate, 2009). As can be observed, speaking per se has not always been the main focus of interest in these different approaches but has often been seen as a means of developing teaching methodologies. In other words, teaching the speaking skill has frequently not been an objective in its own right. According to Bygate (2009:4), "speaking is often seen as how it can contribute to language acquisition in general."

2.1.6 Principles for Teaching Speaking

When teaching any language, it is important to regard some principles to make students use the language anywhere and anytime. So here are some of them to consider. First, giving students practice with both fluency and accuracy. In accordance with Nunan (2003, p55), accuracy is the extent to which students' speeches match what people actually say when they use the target language. Fluency is the extent to which speakers use the language quickly and confidently, with few hesitations or unnatural pauses, false start, word searches, etc.

Besides that, the second principle is providing opportunities for students to talk by using group work or pair work, and limited teacher talk. Teachers should be careful about the participation of the student in the class. He or she should encourage the student to speak in the class and provide opportunities for them, so they may feel free to speak ignoring limitations. Nunan (2003) has pointed out referring the result of a research: "...teachers do approximately 50 to 80 percent of the talking in classroom". (p55). He further suggested that pair work and group work activities can be used to increase the amount of time that learners get to speak in the target language during lessons.



The last principle is, designing class activities that involve guidance and practice in both transactional and intersectional speaking. When we talk with someone outside the classroom, we usually do so for interactional or transactional purposes. Interactional speech is communicating with someone for social purposes. It includes both establishing and maintaining social relationships. Speaking inside the classroom need to embody both interactional and transactional purposes, since language learners will have to speak the target language in both transactional and intersectional settings.

2.1.7 Causes of English-Speaking Fears

Although some authors recognize anxiety occurs during test taking, writing and reading, we focused our study in the speaking skill since it is when fear is more evident in our context. Turula (2004) identifies four categories of possible causes: academic, cognitive, social and personal. Based on the reviewed theory, there could be identified some factors that may cause language anxiety in our context, which can be summarized within four categories which are: Psychological, cognitive, methodological and social-affective. These categories are shown in the following diagram and should be taken into account.

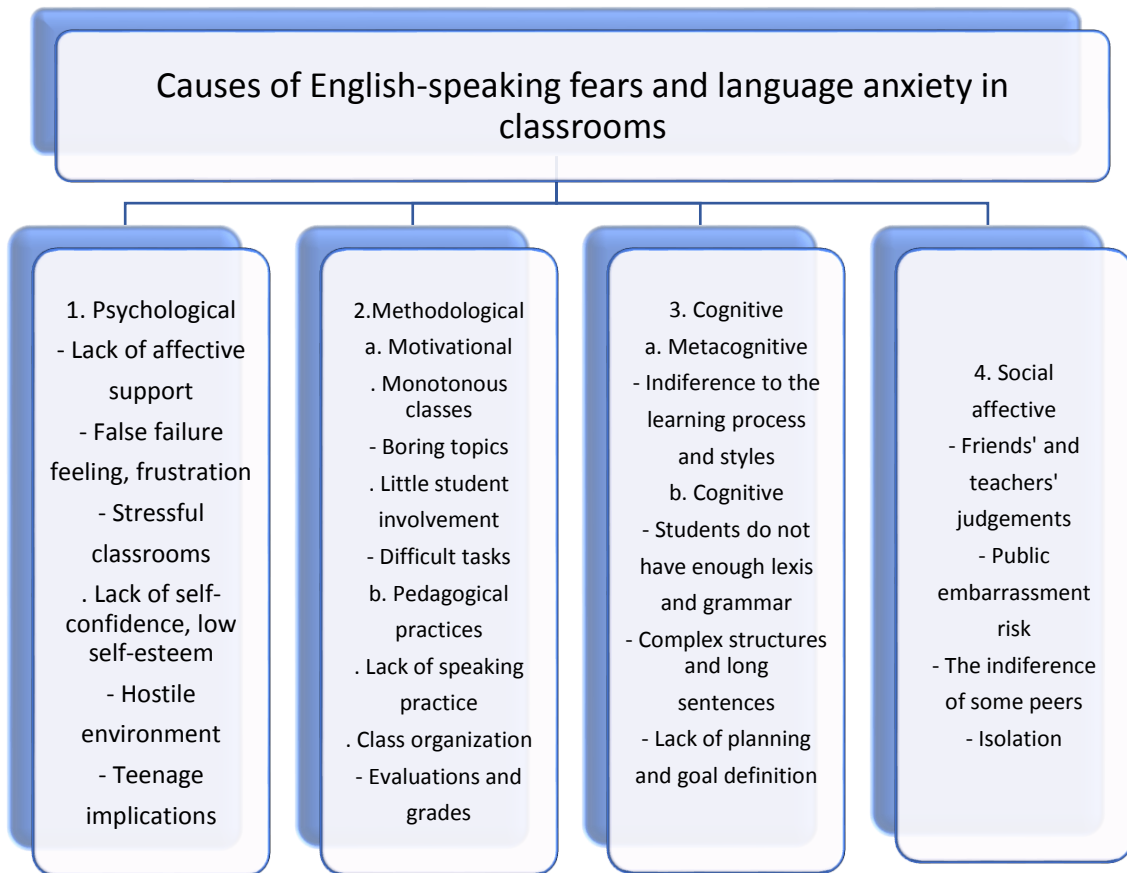


Diagram 1. Causes of English-speaking fears and language anxiety in classrooms.

Source: BUITRAGO TINJACA, Rocío Amparo and AYALA CONTRERAS, Ruth. Overcoming Fear of Speaking in English through Meaningful Activities: A Study with Teenagers*. Profile [online]. 2008, n.9 [cited 2018-09-06], pp.23-46.

The importance of knowing the problems that students have is that there can be searched strategies to help the students overcome their fears of expressing themselves orally, to explore meaningful activities to help students feel confident and to provide opportunities to strengthen oral communication. The analysis of the theory led to four main categories summarized in Diagram 2.

They were based on the studies on language anxiety carried out by Turula (2004), Jones (2004), Dörnyei (2002), Brophy (1998), Davies & Rinvoluceri (1990), Von Worde (2003); and on the studies about learning strategies by Oxford (1990) and O'Malley & Chamot (1990), and learning strategies for communication by Bygate (1987).

