

Large Class Management throughout Learning and Teaching of Speaking Skill: Case study of the University of Burundi

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Abstract

The objective of this study was to discuss challenges encountered by lecturers and students in the management of large classes while teaching and learning the speaking skill in English. The work was motivated by the fact that First Year students, even though they use English as medium of instruction, are not good at speaking English. The study enthralled on the use of appropriate methods, approaches and techniques to manage large classes. The purpose of the study was to examine the category and seriousness of the challenges faced by the subjects and suggest the use of appropriate methods, techniques and approaches in a large class of more than a hundred students. The case study was conducted at the Institute for Applied Pedagogy of the University of Burundi. Simple random sampling was adopted to select students, lecturers and administrators concerned as the study population. A written questionnaire, interview and participant observation were used during the study through the qualitative analysis.

Keywords: Burundi, education, large class management, speaking teaching and learning, teaching

1. Introduction

People communicate, work, study, pray, exchange knowledge or goods by means of language. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, a new language came to the Burundian scene, namely Swahili, brought by Swahili traders from the East Coast of Africa. As a matter of fact, Swahili became a commercial language in some Burundian hamlets. Later on in the same century, catholic missionaries and German colonizers settled in the country and introduced a new language, German. However, that language did not influence much the history of languages in Burundi. All along the colonial period French emerged to become the main official language in the country.

Now, English is gaining ground as a major world language. With Burundi's entry into the East African Community, more and more people are learning it for various purposes. It has been introduced in primary and secondary school curricula. The teaching and learning of English were officially introduced in the national curricula for the first time in 1959, from the first year of secondary school.

According to Teny Doyle and Paul Meara (1991), the English language is now spoken by more than 350 million people as their mother tongue and over one billion use it as their official language. So English is spoken and used by way of a national or/and an official language in many countries worldwide.

The admittance of Burundi into the East African Community finally came to nurture its importance since this community uses English as its working official language. English is, thus, a key for the smooth integration into that Community. Burundians in general and learners of English in particular need to be well equipped with skills that can succour them to develop communicative competence, especially the speaking skill in order to be able to communicate confidently and accurately in English.

However, in addition to the fact that it has got an unfair share in the curriculum, so many other factors still affect and undermine the teaching and learning of English in the Burundian educational system especially in large classes. Large classes affect the use of teaching materials and methods. Teachers also feel stranded in imparting proper teaching in such classes. English language teachers at all levels generally agree that large classes are a big hindrance in teaching. Henceforth, the need for the management of large English language classes arises.

The perception of large class management is often confused with upholding discipline in large classes. According

to Mahmood Ahmad Azhar (2004), management of large size English language classes in an instructional perspective means the complex set of plans and actions that the teacher uses to ensure that the learning in the classroom is effective and efficient. The concept of management of large classes is broader than that of discipline, which often implies keeping students quiet and, in their seats, but that should not be the teacher's central goal. Effective classroom management places discipline in its proper perspective on the overall instructional scene.

In the University of Burundi in general and at the Institute for Applied Pedagogy in particular, the problem of large class management is a reality and affects the quality of teaching and learning. The present study envisages to identify the problems faced by teachers and learners, particularly in the field of spoken English in the first years of the Institute for Applied Pedagogy, in order to propose appropriate solutions. Actually, more than 50 students are seen as a large class in the context of Burundi.

1.1 Background to the Study

In Burundi, the English language appears nowadays to be an essential language to be learned for various reasons. There are two foremost motives for the espousal of the English language in Burundi. First of all, the geographical location of Burundi and secondly, the fact that English has come to be an international language for communication.

English has become a window open for communication with the outside world. Nonetheless, the teaching of the English language has been lately introduced in the educational system of Burundi on the top of the other two pre-existing languages, Kirundi and French.

It is now taught as a compulsory subject from primary school up to university level. But English has turned out to be a victim of the phenomenon of the plethoric number of students in classrooms because of the rapid growth of the student population. With free primary education policy adopted in 2005, Burundi is still facing large class issues because the demand for education is higher than the supply. In addition, the University of Burundi, one of the public institutions, has felt the impact of the increasing number of students.

