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### Research Paper

## EFL Students' Attitudes towards Negative Effects of Large Class at Kandahar University

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### Abstract

The effects of class size on teaching and learning in EFL classrooms have been through an argumentative debate among researchers for a long time. Some scholars, researchers, and teachers claim that large classes result in negative effects while others see large classes as opportunities. Hence, the main aim of this paper is to explore the attitudes of students regarding the negative effects of large classes on EFL learning at Kandahar University in Afghanistan. This research is a quantitative study, which applied the survey design. The questionnaire of the study was adapted from Donkoh and Antwi (2015). The researchers distributed 150 questionnaires to freshman, sophomore, junior and senior students in the Department of English Language and Literature, and collected back 130 questionnaires properly filled in. The study found that in the instructional domain, practical works,

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exercises, and communicative activities were seriously missing and the teachers were dedicating most of the class time to classroom management and attendance; in the psychological domain, students were passive and felt neglected; in the social domain, there was an emotional gap between teacher and students. Lastly, the findings of the research are in line with the studies carried out in the EFL context in other countries. Moreover, the study presents some implications and recommendations to cope with the problems of large classes for future application in teaching EFL students.

**Keywords:** Class size, EFL Classroom, Overcrowded Classrooms, Teaching English in Large Classes

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### 1. Introduction

Class size is one of the challenging issues in the field of education that is faced by teachers and students. The size of an ideal class varies according to the educators and teachers. Monke (2010) defines class size as the actual number of students that one teacher is responsible for teaching every day. Sangangula (2016) asserts that class size is the number of students who at a specific time receive instructions or attention from the same teacher in a classroom or the number of students studying together in a single classroom. In itself, class size has positive and negative effects on students learning and teaching performance in the classroom. In this regard, schools, and institutions in developing countries try to decrease the number of students in the classroom from very large to normal numbers. This standard number facilitates student interaction and the application of communicative language teaching.

Blatchford, Bassett, & Brown (2011) claim that class size or what is considered a large class differs from country to country and different scholars, teachers, parents, and researchers have different opinions about the

standard or an optimum number of students in a classroom. Researchers such as Bassett et al. (2011) state that classes between 40 to 50 students in Japan are considered large, in the Saudi context, a class of 45 students is considered to be large. While those which are considered large classes in South Africa are the ones between 45 and 109. But some other researchers achieved that 20-30 or 25-30 is the perfect size for students in a classroom as Hess (2001) states that a class is considered large if it has 30 students or more.

Heever (2000) states that researchers and educators have argued that large classes can negatively affect students' achievements. This consists of a decrease in student achievements of those in larger classes and an increase in student achievements of those in smaller classes. The dispute is that students in larger classrooms have less one-on-one time with the teacher, which therefore leads to less instruction time and in turn lower examination scores. Also, it is implied that in larger classes, discipline becomes more of an issue because there are more students to attend. On the contrary, in a smaller class students are given more instructional time and are able to focus more on the curriculum being taught instead of discipline and other issues that are occurring around them. Monke (2010) reports the teachers' arguments that smaller classes lead to effective teaching and improved learning.

Moreover, Bahanshal (2013) states the negative effects large class has on teachers and students: (a) Teachers cannot teach well in large classrooms because they are not able to manage students in classrooms and they cannot prepare practical activities for them. (b) Teachers cannot check their homework and test papers accurately. (c) They feel bad about the students' quizzes and tests and usually, they become mentally tired while teaching in large classrooms. On the other hand, students also face many problems in large classrooms such as; (a) back setters cannot see the board properly; (b) results in a lack of class participation for every student; (c) students get busy

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with other activities at the back of the class; (d) students feel shy in front of more students; (d) some students feel bored about the rush made by other students and sometimes they get ill from the dust and noise in the classroom by student's load.

Similarly, Thaher (2004) states other negative effects of large classes: There is an unexpected relationship between students and teachers, students thought that their teachers in the large classes did not remember their names which shows a negative result; using the students' names helps them to participate in the classroom, and lack the practical works in the classroom is another problem for language learners. Students consider themselves passive listeners in the large class because the atmosphere is teacher-centered and there is no chance for students to take part in lessons.