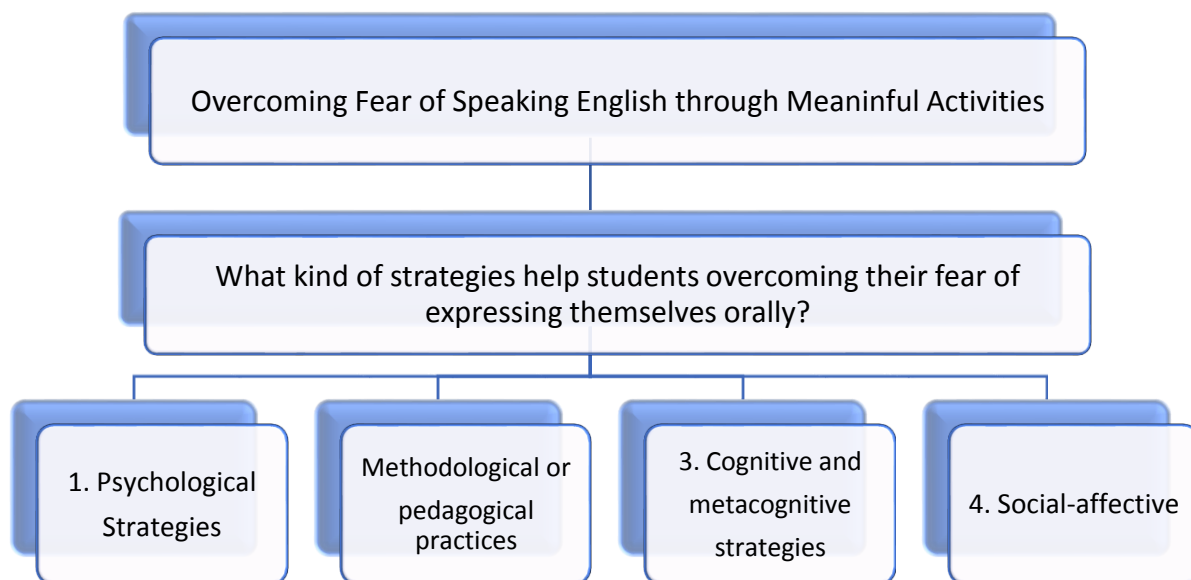


Diagram 2. Categories found in the data analysis. Source: BUITRAGO TINJACA, Rocío Amparo and AYALA CONTRERAS, Ruth. Overcoming Fear of Speaking in English through Meaningful Activities: A Study with Teenagers. Profile [online]. 2008, n.9 [cited 2018-09-06], pp.23-46.

2.1.8 Current Strategies to Handle Large Groups

As Mohammed Rhalmi (2013) stated, it is certainly very difficult for a teacher to deal with large classes. Anything done to fix the problem would have no or little impact unless students are really motivated to learn. Nevertheless, the following strategies may be useful to help the intensity of the situation. First, it would be a great idea to train students to work in small groups of five to seven students. And when working in groups, it would be beneficial for students to sit around in a circle so that everyone could have a chance to participate. Those

groups should include fewer members to avoid non-participative students. It is important to find active roles for students to avoid them being lazy.

Besides, according to him, pair work may be also a good alternative to practice conversations, exercises and other language activities. Pairing weaker students with stronger ones might be an option unless teachers fear the weaker students feel intimidated. Also, changing the classroom desk arrangement to take into consideration the large number of students is a good idea. Finding out the right arrangement is up to the teachers' creativity and classroom size. Keeping in mind that the location of the desks should make cooperative work easier. To optimize teachers' work with students with learning difficulties, they should be given seats in front of the class, closer to the whiteboard so that the teacher can spot difficulties easily while teaching.

Another strategy in order to reduce stress and noise level, is to set simple rules for class management. The first one is establishing simple rules of acceptable behavior for everybody to observe when working in groups, in pairs or individually. The next one is to teach the students to deal with classroom chores. For instance, getting into and out of the classroom at the start and end of class or during recess time, handing out books, papers, and other materials; cleaning the whiteboard and ordering their desks and putting away school materials at the end of the class.

The next strategy for teachers in large classes is to delegate some of the work to more able students. These can play the role of teachers' assistants. Another strategy that might be effective for some teachers is to split the class into weak students and more able students. This would make it possible for the teacher to concentrate on the weaker students. However, this should be done with a lot of caution so as not to affect weaker students' self-esteem.

Another strategy is the use of technology. Technology ensures that everyone has time to connect with the teacher. For instance, teachers may plan to do the following: A large class will be better off with a blog or a wiki where students and the teacher could meet at home and using students' emails would make it easier for teachers to connect with students off

class. According to Mohammed Rhalmi (2013), teaching large classes can be discouraging if you have never stood in front of that many students before. Ideally, ESL class sizes are properly small. Discipline is easier, and teachers can devote more resources and time to giving each student the attention that they need. Things do not always work out like that, though. In many schools, where resources are limited, teachers may find themselves staring with 20 or more faces. There are a few advices he propose to help manage such groups.

The first one is to plan de class activities. To keep a large class engaged, teachers need to keep things moving and have a lot of energy. That means they need to know exactly what he or she and the students are doing next. In the meantime, while teachers are through textbooks or notes trying to find the right page or choose an activity is the perfect time for students to get distracted and start misbehaving. As well as, establishing routines are one of the most important things to have in terms of maintaining order in the classroom. When students know exactly what is expected of them, what books they need to have ready, and how to do certain activities, the class flows by easily and efficiently.

Besides planning the class, teachers need to be strict about discipline and rules. This do not mean they have to be a mean teacher. It does mean that you cannot let students get away with little things like talking to their neighbor or starting fights. Teachers need to make it clear from the first day of class what they won't tolerate and enforce it consistently. Moreover, teachers need to have extra activities. In the event that the teacher does have to deal with one or two students' behavior or leave the classroom for some reason, have something prepared for the students to work on independently.

The next advice is to manage the time carefully. With so many students, it is common to let a game or activity take up a lot of time. So, the teacher needs to have a clock visible and keep a close eye on it or bring a timer to keep a strict limit on activities. Teachers always need to have extra activities planned and ready to go in case they have extra time. Also, to have a seating arrangement ready. Teachers know their students, so they need to think about which students are most likely to start chatting or fighting during class. Teachers need to think about which students are struggling and try to seat them next to students who have a

strong grasp of the material. Make some notes during the first week of classes about what problems have come up.

The following is to divide the class into teams. This in order to have fun, to make a competitive environment that can help to motivate students, by rewarding points for the quietest team, best behavior, or fastest to finish their work. Teachers need as well to give every student a chance to participate. In a large classroom, it is common for quieter students to fade into the background while the more outgoing ones answer the questions and participate. Whether teachers are keeping track of who they call on, playing games where everyone has to participate, or doing partner work, they need to make sure that every student is involved.

The last advice is to reinforce and review. Before starting any independent work, practice the lessons, patterns, or new vocabulary thoroughly. Teachers don't have much time or resources to give individual attention to a lot of students, so they need to be sure that the whole class really understands everything and can do the work pretty independently. Plan name-based, "get-to-know-you" activities to help establish rapport. According to Mohammed Rhalmi (2013), it is true that teaching a large class is challenging as it is pedagogically unacceptable and psychologically irrelevant. These classes involve, most of the times, mixed abilities, language levels, motivation, needs, interests, and goals. Nevertheless, teaching and managing such classes is possible if steps such as those described above are taken.