Therefore, in order to solve this problem, they tend to put as many students as possible in one class. In this way, they seem to be solving the problem but they ignore that they are creating another cumbersome situation for the teacher who is going to teach and students who will be in that class. For example, the English course is a common subject in all science departments (Mathematics, Biology-chemistry, Physics-Technology) and is also taught by one teacher in the same classroom at the Institute for Applied Pedagogy whereas there would be one lecturer of the English language for each department at least. Furthermore, due to the growing student population as result of free education in primary education, secondary school graduates are urged to pursue their academic studies and are oriented to the University of Burundi. This is the reason why first years in different departments at the University of Burundi are now overcrowded.

The descriptive situation above does not allow effective verbal communication in the classroom, especially in a language class. Thus, teachers of oral expression in English struggle to make the students speak the language, but as anyone can realize, not all will have the opportunity to use the language in such classes. Moreover, this situation can alter the methods used by the teacher because a method which can work for a normal class of 30 students may not work in large classes.

1.2 Definition of Key Terms

Communicative competence is defined by Campbell and Wales (1970:24) as “*the capacity or ability to produce and understand utterances, which are not so much grammatical but appropriate in the context in which they are used*”.

According to Adejare (1995:115), **Communicative Competence** is “*the general human ability to use language predicated upon the general knowledge of grammar of each particular language and ability to produce and understand general and some specific texts in the language*”. In the present study, **communicative competence** means the ability to speak fluently a language.

Large class has a dual meaning: On the one hand, it refers to how physically large the classroom is. On the other hand, it simply means the number of students in a classroom. In this work, large class is used to refer to the second meaning. It has always been a very controversial debate about how big the number of students should be in so-called large classes.

Classroom environment: It provides a context for learning and includes not only the physical space, resources and materials, but also the classroom atmosphere, participants' attitudes and emotions, and the social dynamics in the learning environment.

Management: It is an arrangement and organization of materials and activities related to teaching, helping in the application of skills during class and providing guidelines to the teacher for organizing his/her performance during the teaching activity.

Method: It is the systematic and logical arrangement of different ideas for introducing and transferring knowledge with a view to make the learning process functional, instructive and successful.

Methodology: It is the package of methods, procedures and principles related to teaching of discipline, reflecting the theoretical approach to the subject.

Strategy: It is the conscious outline/plan based on teaching objectives and including the ordering of materials to be conveyed to the learner. Strategy may be implicit or explicit.

Technique: It is the classroom application of teaching methodology and modus operandi adopted by the teacher during a particular class.

1.3 Classroom Management

Classroom management concerns all the strategies and materials that teachers use inside the classroom in order to create a suitable atmosphere that helps students to develop their learning skills. It is also the process of ensuring that lessons run smoothly despite disruptive behaviour by some students, closely linked to issues of motivation.

According to Oliver and Reschly (2007: 01): “*ability of teachers to organize classrooms and manage the behaviour of their students is critical to achieving positive educational outcomes*”. In addition, Marzano and Pickering (2003) wrote that “*effective teaching and learning cannot take place in a poorly managed classroom... In contrast, well-managed classrooms provide an environment in which teaching and learning can flourish*”.

Henceforth, we see that classroom management is a major component of the teaching and learning process. Brophy (2006) states that “*Classroom management refers to actions taken to create and maintain a learning environment conducive to successful instruction (arranging the physical environment, establishing rules and procedures, maintaining students’ attention to lessons and engagement in activities)*”. If teachers teach without establishing control, then the quality of teaching will suffer.

According to Wragg (2003), “*For many years, researchers and teachers themselves have tried to find the secrets of successful teaching.... Without the ability to manage a group effectively, any other qualities teachers have maybe neutralized*”. Henceforth, successful class management is one of the best strategies that leads to successful language learning.