Class size is a challenging issue for teachers in the education system in Afghanistan. The number of students in classrooms at schools and universities is more than normal. Specifically, the number of students in the department of English Language and Literature is 70 on average.

In the face of large classes, lecturers in the department of English Language and Literatures at Kandahar University are overwhelmed with the workload and resort to traditional teaching and assessment methods. Most of the time, lecturers are unable to finish marking assignments, quizzes, and examinations on time, and this delays the feedback given to students. Blatchford, Moriarty, Edmonds, and Martin (2002) opine that finding time for marking, planning, and assessment in large classes is more of a challenge and this is seen by teachers as a direct threat to the quality of their teaching. Teaching in the department is mostly by the lecture method. As lecturing is considered to be perhaps the most frequently used teaching method in most large classes in universities, it is safe to argue that the teaching and learning process is more lecturer-centered than student-centered in universities. This

makes the students less active (passive), even though that should not be the case. With this, Amedahe (2010) posits that some students may not understand certain things but will also not ask for an explanation because of the size of the class. In a large class, students have diverse needs, and the use of the lecture method may not cater to these different needs of the students in terms of ability, interest, and motivation. This calls for various teaching and learning strategies for managing large classes.

### **1.1 Statement of the problem**

All over the world, teachers and students face a lot of challenges during the teaching and learning process since most language classes are large. Such classroom conditions are specifically acute in developing countries (Benbow, Mizrachi, Oliver, & Said-Moshiro 2007). These challenges affect the quality of teaching, assessment of students, and the quality of the products from the universities.

Additionally, Thaher (2004) states that most of the teachers in the Departments of English Language and Literature usually show their reluctance to teach English in large classes. They complain that they find it impossible to reconcile the achievement of the university objectives with the actual classroom situations which causes the decline the student's motivation and achievement. As a result, there is less effective learning in large classrooms.

The gap this research will fill is that according to the researchers' knowledge there were no such studies available in the EFL context of Afghanistan specifically at the university level. As Kerr (2011) states that "fewer studies have assessed the impact of class size on the learning experience and outcomes in the postsecondary context.

### **1.2 Significance of the study**

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According to Yusuf, Onifade, and Bello (2016), some teachers feel not concerned about the affective development of the students. Hence, the effect of class size on attitudes related to study is still open for in-depth and more decisive analysis.

Moreover, it is abundantly evident that English teachers encounter greater challenges when teaching large classes. They encounter difficulties in knowing all students in the class, having time for all individuals, or presenting effective activities. Therefore, many students, especially the weak ones, tend to lose concentration. Similarly, in larger classes, much time is needed for non-academic activities related to administrative and organizational procedures and to the management and control of discipline.

Based on the above problems, it is essential to study the negative effects of large classes in the EFL context of Afghanistan at Kandahar University. Therefore, the study is going to answer the following research questions.

1. What are the instructional effects of large classes on EFL students' learning?
2. What are the psychological effects of large classes on EFL students' learning?
3. What are the social effects of large classes on EFL students' learning?

## 2. Literature Review

Class size is one of the controversial issues of classroom management that affects students' learning performance. According to Thaher (2004), class size has positive and negative effects on students. According to Hayes (1997), large English classes are often associated with disorderliness, lack of control, lack of concentration, lack of classroom interaction, and thus lack of the ability to speak English fluently. Similarly, Strevens (1979), states that overcrowded classes reduce teachers' attention per pupil and produce real physical discomfort and distraction. They also include extreme heat and cold

in the classroom. In fact, in large classrooms, learners experienced a higher level of anxiety during interaction and initiating communication. Thus, they perceived the situation as anxiety-provoking and avoid communicating (Aubery, 2010).

Wilson (2006) opines that two important and interrelated aspects of teacher practice are adversely affected by large classes. These are instructional time and classroom management. On instructional time, there is evidence that teachers in large classes devote less time to instruction as compared to teachers in small classes who are likely to cover a range of subjects. According to Wilson (2006), large classes take a toll on the teacher's ability to control time management, task management, and behavioral management which leaves the teacher little time for actual instruction. Thus, in large classes, it is difficult for teachers to spot problems and give feedback, identify specific needs and gear teaching to meet them, set individual targets for students, and be flexible and adventurous in the use of different styles of teaching.