CHAPTER III

3.1 METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN

The following methodological design section specifies the type of approach that was used in the present research. Also, the researchers explain the type of research and the research design. Besides, the research team specifies who is the population under study, the sample and the reason why it was chosen. Finally, this section contains the instruments that were used to collect the data needed to get the answers to the research questions and therefore accomplish the objectives of the research.

3.1.1 Type of Approach

A qualitative "approach" is a general way of thinking about conducting qualitative research. It describes, either explicitly or implicitly, the purpose of the qualitative research, the role of the researcher(s), the stages of research, and the method of data analysis. The research team used the qualitative research to carry out the study since the research was focused on the problems of the large number of students in the development of their speaking skill rather than in numeric data.

3.1.2 Type of Research

The research is a case study, specifically a descriptive case study and it can be explained as a statement of affairs as they are at present with the researcher having no control over variables. Moreover, "descriptive studies may be characterized as simply the attempt to determine, describe or identify what is (the phenomenon) ...". (Ethridge, D.E. 2004) (P.24). The researcher team used the descriptive research since the aim is to list the communicative strategies in order to develop the speaking skill in large classes such as the Advanced Intensive English II groups from the Foreign Language Department at the University of El Salvador.

3.1.3 Research Design

Non-experimental research is research that lacks the manipulation of an independent variable, random assignment of participants to conditions or orders of conditions, or both. So, in this research project, the type of study is non-experimental since the researcher group only collected the information by asking the students opinions and by collecting the perspectives of the teacher in charge of the class and students. There was no manipulation of any of the variables at any time.

3.1.4 Population

This study took place at the University of El Salvador with one group of the Advanced Intensive English II at the Foreign Language Department. There is one group which was the population of the study: the group 03 in the morning with 28 students. The subject of Advanced Intensive English II was chosen by the researchers because that level is the last of the Intensive English courses where students are expected to handle the speaking skill and due to the large number of students in each group. Consequently, the group fits into the topic under study.

3.1.5 Sample

The sample for this study is 28 students among boys and girls from the group 03 which are all the students from the Advanced Intensive English II group 03 from the Teaching English major at the Foreign Language Department at the School of Arts and Sciences at the University of El Salvador, Main Campus.

3.2 Techniques and Instruments

In this research project, the researcher group made use of two techniques and their corresponding instruments to gather information regarding the topic under study. The techniques were: the interview, which had the objective to collect evidence from the teacher and experts regarding large number of students in the Advanced Intensive English II at the Teaching English major using a questionnaire. The first instrument, which was addressed to the teachers from the Foreign Language Department, contained 11 items between open and close questions as well as follow up questions to the interviewee to give this the opportunity to express himself and provide recommendations that contribute to solving the problem. The second instrument, which was addressed to experts, contained 14 items to respond to.

The second technique to collect the information was the observation and its corresponding instrument which is a checklist containing 15 items. This instrument was chosen since observing the sample group would contribute to understanding how students from the Advanced Intensive English II group 03 at the Foreign Language Department felt regarding the large group they are part of and what their thoughts and concerns are about the matter.

The validity and reliability of these instruments rely on the two main sources from which the data was collected. Furthermore, with the first interviews the teachers' points of view were gotten and, most important, relevant information was gotten through the interviews to the experts on the subject. Also, the students' perspectives were collected through a checklist. All these instruments were checked by the assessor. Besides, the instruments were piloted in another group taking as sample five students to make the necessary changes where they were needed.

3.3 Data Analysis

The method used to analyze the data is called Data Triangulation which is, according to Denzin (1970), "a combination of two or more theories, data sources, research methods, in the study of a particular phenomenon." Also, Morse defines the methodologic triangulation as "the use of at least two methods, usually qualitative and quantitative to address the same research matter". When a particular research method is inadequate, the triangulation is used to ensure that a more comprehensive addressing of the resolution of the research matter is taken.

CHAPTER IV

4. ANSWER TO RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Which are the communicative strategies being implemented to develop the speaking skill in the Advanced Intensive English II course, group 03?

There are different definitions for speaking: however, the most accepted definition according to the experts is “an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing, receiving, and processing information”, Burns & Joyce (1997). Nowadays, English speaking is used for multiple purposes such as: international communication, science, commerce, advertising, diplomacy and transmitting advanced technology. For that reason, the implementation of communicative strategies is an essential part in the development of speaking competences. Based on that, the Foreign Language Department at the University of El Salvador takes the teaching of the English speaking as one of the most important skills to be developed. Moreover, the communicative strategies being implemented to develop the speaking skill in the Advanced Intensive English II, course, group 03 are described in the next section.

One of these strategies is conversation in groups. This is one of the most commonly used strategies by all the teachers at the Foreign Language Department. From what could be observed in the classroom, the use of the conversation in groups had two advantages when practicing the speaking skill in a large group. One of them is that most of the students can be talking and practicing for a longer period time which according to the theory is necessary to get fluency in the target language. The second advantage is the input language the students receive from their peers since according to Murylan Kyne (2010), it is really important to engage the students on listening to their peers since they get a high percentage of their knowledge from them. Consequently, by doing these, students quickly develop new concepts, understanding and acquire new skills. Besides this strategy, there was another one being used in the classroom.

Another communicative strategy implemented in the Advanced Intensive English II course, group 03 is the role play. Role plays can be defined as the act of imitating the role of a different person, for example as a training exercise or in language learning, according to Collins Dictionary. Role plays have two advantages for teachers and students. The first one that was observed is that all the students have the opportunity to talk. When they do roleplays, most of the times all the students participate at any point of the activity which is important to get all the students practicing. Another advantage is that students get to use different kind of words from everyday vocabulary and vocabulary used in imaginary situations which is not commonly used. This gets the students to vary the type of vocabulary they use in certain situations. Besides, there is another strategy that was observed in the group.

The last communicative strategy that was observed is the debate. According to Collins Dictionary, a debate is defined as a discussion about a subject on which people have different views. Debates have different advantages for developing the speaking skill in the students. One of the advantages is to make students practice the speaking skill by expressing their ideas. This is an advantage because students have the opportunity to use the fluency and accuracy they have acquire during the lessons. Which according to Nunan (2003), fluency and accuracy are a very important part in the speaking. Another advantage is to learn new vocabulary since they need to read before the actual debate. All of these strategies were found to be helpful at the moment of developing the speaking skill in the students from Advanced Intensive English II course, group 03.