Amy B. Tsui (2003) asserts that classroom “*...is frequently used to refer to aspects of classroom organization, such as conducting individual, pair, or group work, maintaining order; dealing with disruptive behaviour; and handling daily business, such as collecting assignments and taking roll calls*”.

Classroom management according to Daniel Linden Duke (1990) is “*application of procedures necessary to establish and maintain an environment in which instruction and learning can occur*”.

In order to ensure that instructional time is not wasted, teachers are required to be good planners. Many problems of large size English Language Teaching (ELT) classes can be foreseen. Although, perhaps no teacher can eliminate all the anticipated problems, planning permits teachers to keep to the amount of time needed to deal with such problems to a minimum. Therefore, teachers must have the ability and experience in managing their classes in order to be successful in the teaching process. Furthermore, for teachers to speak English as native speakers and being knowledgeable about its teaching is not enough to be good teachers, they should have the ability to manage their classes.

Much literature indicates the crucial importance of classroom management. Weinstein (2007:06), for instance, points out that classroom management has two main purposes: to establish and sustain an orderly environment so that teaching and learning can be effective and to enhance students’ social and emotional growth.

1.4 The Class Size Phenomenon

In academic institutions, teachers generally face different classes in one day. Their quality of teaching is influenced by the number of students in their classes. There is no absolute agreement upon the optimum class size for the ideal learning situation. Hence, the term “*large size class*” also varies from situation to situation and from institution to institution.

For example, a class of Chemistry where the students have to carry out experiments needs to be small. Similarly, in an English language class, the number of students has to be reasonable like 30 students so that they can easily communicate with them. For teaching the speaking skill in an English language class, the teacher has to have a

class that can allow him/her to verify the speaking competence of learners.

In Burundi, the educational system is facing the large class phenomena from primary school to university. It is due to rapid demographic growth in the whole country. For instance, the Institute for Applied Pedagogy (IPA) was created in 1993 and began with an average of 44.2 students per class whereas it presents an average of 121.2 students per class in the 2010-2011 academic year and 92.1 students per class in 2016-2017. Table 1 shows the enrolments of students in first years of all the departments of the Institute for Applied Pedagogy in the old system of higher education from its creation to 2011. Table 2 displays the enrolments of students at the Bachelor level in the new system (Bachelor, Master, Doctorate).

Table 1. First years' enrolments at the Institute for Applied Pedagogy of the University of Burundi (Source: Academic services, U.B, 2017)

Academic year	English-Kirundi Department	Biology-Chemistry Department	French Department	Mathematics Department	Physics-Technology Department	TOTAL
1993-1994	48	33	74	41	25	221
1994-1995	25	37	58	29	17	166
1995-1996	26	22	45	26	14	133
1997-1998	41	28	28	18	15	130
1998-1999	58	77	75	80	18	308
1999-2000	79	90	45	67	11	292
2000-2001	104	50	38	58	4	254
2001-2002	88	53	33	49	8	231
2002-2003	146	119	86	97	51	499
2003-2004	182	145	101	111	107	646
2004-2005	157	105	108	94	65	529
2005-2006	151	108	156	111	29	555
2007-2008	156	89	146	104	31	526
2008-2009	137	87	79	73	51	427
2009-2010	173	124	132	116	103	648
2010-2011	126	115	191	134	40	606

Table 2. New academic structure (Bachelor-Master-Doctorate) at University of Burundi (Source: Academic services, U.B, 2017)

A Academic Year	English Department	Biology-Chemistry Department	French Department	Kiswahili-Kirundi Department	Mathematics Department	Physics-Technology Department	TOTAL
2011-2012	188	118	170	-	149	42	667
2012-2013	180	89	137	-	99	28	533
2013-2014	NULLIFIED						
2014-2015	144	39	97	93	62	15	450
2015-2016	156	53	84	61	50	43	447
2016-2017	147	59	125	124	62	36	553

2. Methods and Strategies for Large class Teaching

Managing student behaviour in the classroom in order to enhance teaching and learning is viewed in literature as

a complex process as it concerns a wide range of behaviour that may be present in a particular group of students as well as the identification and implementation of appropriate strategies for handling these behaviour patterns (Tan et al., 2003:17).