Bahanshal (2013) stated that the problems of large classes can be either physical, psychological, technical, or a mixture of them. Additionally, in his study he found that large classes result in anonymity and passiveness of students; rising issues in discipline and class morale; and finally, what he called the *inherent logistical problems* including taking attendance distributing, and collecting exams.

According to Felder (1997), not all English teachers think that class size matters; such teachers believe that a good teacher is good whether he teaches small or large classes. He adds that large classes give instructors great satisfaction and self-pride that they can teach this great number of students. He argues that "there are ways to make large classes almost as effective as their smaller counterparts". Some researchers are of the view that large



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classes can provide richer human resources and greater opportunities for creativity. It is argued that more students mean more ideas, and this provides more opinions and possibilities. In addition, large classes can provide more opportunities for co-student interaction, foster an atmosphere of cooperation and encourage creativity and innovation (Qi and Wang, 2009). Thus, large classes do not only bring challenges but also opportunities for lecturers. The 'Condition of Education Report by the US Department of Education (2005) reveals that undergraduate enrollment in colleges and universities will continue to increase steadily. The report indicates that class sizes are reaching unprecedented levels and this is making institutions of higher learning push faculty to become better teachers.

Ur (1996) believed that regardless of the number of students in a class, it is teachers' perceptions towards the class size in a certain context with particular tools and facilities that are provided that make classes either small or large.

However, Kickbusch (2000) shows in her recent research that reduction in class size to less than 20 students without changes in instructional methods cannot guarantee an improved academic achievement and that class size appears to have more influence on student's attitudes, attention, interest, and motivation than on academic achievement.

Felder (1997) found that "teachers think if proper strategies are adopted, students may achieve more". Likewise, Carpenter (2006) opines that it is essential for faculty to identify effective methods of teaching in large classes, especially when large classes seem to have come to stay. Thus, Nnaji (1991) proposes tutorial classes as a solution to help reduce the menace of large classes. Chitrapu (1996) proposes the whole language approach for large classes which emphasizes that language use requires interaction which seems to improve students' confidence and fluency and helps them develop

strategies for improving all language skills. Alimi, Kassal and azeez (1998) introduce team teaching to overcome some of the problems of the large classes at the University of Agriculture in Nigeria. According to Pate-Bain, Achilles, Boyd-Zaharias, & McKenna, (1992), by providing individualized instruction, teachers can increase optimum learning by planning appropriate activities that facilitate learning within the zones of proximal development of each student. They added that teachers of small classes were able to increase monitoring of student learning and behavior and had more detailed knowledge of each student's needs.

Regarding the large class size, different researchers have found different results. Todd (2012), for example, studied the effects of large EFL class sizes on the students' learning and found that large classes had significantly adverse effects on Thai EFL students' learning. On the other hand, Thaher (2004), found that students' responses to instructional, psychological, and social effects were all moderate, and he reports that in Indonesian universities concerning classroom management, teaching and learning, evaluating students' progress, time allocation, and instructional aids, suggests that the problems of large classes seriously affect classroom management, and solutions to those problems are urgently needed. Students' engagement, behavior, and retention are affected in so many ways by the size of the class. This idea is supported by Finn, Pannozzo, and Achilles (2003) who, in reviewing studies on the link between student engagement and class size conceptualized student engagement in two forms, namely, social engagement and academic engagement. They indicated that when students are placed in smaller classes, they become more engaged, both academically and socially, and argue that with strong social academic engagement, academic achievement improves. Similarly, Zamaereh (2017), state that lack of

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interaction, less engagement, less motivation, less language skill, and unfair distribution opportunity neglect the students' achievement.

Zamaereh (2017) conducted a comparative study *The Effect of Class Size on the Achievement of EFL Students between An-Najah National University and Hebron University*. Results revealed a significant relationship between student achievement and class size. Students enrolled in smaller classes achieved better than their counterparts in larger ones.

Ao and Jo (2016) conducted research about the effects of class size on student performance in a hypermedia-supported classroom'. The study found that students exposed to hypermedia instruction in both small and large classes performed significantly better in their post-tests. It was also found that class size and modes of hypermedia instruction have significant interaction on the performance of the learners.