The communicative strategies being implemented to develop in the speaking skill were a crucial part in the learning process. The use of group work which it advantages are most of the students can be taking and practicing for a long time and the input language they received from their peers. The use of roleplays with the advantages of get all the students to practice the oral skill and to use a variety of vocabulary. Besides, the use of debates which has the advantages of making students express their own ideas putting into practice the fluency and accuracy learnt in the class and the second advantage is which is making them get new vocabulary when reading before an actual debate. All of these communicative strategies were

observed in the Advanced Intensive English course, group 03 and it was confirmed that all these which are implemented work in the development of the speaking skill.

2. Which are the communicative strategies being implemented by teachers in a large group to develop the speaking skill at the Foreign Language Department?

In the last decades, in El Salvador there has been an increasing number of inhabitants according to the General Bureau of Statistics and Census (DIGESTIC). Consequently, at the University of El Salvador there has been as well an increasing number in its population which has led to a large number of students in most of its classrooms. For instance, the Foreign Language Department is one of the most affected departments by the over population, mentioned the head of the department. Nowadays, most of the classes surpass the 25 students in the class which is considered to be a large group. Brown (2001), believed that an ideal class should not exceed 12 students. What a large class is, however, is not specifically defined. The most commonly used definition is given by Ur (1996), who stated that ‘‘large classes are those with a specific number of students that teachers cannot handle, and resources are not enough to facilitate the teaching and learning process and that pose many problems for both teachers and students.’’ Furthermore, due to the large number of students in the classrooms it is necessary for teachers to implement some communicative strategies to develop the speaking skill at the Foreign Language Department.

The first communicative strategy mentioned by teachers is conversation in pairs. According to teachers, having conversation in pairs is one of the most effective strategies to have the students speaking while improving their fluency, accuracy, grammar as well as their listening skills. There are many advantages in having a conversation in pairs according to teachers. The first advantage is that since there are only two students involved their talking time is increased dramatically compared to other communicative strategies. The second advantage is that there exists reciprocity which means that they not only have the chance to practice their oral skill but their listening skill as well since they are getting a response to their questions as well. A third advantage has to do with monitoring. Since the students

talking time is higher, teachers have a better chance to catch students' mistakes and correct them appropriately.

The second communicative strategy that works to develop to speaking skill in a large group is the debate. Debates are considered one of the most effective strategies to have students practicing and developing their oral competences since it makes students express their ideas and develop fluency while speaking. Besides, making use of debates in the classroom helps teachers realize about the lack of information or misinformation that students might have. This is a great way for students to have feedback from the teacher since there must be a group discussion always at the end of each debate, so students know the weak points they have. According to teachers, however, debates should be controlled by the teacher in charge of the class, in other words, they need to be carried in a guided way. There is another communicative strategy that teachers use to develop the speaking skill at the Foreign Language Department besides debates.

The next communicative strategy is the role play. When students make use of role plays, they not only put in practice the speaking skill, but they create imaginary situations that could happen in the real life as well. All of these helps teachers to evaluate the correct pronunciation of words, the use of fluency and to see if students are afraid of speaking the L2. To make this happens, the teacher needs to provide an example to all the students that helps them to create the right scenario to develop their roleplays in a proper manner. The use of role plays is not only a fun way to make students practice their oral skill, but they can socialize and to not be afraid.

The last strategy implemented by teachers at the Foreign Language Department is the use of media as videos and recordings. The use of videos in an English class in which students are practicing the oral skill is really important due to the fact that when they see people taking in the target language, they can make use of that vocabulary and practice the manner in which a native speaker expresses their feelings and thoughts. Teachers use this method as a way to show the American culture and new vocabulary that students can make use of in a fluent way. The use of recording makes the students listen and practice their listening skill which provide

them increases Besides, making use of audiovisuals in the classroom not only gives the students the opportunities to practice in the classroom but also out of it.

There are different communicative strategies being implemented by the teachers at the Foreign Language Department and all with the same goal which is the development of the speaking skill. One of the strategies is the use of conversations in pairs since it gives students practice for a longer period of time and listening input. The second strategy is the debate which is used to have students expressing their ideas and thoughts with fluency after having gotten the necessary information from reading. The next strategy implemented by teachers are role plays which, according to them, play an important role in the development of creativity and free talking. The last strategy to have students speaking is the use of audiovisuals. Making use of videos and recordings helps students get the input they do not get from their teachers. It has some advantages as listening to a native speaker, so they get the right pronunciation of words and get drenched with the culture of the target language. Having all these strategies in mind it was confirmed that their use is effective for developing the speaking skill on students from large groups.

3. Which are the communicative strategies proposed by experts to handle large classes?

Handling a class requires a good knowledge of classroom management from teachers which is an essential part of the teaching-learning process. Therefore, in large groups it is important for teachers to know communicative strategies that help the development of the speaking skill on the students. Otherwise, some problems might arise. According to Hayes (1997), the problems with teaching in large classes are the following: discomfort, lack of control, lack of individual attention, poor evaluation, and learning effectiveness. Consequently, here are several communicative strategies proposed by experts to handle a large class.

The first strategy proposed by experts to develop the speaking skill in a large group is the role play. Role plays are activities where students are asked to pretend to be in various social contexts and various social roles (Harmer, 2001; Thornbury, 2005; Solcova, 2011). The role play strategy supports the theory of Vygotsky in Brown (2008) as he stated that the development of language performance occurs in sociocultural interaction in learning process. Furthermore, in terms of function of speaking proposed by Brown and Yule (1999), Brown (2001), Bailey (2005), Thornbury (2005), and Richards (2008), the activity used talk as interaction because it served to maintain social relationship and had purposes to be friendly and nice to interact with others. On a final note, role-plays and simulations increase learners' self-confidence and encourage more hesitant learners to speak because it is not themselves who they represent when speaking and thus they do not have to take the responsibility for their utterances and actions (Harmer 1984).



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The next strategy is to have the students do creative tasks. Creative tasks resemble real-life tasks as Solcova (2011) believes that students develop their fluency best if engaged in tasks where all their concentration focuses on producing something rather than on the language itself. This strategy is based on a principle that teachers bear in mind what students need, from language-based focus on accuracy to message-based focus on interaction, meaning, and fluency (Brown, 2001). Using this strategy, the teacher adds some expressions to make the activity look real. For instance, there were the one delivering the procedure and others listening, so that interaction between the speaker and the listener can be built up. Moreover, according to Brown and Yule (1999), Bailey (2005), and Richards (2008), the function of speaking in this activity was talk as transaction. As argued by Thornbury (2005), speaking activity should be performed in situations where students can show interest, understanding, and ask questions or make comments. Moreover, materials related to students' lives and interests can increase students' involvement in the classroom (Brown, 2001; Harmer, 2002; Rowley and Hart, 1998; Hammack and Grayson, 2009). So, with the use of this strategy, instead of thinking about the language, the students create and put in practice what they have learned.