There are therefore a number of classroom management strategies that can be deployed to ensure effective teaching and learning in large class. According to Soodak and McCarthy (2006:16), the strategies characterise an all-encompassing view of classroom management that extends to everything that teachers do to facilitate or improve student learning such as:

a. behaviour:

- showing a positive attitude;
- producing happy facial expressions;
- giving encouraging remarks;
- being respectful;
- showing fair treatment of all students.

b. classroom environment:

- being welcoming to students;
- being in well-lit classroom;
- using adequate and stimulating materials;

c. expectations:

- having high expectations of quality of student work and behaviour

d. materials:

- having adequate and quality textbooks
- having equipment and other learning resources

e. activities:

- designing learning experiences that engage student interests;
- having passion and intellectual curiosity.

Bilik (2008) provides a more illuminating set of strategies in the form of a framework that teachers can deploy to effectively manage their classrooms:

2.1 Catering for Students' Development Needs

Effective classroom management should cater for the developmental needs of students including their characteristics. The above means that as a process, classroom management needs to consider what interests and motivates students of different ages and developmental characteristics so that appropriate strategies can be applied (Bilik, 2008; Pianta, 2006). As an example, younger students in lower grades are more motivated to learn by concrete things such as rewards while senior students may just prefer recognition and encouragement.

Creating and managing a learning environment

Creating and managing a learning environment implies a careful planning from the start of the school year. It relates to the creation of two spaces of the learning environment namely the physical and cognitive spaces (Krause et al., 2003). The creation of the *physical learning environment* goes beyond having an attractive, stimulating environment with good ventilation, to ensuring an environment characterised by mutual respect, friendliness and welcoming, that is, an environment where everyone blooms and does their best. The creation of a *cognitive space* relating to the expectations that the teacher sets for students in the classroom and the process of ensuring a motivating climate are viewed by Bilik (2008) as the most important components of the creation of a learning environment strategy.

Zakia Sarwar (2001) examined Logon's assumptions and Altman's tenets to determine how the concept of individualization could be exploited for large classes, where learners needed (a) exposure to language learning, (b) activities for confidence building and (c) a learner-centred approach to build rapport between the teacher and learners. After thorough deliberations, a working definition that emerged was the use of four Rs for *individualization* purpose, i.e; "Re-education, Responsibility, Relevance and Rapport".

- a. *Re-education* This implies redefining the role of a teacher as facilitator and the student as an active agent in the process of learning. In Burundi, this change needs to be emphasized more, since the teacher and the learners are used to the lecture method in which the student is a passive listener and the teacher talks without any interaction or break for the whole teaching period.
- b. *Responsibility* This means that the students take charge of their own learning. In our social context, this is a conceptual leap as they are used to rote learning and lack confidence in their own cognitive domain. It also implies teacher's responsibility to set up clearly defined tasks which can be monitored by the students on their own and ensure the availability of self-learning materials for learners.
- c. *Relevance*. The material devised for the learners needs to be relevant. Relevance means finding contexts of learning that are meaningful for the learners.
- d. *Rapport*. A large size class poses to be a class-management challenge for a teacher. It is only through the proper rapport that an atmosphere conducive to learning can be built up. Also "*humanizing*" a large class is perhaps the only way to motivate learning.

Humanistic teaching could be a good method in dealing with disruptive students because it concerns students' feelings and motivation. Harmer (2001:90) points out that "*humanistic teaching has also found a greater acceptance at the level of procedures and activities, in which students are encouraged to make use of their own lives and feelings in the classroom*". Using this method, teachers might design activities that make students feel good and remember happy times whilst at the same time practice language. Teachers should take on many different roles. These roles are not like the traditional role of being authoritarian. The role of the teacher is to be an instructional leader, a facilitator and a guide.

2.2 Speaking Activities in Oral Expression Course

Students are still under the responsibility of teachers until they learn effectively the target language. So, teachers must make sure that their students learn and get the intended information. Teachers should be aware that "*learners are not neutral pawns in the teacher's game, but individuals with positive and negative feelings about themselves and others*".