Richards (1978) examined the relationship between class size and learning in English language courses at Thai universities in small and large classes. The findings showed that class size had negative effects on their test grades. Furthermore, comparing the grades of students in different classes suggests that 25 and 45 students per class are the perfect size for language learning.

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1 Research design

The study has embraced a quantitative approach where the researcher sought to analyze each question of the questionnaire relatively from primary data and gather information through the questionnaire. The questionnaire was adapted from Donkoh and Antwi (2015). The questionnaire was divided into three sections to answer the research questions to identify the challenges the EFL students face in large classes.

### 3.2 Participants

Participants were 130 EFL students (among whom 38.46% were freshmen, 15.38% were sophomores, 15.38% were juniors, and 30.76% were seniors) from the department of English language and literature, faculty of languages and literature at Kandahar University. Among them 49.23% of participants were aged 15-20, 50% were 21-25, and 0.76% were 25-30. Based on gender, 85.38% of participants were male and 14.61% were female. And 75.38% of participants' native language was Pashto, 23.07% was Dari and 1.53% of participants were other language speakers.

The participants were selected based on Morgan's formula through simple random sampling. According to Creswell (2012) in simple random sampling, the researcher selects participants for the sample so that any individual had an equal probability of being selected from the population.

### 3.3 Instrumentation

The data for this research was collected through a questionnaire that was adapted from Donkoh and Antwi (2015). Only with minor changes to match it with the Afghan EFL context. The questionnaire had three sections namely, the instructional effects, the psychological effects, and the social effects. Questionnaires were designed which contained close-ended questions for data collection.

### 3.4 Data Collection

Data were collected using the questionnaire, in print, from all the classes in the faculty containing freshmen, sophomores, seniors, and juniors. The researchers distributed questionnaires using a random sampling approach for data collection. Only properly filled questionnaires were selected for the data entry.

### 3.5 Data Analysis

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After collecting the data, 130 questionnaires were filled out properly to be analyzed. For analyzing quantitative data, SPSS program version 19 was used. For achieving the goal of the study, statistics like frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation were used for the calculation.

### 3.6 Validation of the questionnaire

To ensure content validity, the researcher discussed the problem with the English language teachers who have had experience in teaching English and then distributed the questionnaire to four referees from the College of Education and the Department of English who ensured its appropriateness by suggesting some modifications in the arrangements of some items.

### 3.7 Reliability of the instrument

The reliability of the instrument was calculated by the Cronbach Alpha formula. Accordingly, the reliability coefficient was 0.81, which fits the purpose of the study.

## 4. Results

To answer the research questions and analyze the questionnaire, the findings of the research are divided into three sections namely, the instructional effects, the psychological effects, and the social effects. We will analyze all the elements of the questionnaire in the mentioned three domains.

### 4.1 The Instructional Effects

The first section of the data analysis is related to the instructional effects. This section consists of ten items in the questionnaire which are analyzed and interpreted as follows:

**Table 1**

*Instructional Domain*

No	Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
		Agree (5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	Disagree (1)

1	In the large classroom, practical works and exercises are neglected.	38 29%	57 43.5	20 15.3	10 7.6%	5 3.8%
2	In the large classroom, communicative activities are neglected.	49 37.4%	55 42%	16 12.2%	9 6.9%	1 8%
3	In a large classroom, I can do other activities (Like doing homework,) during the teaching because the teacher can't see me.	46 35.1%	45 34.4%	14 10.7%	16 12.2%	9 6.9%
4	If I sit at the back of the classroom I can't hear the teacher and/or see the board properly.	48 36.6%	44 33.6%	19 14.5%	16 12.2%	3 2.2%
5	In the large classroom, teachers don't ask me for my opinion about the topic.	33 25.2%	52 39.7%	21 16%	19 14.5%	4 3.1%
6	In a large classroom, I don't write my homework correctly because the teacher is not able to check it deeply.	38 29%	39 29,8%	23 17,6%	18 13,7%	13 9.9%
7	In the large classroom, the approach to teaching is teacher-centered, so I can't participate in activities.	31 23.7%	56 42.7%	21 16%	17 13%	5 3.8%
8	In the large classroom, the lack of opportunity to ask questions from teachers.	32 24.4%	43 32.8%	22 16.8%	25 19.9%	7 5.3%
9	In the large classroom, teachers spend much of their time on classroom	42	63	17	6	2