The use of drilling is another strategy that is proposed by experts. A drill is defined as “a type of highly controlled oral practice in which the students respond to a given cue” (Matthews, Spratt & Dangerfield, 1991, p.210). Drilling, as Thornbury (2005) defined, is a strategy to improve pronunciation by imitating and repeating words, phrases, and even whole utterances. It functions to make students pay attention to the new materials and emphasize words, phrases, or utterances on students’ mind, move new items from working memory to long term memory, provide means of gaining articulatory control over. Through repetition, learners form habits. As Larsen-Freeman (2000), comments “the more often something is repeated, the stronger the habit and the greater the learning”. When learners put these habits into practice, they have an opportunity to maintain proficiency in the target language. Similarly, Rivers (1964), argues that “foreign language learning is basically a process of mechanical habit formation. Good habits are formed by giving correct responses rather than making mistakes. By memorizing dialogues and performing pattern drills, the chances of producing mistakes are minimized” (p.19-22). The use of drilling is not something new for teachers but is one of the important strategies that experts take into account to make easier the development of oral proficiency on students.

Another useful strategy is to use technology in lessons. According to Robinson, Rhonda; Molenda, Michael; Rezabek, Landra, 2010, educational technology is "the study and ethical practice of facilitating learning and improving performance by creating, using, and managing appropriate technological processes and resources". Nowadays, many websites offer free live chat services which is pedagogically worth for language learner just like the language assessment. Technology also has the power to transform teaching by ushering in a new model of connected teaching. This model links teachers to their students and to professional content, resources, and systems to help them improve their own instruction and personalize learning, as stated by U.S. Department of Education. M. Swain (2004), mentioned on one of her books for the British Council, that innovations in learning technologies for English language teaching and argued that digital technologies are ideally placed to help teachers working with learners, and learners working independently, to do the necessary ‘‘languaging’’ that makes their language development possible. She was referring about doing things with language rather than just learning about language. Swain (2004),

argues that learners can't simply develop based on input. Learners must engage with other people using that language and try to make meaning together. "We need technology in every classroom and in every student and teacher's hand, because it is the pen and paper of our time, and it is the lens through which we experience much of our world", David Warlick (2016).

The next strategy is the meaningful and genuine interaction that arises with debates. Bannink (2002) states that "genuine conversational interactions cannot be the outcome of preplanned lesson agendas, they have to emerge and so, by definition, cannot be planned" (p.271). According to Balcer and Seabury (1965), debate is closely allied with discussion. Debate is "a discussion as a cooperative attempt by two or more individuals, with stimulation and guidance by a leader, to find the best solution to a problem" This is especially so because the classroom setting itself is adverse to real and genuine interaction. The best fluency practice is therefore such that emerges from the situation, for instance, when learners pose a question and a debate arises. Teachers should always exploit these situations fully because they are likely to be one of the best examples of meaningful and natural conversation occurring in class. Consequently, this speaking strategy is one of the most used by experts and teachers when developing the oral skill since it helps students practice freely and express their ideas in a way that they feel has no limit which contributes to the speaking and thinking creativity.

There are different opinions from different authors in regards of the strategies, techniques, and activities that help with the development of the speaking skill for students that are part of large groups. As it is defined, a large class is "a class that is too large for effective teaching to occur", Mulryan-Kyne (2010-176). However, there is not an exact number of students in a class which teachers can refer as "a large class". It all depends on the context and type of education. The five strategies and activities for developing the speaking skill in large groups proposed by experts are the role play, the creative tasks, drilling, the use technology, and debates. All these strategies play an important role in the development of the speaking skill and making a smart use of them in the classroom can motivate the students to practice and it will make the teaching process easier for the teacher.

PROPOSAL:

At the end of the research project, a list of strategies to deal with large groups in the development of the speaking skill by experts in the matter was specified in the answer to the research questions section and are summarized as follows. The proposal is composed by five strategies which are the role play, the use of creative tasks, drillings, the use of technology, and, the debate. These strategies are meant to facilitate the handling of large classes and to promote the development of the oral skill in the students.

CHAPTER V

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 CONCLUSIONS

From the observation made to the students of the Advanced Intensive English II, group 03 and the results gotten through the interviews done to teachers and teaching experts from the FLD the research team concludes that:

Teachers

Teachers from the Foreign Language Department are used to handle large groups due to the number of students in each subject of the major.

Besides, teachers from the FLD feel that there is not enough support and constant training to develop and to be updated in the latest teaching methods and strategies.

Teachers use most of the strategies listed by the teaching experts in order to develop the speaking skill on students.

Students

Only a few students participate in speaking activities such as debates and group conversation during class.

Most students do not participate in oral class activities due to the lack of confidence.

Experts

According to the experts, the number of students in each group is not adequate for a proper learning and development of the oral skill on students.

Besides, the experts believe that being part of a large group impacts negatively the teaching learning process and make things harder for teachers since they are not able to support nor follow each student learning progression.

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

For the authorities:

Taking into account the conclusions from the research paper, the research team provides four recommendations to the authorities from the Foreign Language Department. The first recommendation is to provide teachers with trainings, so they can deal more effectively with large classes as well as to provide them strategies that can facilitate the teaching process. Another recommendation is to provide more desks for students in the department since there are some group with too many students and desks are not enough. A third recommendation is to decrease the number of students in each classroom so that the learning of the contents and the learning process is more effective since according to the findings too many students in a classroom makes the teaching-learning process more difficult. Added to that, the last recommendation is to foment the implementation of new communicative strategies to become more competitive in the English Teaching world as a Department. These recommendations are in basis to the finding and to the responses and thoughts teachers and experts expressed during their interviews to have a more effective teaching department.

For the teachers:

Having in mind the conclusions from the research paper, the research team provides four recommendations to the teachers from the Foreign Language Department. The first recommendation is to keep the class engaged. Teachers need to keep things moving and have a lot of energy. That means teachers need to know exactly what you and the students are doing next. Dead time while they are shuffling through textbooks or notes trying to find the right page or choose an activity is the perfect time for students to get distracted and start misbehaving. Another recommendation is to give every student a chance to participate. In a large classroom, it's easy for quieter students to fade into the background while the more outgoing ones answer the questions and participate as observed in the target group. Whether playing games where everyone must participate, or doing partner work, teachers must make sure that every student is involved. Another recommendation for teachers is to let students know and feel confidence to approach them in case of doubts or anything the students need regarding the subject. That is, teachers should coordinate the time and days so that students can look for them at the right time. The fourth recommendation is to discuss and share experiences with their colleagues about the problems they have faced in large classes and the strategies they have used to overcome those problems.