From this quotation we explicit that students are under the responsibility of teachers; so they must work hard and do their job effectively in attempting to promote students' level and ability to master the target language. Then, teachers are asked to choose and manage appropriate speaking activities in order to motivate students' interaction in the classroom and enhance their engagement in the presented activity.

The advantages of preparing and presenting speaking activities are explained in the book: "*How to Teach English*" by Jeremy Harmer (1998:87) who gives three main reasons why speaking activities are beneficial for the students' learning development:

- The first reason is about "*Rehearsal*" in which students experience every day in every speaking activity a new situation that could happen in real life. At this step, students have free discussions outside the classroom.
- The second reason is about "*Feedback*" in which students and even teachers are able to be aware of their progress. Teachers can see how well their class is doing and what language problems they are having because students are asked to produce feedback. Speaking activities can give students self-confidence and satisfaction, and with a sensitive teacher, guidance can help them into further study.
- The last presented reason is about "*Engagement*" in which speaking activities could enhance students' participation and interaction in the classroom. Harmer (1998:88) says: "*If all students are participating fully and if the teacher has set up the activity properly and can then give sympathetic and useful feedback – they will get tremendous satisfaction from it. Many speaking tasks (role-playing, discussion, problem-solving, etc.) are intrinsically enjoyable in themselves*".

2.3 Research Area

The research study was conducted at the Institute for Applied Pedagogy of the University of Burundi. The latter has six departments namely English, French, Kiswahili-Kirundi, Biology-Chemistry, Physics-Technology and Mathematics, and the English language is taught in all departments. But, students of science departments (Mathematics, Biology-Chemistry, Physics-Technology) learn English in the same space with one teacher.

2.4 Research Population

The population concerned by the research is made of teachers and learners from the Institute for Applied

Pedagogy at the University of Burundi. The researcher was helped by the Academic Services in order to get the lists of the students. The number of all the students in First Years in 2016-2017 academic year is 553.

2.5 Sampling

The sample includes a sample of six teachers of English namely 3 from the English Department and 3 who teach English in other departments; however, one teacher did not return back the questionnaire, which resulted in 5 questionnaires returned. Because of the large number of students, the researcher selected 15% for each department and so, 90 students of first years at the Institute for Applied Pedagogy (IAP) - University of Burundi were chosen. The subjects were randomly chosen on the basis of the alphabetical lists. The researcher took a list and selected students with odd numbers until 16% was reached for each department. The population chosen allowed to investigate and evaluate the impact of large class size on the teaching and learning of the speaking skill in English.

Table 3. Sample of Teachers and Learners used as Informants by Department

Department/First year	Total number of learners	Number of sampled learners	Number of Teachers surveyed
English	147	23	3
French	125	20	1
Kiswahili-Kirundi	124	19	1
Biology-Chemistry	59	10	
Mathematics	62	10	1
Physics-Technology	36	9	
Total	553	90	6

2.6 Data Collection Instruments

There is a number of instruments used to collect data from subjects. You can observe them or submit them to a written questionnaire or oral (interview). A combination of two instruments were used in this study namely: classroom observation and written questionnaires administrated to both the teachers and the students. The questionnaire where initially tried on a few lecturers and learners.

2.7 The Field Study

After carrying out the pilot study, different opinions from lecturers and students including observations and comments were integrated in the final questionnaire that was distributed during the field study. Also, two kinds of questionnaire: one for teachers and another one for students. The researcher went from department to department and distributed the questionnaires until all the respondents received it. Out of 6 lecturers who received the questionnaire, 1 did not answer. Only 5 lecturers returned a completed questionnaire. Then, from the initial sample of 90 students the final sample was 83 who gave back the completed questionnaire.

2.8 Data Analysis Procedure

In this study, concerning the questionnaire, the researcher classified the answers given by respondents that is teachers and learners, into different categories according to the answers that were given. The following step was to establish tables with frequencies and percentages, theme by theme and question by question. For open-ended questions, the researcher noted the expressed opinions.