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	management and taking students' attendance.	32.1%	48.1%	13%	4.6%	1.5%
10	I like taking exams in the large class because there is an opportunity for me to cheat.	30 22.9%	45 34.4%	18 13.7%	17 13%	30 15.3%

For the first item, '*In the large classroom, practical works and exercises are neglected*,' Table 1, indicates that 11.4% of participants disagreed while 72.5% of participants agreed. Only 15.3% of the participants were neutral.

For the second item '*In the large classroom, communicative activities are neglected*' Table 1 indicates that 14.9% of the participants disagreed while 79.4% of participants agreed and only 12.2% of the participants were neutral.

For the third item "*In a large classroom, I can do other activities (Like doing homework,) during the teaching, because the teacher can't see me*" Table 1 indicates that 19.1% of participants disagreed while 69.5% of participants agreed and only 10.7% of the participants were neutral.

For the fourth item "*If I sit at the back of the classroom, I can't hear the teacher and/or see the board properly*" Table 1 indicates that 14.5% of participants disagreed while 70.2% of participants agreed and only 14.5% of the participants were neutral.

For the fifth item "*In the large classroom, teachers don't ask me for my opinion about the topic*" Table 1 indicates that 17.6% of participants disagreed while 64.9% of participants agreed only 16% of the participants were neutral.

For the sixth item "*In a large classroom, I don't write my homework correctly because the teacher is not able to check it deeply*" Table 1 indicates that 23.6% of participants disagreed while 57.3% of participants agreed and only 17.6% of the participants were neutral.

For the seventh item, '*In the large classroom, the approach to teaching is teacher-centered, so I can't participate in activities*', Table 1 indicates that 16.8% of the participants disagreed while 66.4% of participants agreed and only 16% of the participants were neutral.

For the eighth item, '*In the large classroom, the lack of opportunity to ask questions from teachers*' Table 1 indicates that 24.4% of participants disagreed while 57.2% of participants agreed and only 16.8% of the participants were neutral.

For the ninth item, '*In the large classroom, teachers spend much of the time on classroom management and taking student's attendance*' Table 1 indicates that only 6.1% of the participants disagreed while 80.2% of participants agreed and only 13% of the participants were neutral.

For the tenth item, '*I like taking exams in the large class because there is an opportunity for me to cheat*' Table 1 indicates that 28.3% of the participants disagreed while 55.3% of the participants agreed and only 13.7% of the participants were neutral.

#### 4.2 The psychological effects

The second section of the data analysis is related to the psychological effects this section consists of six items in the questionnaire which are analyzed and interpreted as follows:

**Table 2**  
*Psychological Domain*

No	Items	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
1	I feel shy speaking in a large classroom.	28 21.4%	36 27.5%	18 13.7%	29 22.1%	19 14.5%
2	In the large class, I feel neglected.	29	52	27	17	8



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		22.1%	39.7%	20.8%	13%	3.8%
3	I feel sick in the large classroom because of the air pollution.	26	45	20	29	10
		19.8%	34.4%	15.3%	22.1%	7.6%
4	In the large classroom, the atmosphere is noisy and stressful.	40	44	25	14	7
		30.5%	33.6%	19.1%	10.7%	5.3%
5	In the large classroom, I am not very active.	46	51	13	15	5
		35.1%	38.9%	9.9%	11.5%	3.8%
6	The opportunity to express myself in the large classroom is rare.	29	49	24	22	6
		22.1%	37.4%	18.3%	16.8%	4.6%

For the first element, '*I feel shy to speak in a large classroom*', Table 2 indicates that 36.6% of the participants disagreed, on the other hand, 48.9% of participants agreed while 13.7% of the participants were neutral.

For the second element, '*In the large class, I feel neglected*' Table 2 indicates that 16.8% of participants disagreed with this statement, 61.8% of participants agreed and 20.6% of the participants were neutral.

For the third element, '*I feel sick in the large classroom because of the air pollution*' Table 2 indicates that 29.7% of the participants disagreed, on the other hand, 44.2% of the participants agreed while 15.3% of the participants were neutral.