CHAPTER VI

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ANNEXES

CHAPTER VII

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

Interview Addressed to Experts:

1. In your opinion, how many students does a large class have?

- a) 15-25 students b) 26-35 students c) 36-45 students d) more than 45 students

When experts were asked “in your opinion, how many students does a large class have?” The answers varied from one teacher to another. For example, two of the experts mentioned that for them a large class has above 25 students. While the third expert said that for him was above 35 students. According to the presented results, all the interviewed experts agreed that a large class have more than 25 students, even when the appropriate number of students in a classroom must be from 12 to 15 students, according to Brown (2001).

2. What is your definition of a large class?

In the second question, regarding the definition of a large class, the experts had different points of view. The first one, said that a large class is “one where effective teaching does not occur” because the teacher is not capable of monitoring each of the students. The second interviewee said that a large class is “one where it is difficult for the teacher to monitor the development of the class in the work and activities done by the students”. On the other hand, and according to the third expert a large class is “one in which it is difficult to carry out all the activities that teachers want to do in the class”. According to the results, for the experts, a large class is a class where teachers are not able to develop the activities, they have planned for the class time and where it is difficult for teachers to monitor each student while developing the class.

3. Are students in a small class more likely to have a higher English level than in a large class? Why?

According to the third question posed to the experts regarding whether the English level of students is higher in a small class rather than in a large class the results differed from one interviewee to another. According to the first interviewee the small number of students in a class affected positively the English level of the students. The reason behind his answer, according to him, is that in a small class is it easier for them to carry out all the activities, strategies, and techniques in a more efficient way. According to the second interviewee, small classes affect the English level of the students in a positive way since it is easier for students to monitor the students while developing activities and in-class practices. On the other hand, the third interviewee stated that it all depends on the teachers' expertise and variety of activities; this matter is stated by Ur (1996), he mentioned that 'large classes are those with a specific number of students that teachers cannot handle, and resources are not enough to facilitate the teaching and learning process and that pose many problems for both teachers and students'.

4. Why is a class with a large number of students less effective than one with a small number of students?

Experts were asked about the effectiveness of teaching in a small class rather than in a large class. One of the experts mentioned that is it more effective to teach in a small class rather than in a large one because of the fact that the less students in a class the easier is for teachers to monitor the students' development of the language. According to him, the level of the students is directly affected by how much and how well the students are monitored while practicing their language skills. The second expert mentioned that small classes are more effective since it is easier for teachers to develop the class activities, to monitor the students and to have a more appropriate classroom management. The last expert said that in small classes the activities progress in a better way and the learning process is smoother. As a conclusion, small classes are more effective than large classes since students are better monitored, class activities are better developed and, classroom management is handled in a smoother and more efficient way, as per Mulryan-Kyne (2010), a large class is 'a class that is too large for effective teaching to occur'.

5. Which are some of the most common strategies to deal with a large group?

Regarding the question “Which are some of the most common strategies to deal with a large group”, the first expert stated that one of the most used strategies by him to handle a large group is pair work and group work, presentations in groups and co-evaluations. The next expert mentioned that when dealing with a large group it is necessary to look back at the strategies used by teacher in the past as it is the use of drills. For example, repetition activities, as well as pair activities. The last expert stated that pair work, group work, debates and discussions are a must when dealing with large groups since they have a wider range of work. As a conclusion, all the experts were in agreement with two specific ways of working which are the pair work and the group work.

6. Do you think the current strategies are effective for teaching speaking in a large group?

The experts were asked if they believed the current strategies were effective for teaching speaking in a large group and most of them agreed that they are effective and that teachers must use them if they want to have all the students practicing and developing the speaking skill in the classroom. More specifically, the first interviewee mentioned that it was also important to adapt the current strategies according to the number of students in the class to have them practicing their oral skill. The second interviewee mentioned that current strategies as debates, group presentations and, group work in general were effective if teachers know the exact time to use them. Finally, the third expert agreed that the current strategies are the ones to be used in large classes since they help most of the students participate in one way or another, so they practice and develop their oral skill. As a conclusion, all the experts agreed that the current strategies being implemented to develop the speaking skill on students are effective since they are communicative and make all the students develop their oral skill.

7. Which are the current strategies being implemented to teach the speaking in large groups?

Regarding the question ‘‘Which are the current strategies being implemented to teach the speaking skill in large groups?’’, the experts had different strategies to mention. The first interviewed expert mentioned some of the current strategies that he uses when teaching large groups. Such strategies are: presentations, group work, as well as a recent developed approach which is the flipping classroom where students are supposed to do at home what they should do at the school and by doing at the school what they should be doing at home. Besides, the second expert mentioned some other current strategies as group repetition which according to him works well to have all the students practicing the pronunciation of words at the same time. Added to repetition, he mentioned other strategies such as roleplays and pair work which are the same strategies mentioned by the third interviewee. According to the experts, strategies as pair work and group work are really useful as current strategies to deal with large groups. Nunan (2003) suggested that pair work and group work activities can be used to increase the amount of time that learners get to speak in the target language during lessons.

8. Which are some activities and techniques you recommend for improving the teaching of the speaking skill in students from a large class?

For the interviewees it is really important to have clear a few things before teaching a large group. For instance, the first expert mentioned that some of the activities he recommended for improving the teaching of the speaking skill in a large class are roleplays and the use of communicative activities to make students develop their speaking skill. The next interviewee mentioned that before teaching a large group it is a must to be very well prepared since dealing with such number of students is not an easy task. Besides, he mentioned that it is important to have prepared a lot of activities such as roleplays and debates which according to Mohammed Rhalmi (2013) it is necessary to get all the students practicing their language skills.

9. Which are some of the recommendations you could give to an English teacher to have all the students speak in a large group?

For most of the teachers, it is really important to have all the students practicing their oral skills during class time since according to them that is the only available time they have to develop their skills. Some of the recommendations given by one of the interviewees is to be very well prepared since it is not an easy task to handle a large group. Besides, according to another expert, it is important to have ready a large number of activities for the class.

10. Do you think overpopulation in a class affects the teaching-learning process?

Regarding the question made to experts where they were asked if they thought that overpopulation in a class affected the teaching-learning process, the responses varied but were oriented towards the same conclusion. All the interviewees agreed that overpopulation in a classroom impacts negatively the teaching-learning process. The main two reasons for their answer is the lack of time to give proper feedback and the inability to monitor all the students while they make activities and practice with their peers which leads students to not have corrections at the moment they make mistakes. “Crowded classroom conditions not only make it difficult for students to concentrate on their lessons, but inevitably limit the amount of time teachers can spend on innovative teaching methods such as cooperative learning and group work or, indeed on teaching anything beyond the barest minimum of required material. In addition, because teachers must constantly struggle simply to maintain order in an overcrowded classroom, the likelihood increases that they will suffer from burnout earlier than might otherwise be the case.” (U.S. Dept. of Education, 2014).