2.9 Encountered Difficulties

Generally, no research work can be achieved without difficulties. One of them was the time management and the availability of the respondents for both teachers and students.

The distribution process of questionnaires raised peculiar problems to the researcher due to the non-availability of respondents. Students were studying intensively and 7 of them did not hand back the questionnaire. For teachers, they were busy with teaching practices, most of them handed back the answered questionnaires too late.

With classroom observation, English course was already taught in some departments and even in the English department, it was already taught through with the oral expression course. By the way, presentations of topics on British Literature have displayed the insight of speaking skills in the department of English.

3. Data Analysis and Findings

This paper aimed at analysing the impact of large classes on the learning and teaching of the speaking skill referred to as oral skill as well as proposing solutions to the problems. This chapter presented the analysis and interpretation of data gathered through the teacher's questionnaire, student's questionnaire, and class room observation. It is divided into two main sections: the first section reports and analyses information provided through three tools used while collecting our data: the classroom observation, the teachers' and the students' questionnaires.

3.1 Data Analysis from the Teachers' Questionnaire

The lecturer's questionnaire is made of 20 questions which are presented and analysed in groups according to their likeness. One of them responded, "I didn't get any special pre-service training on management of large class but there were some topics related to classroom management that were part of lessons in academic curriculum at the College".

Table 4. Data presentation for Pre-service training

Questions	Answers	F	Percentage
Have you attended a pre-service training on management of large class?	Yes	0	0%
	No	5	100%
Have you done any pre-service training course?	Yes	0	0%
	No	4	80%
	No answer	1	20%
Do you have special training to handle large classes?	Yes	2	40%
	No	3	60%

F: Frequencies.

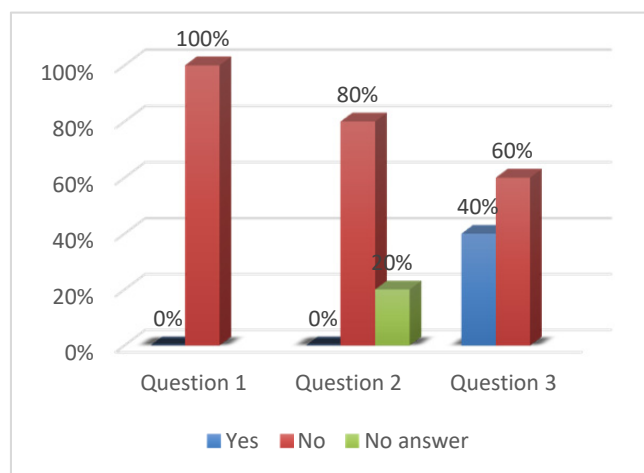


Figure 1. The responses about the sample lecturers are graphically reflected

This section on pre-service training reveals that the teachers had no pre-service training, when special training was necessary for them to teach large size ELT classes. They did not have special training to handle large classes except 40% for whom management of large size class was a part of the curriculum during their academic studies and another 60% did not study it anymore.

Table 5.

Question	Answers	F	Percentage
Did you attend any in-service course in the past five years?	Yes	1	20%
	No	4	80%

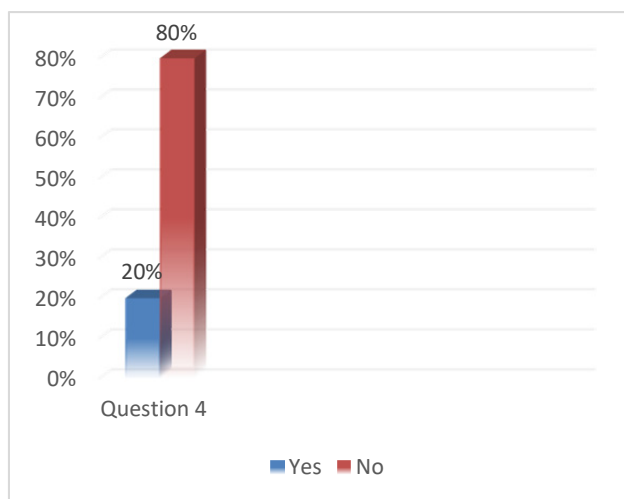


Figure 2. The responses on in-service training course

This section proves that most teachers did not attend an English Language Teaching course in the last five years which means from 2012 to 2017; only 20% have attended in-service training and 80% did not get any training especially on management of large class.