For the fourth element, '*In the large classroom, the atmosphere is noisy and stressful*' Table 2 indicates that 16% of participants disagreed, on the other hand, 64.1% of participants agreed while 19.1% of the participants were neutral.

For the fifth element, '*In the large classroom, I am not very active*' table 2 indicates that 15.3% of participants disagreed, on the other hand, 74% of participants agreed while 9.9% of the participants were neutral.

For the sixth element, '*The opportunity to express myself in the large classroom is rare*' Table 2 indicates that 21.4% of participants disagreed, on the other hand, 59.5% of participants agreed while 18.3% of the participants were neutral.

### 4.3 The social effects

The third section of the data analysis is related to the social effects. This section consists of five items in the questionnaire which are analyzed and interpreted as follows:

**Table 3**  
*Social Domain*

No	Items	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
1	In the large class, the teacher doesn't care about me even if I sleep in the class.	31 23.7%	51 38.9%	14 10.7%	22 16.8%	12 9.2%
2	There is an emotional gap between students and teachers in a large classroom.	35 26.7%	54 41.2%	25 19.1%	13 9.9%	2 1.5%
3	In a large classroom, I feel bad when my teacher doesn't call me by my name.	44 33.6%	47 35.9%	18 13.7%	17 13%	4 3.1%
4	In a large classroom, the environment is safe because I don't have to answer every question.	33 25.2%	53 40.5%	18 13.7%	19 14.5%	7 5.3%

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5	In large classrooms, teacher-student interaction is neglected.	28	46	26	19	11
		21.4%	35.1%	19.8%	14.5%	8.4%

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For the first element, '*In the large class, the teacher doesn't care about me even if I sleep in the class*' table 3 states that 26% of participants disagreed, however, 62.6% of participants agreed while 107% of them stayed neutral.

For the second element '*There is an emotional gap between students and teacher in large classroom*' Table 3 states that 11.4% of participants disagreed, however, 67.9% of participants agreed while 19.1% of them stayed neutral.

For the third element '*In a large classroom, I feel bad when my teacher doesn't call me by my name*' table 3 states that 16.1% of participants disagreed, however, 69.5% of participants agreed while 13.7% of them stayed neutral.

For the fourth element "*In a large classroom, the environment is safe because I don't have to answer every question*' table 3 states that 19.8% of participants disagreed, however, 65.7% of participants agreed while 13.7% of them stayed neutral.

For the fifth element '*In a large classroom, teacher-student interaction is neglected*' Table 3 states that 22.9% of participants disagreed, however, 56.5% of participants agreed while 19.8% of them stayed neutral.

## 5. Discussion

This study attempted to figure out the extent these negative factors have on EFL students' learning performance in large classes. An analysis of the overall result of the study clarified that there are twenty-one negative factors of the large class size that affect, more or less, EFL students' learning

performance at Kandahar University. The discussion section, in this paper, is divided into three domains based on the research questions.

The first domain answers the first research question: *'What are the instructional effects of large classes on EFL students' learning?'* In this domain, 10 items were studied.

In the instructional domain, the most critical items were (1, 2, and 9) in which practical works and exercises and communicative activities were seriously missing and the teachers were dedicating most of the class time to classroom management and attendance. In this regard, Thaher (2004) found that in large classes students do not get enough time to practice what they had been learning since the communicative activities, which involve classroom interaction, are neglected in large classes. Similarly, Todd (2006) found that teachers spent much of their time on students and classroom management as well as attendance. Additionally, In the instructional domain, the moderate critical items were (3, 4, 5, and 7) in which students were deviating from the lesson. Students neither could hear the teacher nor see the board properly. Their opinions were not asked, and the approach to teaching was teacher-oriented in which students were passive. Similarly, Yusuf et al. (2016) found that Students possibly lose their attention because of their far distance from the board. This makes teachers' voices less audible and writings unclear. De Paola, Ponzio, & Scoppa (2009) added that in large classes, the learning method is teacher-centered and it is difficult for teachers to apply any other method, so only the teacher is busy thus the students are passive. Moreover, in the instructional domain, the less critical items were (6, 8, and 10) in which students were mostly ignoring homework; students' questions remained unasked, and there were opportunities for cheating exams. This is similar to the result obtained by Yusuf et al. (2016) that students in large

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classes are more likely to be off task, particularly in terms of not paying attention to their teacher.