11. In your opinion, do you feel is easier to teach in a small class than in a large one?

Regarding the eleventh question in the interview the experts mentioned that it depends on various elements. The first interviewee stated that it all depended on the teachers’ expertise and handle of the class and activities. Besides, the second expert mentioned something different. For him, small classes are always easier since teachers do not have to deal with a number of students they do not have control over. On the other side, if the number of students is small, then, teachers can monitor, provide feedback and focus on the individual characteristics of each student. Added to that, the third expert mentioned that in a small class the communicative strategies are applied in an easier way since if teachers have less students the more opportunities to speak all the students have.

12. In your opinion, what are some of the problems that teachers and students have in a large class in the speaking skill?

Regarding the question number twelve in the interview made to experts, all the experts had similar answers. All of the interviewees think that there is a main problem when handling large classes and that is monitoring. Monitoring is an essential part of the learning process; however, according to the experts, when there are so many students in a class it is very difficult to monitor each student in every activity. And in order to deal with this situation is it important to have ‘students with learning difficulties should be given seats in front of the class, closer to the whiteboard so that the teacher can spot difficulties easily while teaching’ Mohammed Rhalmi (2013).

13. What is the most important thing at the moment to develop the speaking skill in a large class?

Regarding the second last question made to experts, all of them had different point of views. The first expert mentioned that it is really important to be very well prepared and to have a lot of activities for the topics to be taught. The second expert mentioned that having a lot of activities and have the students working in pairs or groups was recommended when practicing the speaking skill in a large group. The third interviewee stated that the most important thing is to have the students practicing the speaking skill among their peers and to reduce considerably the teacher talking time, so they have more time to practice and develop their oral skill.

14. What aspects of the speaking skill are more difficult to develop?

According to the experts, there are some important aspects of the speaking skill which are more difficult to develop on students. The aspect of the speaking skill which is considered by them one of the most difficult to achieve is the accuracy and fluency. Most of the teachers agreed that gaining fluency was not easy; however, at Advanced English levels most of the students had already achieved that fluency. Contrary to accuracy, most of the Advance

English students still have some problems using the proper grammar, subject-verb agreement, mispronunciations, which are part of the accuracy when speaking.

Instrument Addressed to Teachers

1. In your opinion, how many students does a large class have?

When teachers were asked “in your opinion, how many students does a large class have?” The answers varied from one teacher to another. The first teacher mention that for her a large class has above 45 students. While the second teacher said that for him a large class has above 15 students. The next teacher said that for her a large class has above 25 students and the last teacher mention that for him a large class was above 36 students. According to the presented results, all the interviewed teachers agreed that a large class have between 15 and 45 students, even when the appropriate number of students in a classroom must be from 12 to 15 students, according to Brown.

2. What is the highest number of students you have had in an English class?

In the second question, regarding “what is the highest number of students you have had in an English class?”, the answers varied from one teacher to another. Two of the teachers said that for them 40 students have been the highest number of students they have had. The next teacher mention that for her was 45 students has been the highest number of students has had. The last teacher said that the highest number of students she has had was 38 students. According to the results gotten from the teachers it can be said that the highest number of students they have had in an English class goes from 38 to 45 when according to Hess (2001), a class is considered to be large if it has 30 students or more.

3. Do you consider that students’ English level could be higher in a small class?

Regarding to the third question “do you consider that students’ English level could be higher in a small class?”, all of the teachers were in agreement and said that they considered that the English level could be higher in a small class. One of the teachers mentioned that is because the teacher can attend all the doubts and give feedback that students might have. Furthermore, Quintilian, a rhetorician writing in the Roman Empire around 100 CE, confirmed that only a few students at a time could be taught effectively.

4. Do you have the students working individually, in pairs or in groups?

According to the fourth question posed to the teachers if they have students working individually, in pairs or in groups. All of the teachers were in agreement and mentioned that they use those three techniques and said that they use them according to the class activities that they are going to develop; however, according to the theorist John Dewey stated that in his ideal school, class sizes should be very small and as he stated, “for the purposes of convenience, the students are divided into small groups of eight to twelve according to the kind of work and the age of the students. It is expected that the teacher will give attention to the specific powers and deficiencies of each child.”

5. Is it easy to have good interaction and communication with each student?

Teachers were asked if they had a good interaction and communication with each student in the class. The response to that question was the same for all the teachers. They were in agreement, and they said that when they have a large class it is harder for them to have a good interaction and communication with each student in the class than when they have a small class. Subsequently, Blatchford (2002) found that in large classes students have fewer active roles and interactions with their teachers.

6. Is it easy for you to maintain a good discipline in the classroom?

In the sixth question, the teachers were asked if for them it is easy to maintain a good discipline in the classroom. For all of them the answer was the same. One of the teachers, mentioned that this is what works for her “I use the “3 R's”: Have respect for yourself, respect for others, and respect for property”. While another teacher said that “The smaller the class, the better the discipline”. Added to this, another teacher said that “students tend to be undisciplined when they get bored”. That is why all of them were in agreement and said that it is easier to maintain a good discipline in a small class rather than in a large one. According to what Mohammed Rhalmi (2013) stated, ideally, in ESL, class sizes are properly small since discipline is easier to maintain.

7. In a large class, is the physical space of the classroom appropriate for developing all the activities?

The interviewees were asked if in a large class the physical space of the class room was appropriate for developing the class activities. Most of the teachers were in agreement with the fact that when they are teaching in a large class is more difficult to develop some of the activities. For example, one of the teachers said that a class with more than 40 students in a classroom in which there is not enough space can be difficult to make kinesthetic activities. So, for them, it is necessary to have the right space, so they can develop the appropriate activities without having any kind of setback. As stated by Dhority and Jensen in an overcrowded classroom it is really challenging to interact in a room where there is not enough space to move out.

8. Do you consider that the use of activities such as role-plays and debates have a big impact on students' speaking skill?

According to the previous question about the use of activities such as role-plays and debates as a big impact on students' speaking skill. All of the teachers said that those activities help in the development of the speaking skill in the students. The first interviewed said that those are fun and entertain ways to develop speaking skills. While the second teacher said that is not that alone, teachers always need to have a systematic work. According to the teacher, "students need to be exposed, have controlled practice and then they need to practice, kind of PPP (presentation, practice and production)". The third teacher mentioned that the use of those activities can help students to feel confident at the moment of speaking. Also, the last teacher said that using those activities can make students improve their speaking skill. In addition to that, Nunan (2003) mentioned that designing class activities must involve guidance and practice.

9. Which are some of the strategies to make all the students speak in large classes?

There is a variety of strategies that teachers believe they are good to make all the students speak in large classes. One of the interviewed teachers mentioned that she really likes doing activities with students in pairs since this gives more opportunities to all the students to participate more actively in the discussion or conversation. Another teacher stated that

activities such as roleplays and debates make all the students participate while another teacher believes that making activities while telling jokes to the students is what gives them the confidence with their peers and teacher to speak. So, what is really important is “to give the students the confidence they need to speak”, one of the teachers stated.