According to the gathered information, the researcher found out that teachers often use techniques which do not require activities involving students' participation in speaking due to the large class situation.

What should be done here is the organization of seminars or in-service sessions for the teachers on how to deal with different teaching skills in large class. We know that the role of language is to communicate and these teachers are training students who will be communicators; that is why these teachers must be equipped with methods and techniques related to the teaching of the different skills. And for the case of teachers who got the training, they are required to be competent because competent teachers will strive to put theory into practice by emphasizing on the function of a language.

Considering the definition of what a large class is, all the observed classes are large because they contain more than 50 students. In such a situation with many students in the classroom, one wonders how English teachers can make all students speaking. One of the respondents said: *"It's not easy to teach in a large class because you were supposed to work with each individual student just to evaluate and help them. Because the number of learners doesn't allow us to do so, we just split them into different groups, to mean that it's not easy to evaluate each student"*.

The majority of informants, 74.7%, approve that the objective of teaching oral expression (speaking skill) which is to train the students to speak fluently and accurately, is not always achieved. Only 25.3% think that this objective is always reached. One respondent replied our that: *"While students are giving their presentations, they get the habit of holding a speech in front of a great number of people. So, they get able to fight against their shyness"*.

Some students explained that due to being part of a large class, the teacher does not have enough time to focus on and give enough practice opportunities to each student individually. Others argue that the downside of learning English at a higher level and not starting from primary school is the main reason for the lack of fluency in the English language.

According to the students, more time should be used by the lecturers to improve students' oral abilities. These activities can be grouped into categories that are related to the improvement of the speaking skill. Among the

ones connected with the speaking skill, there are *reciting poems, practising formal debates: discussing in groups, discussing in pairs, playing games, answering the teacher's questions orally*.

Looking at the data provided by students, we see that in reciting poems, no student out of 83 students, that is 0 %, stated that this activity is often used; 4 students, that is 4.9%, admitted that reciting poems is used once in a while, whereas 79 students, that is 95.1%, reported that reciting poems as an activity to improve the speaking skill is never used.

Concerning *practising formal debates*, the table shows that 31 students out of 83, that is 37.3 %, admitted that this activity is often used; for 46 students, that is 55.4%, this activity is used once in a while whereas 6 students (7.3%) said that practising formal debates is never used in their classrooms.

As for *group discussion*, we noticed that 49 students, that is 59.1%, admitted that this activity is often used in their classroom; 31 students (37.3%) confirmed that they use the activity from time to time in the classroom while another number of students, that is 3 or (3.6%) acknowledged that discussing in groups is never used in their classrooms. Regarding *discussing in pairs*, the data collected showed that 26 students (31.3%), declared that discussing in pairs often occurs in their classroom; 34 students involved in the research, that is 40.9%, admitted that discussing in pairs is done in their classrooms whereas 23 students, that is 27.8%, stated that they are never involved in discussing in pairs.

Concerning *answering the teacher's questions orally*, 74 students out of 83, that is 89.1%, stated that this activity often takes place in their classroom. A small number of 9 students, that is 10.9%, reported that such an activity is carried out in their classrooms once in a while.

As a general consideration on the activities related to the speaking skill mentioned above, we noticed, after taking into account and analysing the data obtained, that only answering the lecturer's questions orally is frequently used. All the remaining activities within the same category are rarely used to by students' consideration in large classes.

The following discussion presents the relevant debate.