The second domain answers the second research question: '*What are the psychological effects of large classes on EFL students' learning?*' In this domain, 6 items were studied.

In the psychological domain, the most critical item was (5) in which students were passive. According to Thaher (2004), the students consider themselves as passive-listeners in large classes because the atmosphere is teacher-centered. Additionally, In the psychological domain, the moderate critical items were (2, 4, and 6) in which students were feeling neglected; the atmosphere was noisy and stressful, and they had rare opportunities to express themselves. Similarly, Thaher (2004) found that students would not have the opportunity to express themselves which would result in anxiety, discomfort, and boredom. In this regard, Yusuf et al. (2016) also confirmed that class size has a significant effect on the motivation of students to attend classes as well as their studies. Moreover, in the psychological domain, the less critical items were (1 and 3) in which students felt shy while speaking to a large number of students and they were feeling sick. Similarly, Jalilifar and Amin (2008) found that the majority of the students in the opinion groups were unwilling to participate in the classroom discussions due to the students' attitudes. However, in their study, Mousavi and Ketabi (2021) found that the participants had more chances to communicate and interact with the learners and the teacher without being shy or afraid of doing mistakes

The third domain answers the third research question: '*What are the social effects of large class sizes on EFL students' learning?*' In this domain, 5 items were studied.

In the social domain, the most critical items were (2, 3, & 4) in which there was an emotional gap between teacher and students; teachers didn't call

students by their names, and the students were not answering all questions asked by the teachers. Thaher (2004). States that teachers should establish good teacher-student relationships by addressing the students by their names in order to solve the problem of teachers' ignorance especially when the students feel that they are neglected. He adds that the students felt that the atmosphere in the large class was safe because they did not have to answer every question. Additionally, in the social domain, the moderate critical item was (1) in which teachers were not caring for students even if they slept in the class. Moreover, in the social domain, the less critical item was (5) in which teacher-student interaction was neglected. Similarly, Mupa and Chabaya (2011, p. 48) highlight that in larger classes the teachers fail to facilitate single-channel communication.

## **6. Conclusion**

Overall, the study sought to investigate the negative attitudes of students towards the effects large classes have on EFL learnings in the Department of English Language and Literature at Kandahar University, Afghanistan. Specifically, it was to determine the instructional, psychological, and social effects of large classes.

Based on the literature review and the results of this study, it seems that in developing countries, like Afghanistan, large classes have become typical features of the education system, and may be very difficult to be avoided, especially at the university level. The class size can affect teaching and learning in different ways. A class with a large number of students led to an increased number of academic and pedagogical issues, which in turn, lead to increased administration and management responsibilities. While the students complain that they are instructionally, psychologically, and sociologically affected negatively.

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According to the study, we can say that class size has a significant role in the teaching and learning process. It is important for teachers to explore various methods and apply effective strategies that minimize the negative effects of large classes and elevate the teaching and learning levels to their highest standard. Moreover, teachers should be aware to employ more communicative strategies in order to encourage the students to participate and be involved in class interactions. The everyday lessons should not be taught by means of lectures only, students should be involved in doing the communicative activities and tasks, or at least the lectures should be followed by discussions. Students need to be actively engaged in the lesson and should be able to participate in class discussion and ask and answer questions

### **6.1 Implications**

To cope with the large classes, the findings of the research will help teachers and teacher trainers to choose suitable teaching and learning strategies and procedures, and proper teaching methods in the classrooms as well as assist the administration of Kandahar University and the Ministry of Higher Education in making a decision regarding the Students Teacher Ratio.

### **6.2 Recommendation**

The following recommendations could be useful in the EFL context of Afghanistan.

- Ministry of Higher Education can decrease the number of students in the class they introduce through the Kankor (University Entrance) Exam.
- In the case of large classes, teachers can create an atmosphere and use an appropriate method to let all students participate in the class.

- Ministry of Higher Education can increase the number of teachers, classes, and classrooms for the students' better performance in languages and literature classes.

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