10. Why do you think the students are afraid of speaking?

According to teachers there are certain aspects that make students feel afraid of speaking. One of the interviewees stated “There are many reasons (why they feel afraid of speaking), but perhaps the most common is: concerns that others are judging you.” According to his explanation, this is a factor present in all the students who attempt to develop their oral skills. Another teacher mentioned that students do not feel confident to speak since they do not have the knowledge to do it. As conclusion, for the interviewees, the main reason why students feel afraid of speaking is the fear of making mistakes and that their peers make fun of them. Furthermore, Turula (2004), identified four categories of possible causes: psychological, cognitive, methodological and social affective.

11. Which type of work among individual work, pair work, and group work do you consider to be more effective and why.

When teachers were asked which type of work among individual work, pair work, or group work they considered to be more effective most of them had the same answer. For teachers, having the students work in pairs in one of the most effective ways of working since according to them “there are more chances for students to practice for a longer time their speaking skill” which is the main purpose of this type of work. However, one of the interviewees mentioned that he preferred group work since ‘it is an effective method to motivate students, encourage active learning, and develop critical-thinking, communication, and decision-making skills.’ So, teachers agreed that the ideal way of working with a large number of students is pair and group work. To conclude, Nunan (2003) suggested that pair work and group work activities can be used to increase the amount of time that learners get to speak in the target language during lessons.

Observation done to students from the Advanced Intensive English II, group 03.

**UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR
SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT**

Topic: Proposal to deal with large groups in the development of the speaking skill in the students from the Advanced Intensive English II course, group 03, semester I, 2018, at the Foreign Language Department at the School of Arts and Sciences at the University of El Salvador.

CHECKLIST TO OBSERVE THE ADVANCED INTENSIVE ENGLISH II GROUP 03

DATE:

GROUP:

	Item	YES	NO		Item	YES	NO
	Engagement				Classroom Management		
	Teachers				Teachers		
1	The teacher encourages all the students to speak.	X		1	The teacher assigns extra material to practice the oral skill.		X
2	The teacher applies dynamics such as: debates, roleplays to get all students practice their oral skill.	X		2	Speaking in pair-work, group-work, or individual-work activities are promoted in the classroom.	X	
	Students						
3	All the students have the same opportunity to participate in speaking activities.		X	3	There is enough material for all the students.	X	
4	Some of the students get distracted due to the large number of students in the classroom.		X	4	The students are constantly changing their seating arrangement depending on the activities.		X

		YE S	NO			YE S	NO
	Feedback				Physical Environment		
	Teachers						
1	All the students are corrected when they make mistakes when they speak.		X	1	The physical space in the classroom seems adequate for all classroom activities.	X	
2	All the students are always corrected at the end of every oral activity or presentation.	X		2	In the classroom, everybody has a desk to sit on.	X	
3	Peer-correction is promoted.		X	3	The physical space allows different seating arrangements.		X
4				4	The classroom atmosphere is appropriate for learning.	X	

INSTRUMENTS

Questionnaire addressed to teachers from the Advanced Intensive English II courses.

UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR
SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT

INTERVIEW ADDRESSED TO TEACHERS OF ADVANCED INTENSIVE ENGLISH II
GROUP 03 AT THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT

Objective: To collect evidence from the teacher regarding large classes and classroom management problems in the advanced Intensive English II group 01 of the Journalism Department at the main campus of the University of El Salvador during term- II-2017.

INSTRUCTIONS: Answer the following questions.

12. In your opinion, how many students does a large class have?
a) 15-25 students b) 26-35 students c) 36-45 students d) more than 45 students
13. What is the highest number of students you have had in an English class?
14. Do you consider that students' English level could be higher in a small class?
15. In a large class, is it easy to arrange the position of the desks according to the activity?
16. In a large class, do you have the students working individually, in pairs or in groups??
17. In a large class, is it easy to have good interaction and communication with each student?
18. In a large class, is it easy for you to maintain a good discipline in the classroom?
19. In a large class, is the physical space of the classroom appropriate for developing all the activities?
20. Do you consider that you are using the latest strategies to improve English speaking on the students?

21. Do you consider that the use of activities such as roleplays and debates have a big impact on students' speaking skill?
22. Which are some of the strategies to make all the students speak in large classes?
23. Why do you think the students are afraid of speaking?
24. Which type of work among individual work, pair work, and group work do you consider to be more effective and why.

Checklist to observe the Advanced Intensive English II group 03.

UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR
SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT

Topic: Proposal to deal with large groups in the development of the speaking skill in the students from the Advanced Intensive English II course, group 03, semester I, 2018, at the Foreign Language Department at the School of Arts and Sciences at the University of El Salvador.

DATE:

GROUP:

	Item	YES	NO		Item	YES	NO
		S				S	
	Engagement				Classroom Management		
	Teachers				Teachers		
1	The teacher encourages all the students to speak.			1	The teacher assigns extra material to practice the oral skill.		
2	The teacher applies dynamics such as: debates, roleplays to get all students practice their oral skill.			2	Speaking in pair-work, group-work, or individual-work activities are promoted in the classroom.		

	Students						
3	All the students have the same opportunity to participate in speaking activities.			3	There is enough material for all the students.		
4	Some of the students get distracted due to the large number of students in the classroom.			4	The students are constantly changing their seating arrangement depending on the activities.		
		YES	NO			YES	NO
	Feedback				Physical Environment		
	Teachers						
1	All the students are corrected when they make mistakes when they speak.			1	The physical space in the classroom seems adequate for all classroom activities.		
2	All the students are always corrected at the end of every oral activity or presentation.			2	In the classroom, everybody has a desk to sit on.		
3	Peer-correction is promoted.			3	The physical space allows different seating arrangements.		
4				4	The classroom atmosphere is appropriate for learning.		

Questionnaire addressed to experts in didactics.

UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR
SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT

INTERVIEW ADDRESSED TO EXPERTS IN DIDACTICS AND LARGE GROUPS
MANAGEMENT.

1. In your opinion, how many students does a large class have?

a) 15-25 students b) 26-35 students c) 36-45 students d) more than 45 students

2. Are students in a small class more likely to have a higher English level than in a large class?

3. Why is a class with a large number of students less effective than one with a small number of students?

4. Which are some of the most common strategies to deal with a large group?

5. Do you think the current strategies are effective for teaching speaking in a large group?

6. Which are the current strategies being implemented to teach the speaking in large groups?

7. Which are some activities and techniques you recommend for the improvement of the teaching of the speaking skill in students from a large class?

8. Which are some of the recommendations you could give to an English teacher to have all the students speak in a large group?