Table 6. Data presentation on involving students

Activities	Often		Once in a while		Never		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	5	100%
Individual verbal response	1	20%	3	60%	1	20%	5	100%
Debates/discussion	1	20%	4	80%	0	0%	5	100%
Language games	0	0%	0	0%	5	100%	5	100%
Group work	4	80%	1	20%	0	0%	5	100%
Pair work	0	0%	1	20%	4	80%	5	100%
Chorus work	0	0%	0	0%	5	100%	5	100%
Drama: simulation role-play	3	60%	2	40%	0	0%	5	100%

a. Individual Verbal Response

As the table above depicts, the data from the study show that 3 out of 5 lecturers investigated or 60% reported that they use the individual verbal response once in a when while teaching the oral skill; 1 lecturer disclosed that often uses it; 1 lecturer, that is 20% confirmed to have never used such an activity in his oral lesson.

From the above and considering the lecturers' answers and the results from our classroom observation, it has been found out that this activity is the most commonly used technique on which most of the lecturers investigated converge. It is clear that this activity involves students' participation during the speaking lesson in the sense that it gives a student the opportunity to express himself orally. However, during data collection it was observed, it has was noticed that in large classes, a problem remains: it is not all the students who get the opportunity to give their verbal response due to the time allotted to a lesson.

b. Discussion

Concerning debate as an activity to improve the students' speaking ability, data in table show that 1 lecturer out

of 5 investigated (20%), said that he often uses them in his speaking lesson. 4 lecturers, that is 80%, reported that they use this activity once in a while, whereas no teacher had never used the technique.

Considering then the proportion of lecturers who often use it and those who use it occasionally, we simply understood that this activity is used by teachers in large classes. The reason advanced by the lecturers is that according to them, it is difficult in the sense that in debate/discussion, students have to be equipped with high proficiency in the language. In this case, students who are not proficient face the problem of lacking the appropriate vocabulary to use. However, although rarely used in large classes, this activity or technique should be practiced for its great importance in improving the students' public speaking skill to be tried out and for the speaker to be judged by his peers expressing himself on relevant topics.

c. Main Findings

The main findings are the following:

- Insufficient time duration of oral expression;
- Lack of conversation with their classmates in English outside the classroom;
- Little time of debate sessions, discussion;
- No public speaking in terms of acquiring speaking habits;
- Students don't create and don't participate in English clubs;
- No linguistic immersion programme in English speaking countries available.

One student added that (...): *"We should be initiated to speak in front of others. They [teachers] should multiply the opportunities for students to speak a lot even in exams. We should be all given living homes and food for free so as to attain the right objective of speaking English fluently"*.

4. Conclusion

All along the study, our goal was to investigate the existing problems in the management of large size class while teaching and learning the speaking skill in first years at the Institute for Applied Pedagogy of the University of Burundi and to suggest solutions to the problems caused by having ELT in large classes.

Based on the findings from the study, a number of the teachers think that maintaining discipline is mostly a problem in large class. Thus, it becomes very difficult to give individual attention to the weak students in a large class. In addition, most of the teachers do not feel comfortable while teaching in large classes and modern teaching aids are not available at the Institute for Applied Pedagogy. It is hard for student and teacher interactions to be maintained in a large class and it is difficult to keep up effective classroom management. For that reason, teachers cannot develop proper rapport with the students. It has been seen that most of the English teachers did not get special training in large class management. Students assert that they do not feel motivated when they are in a large class. So, learning and teaching need to be made more pragmatic by teaching the students through the communicative approach in order to make the speaking skill learning more effective.

5. Recommendations

In the light of the findings of the study and the conclusions drawn and observations made the, following recommendations are formulated:

5.1 To Students

They should:

- Listen carefully, silently and put into practice their teachers' instructions in order to facilitate their tasks during speaking activities;
- Participate as actively as possible in all the oral activities organized within the classroom with no pretext of belonging to a large class which may bring some students to wait for others to work for them;
- Join English clubs in order to increase the opportunities for free expression;
- Create theatre groups that can allow them to play drama, sketches, etc.;
- Avoid laziness and other types of disturbances related to the large class situation as they think the teacher cannot control their behaviour.

5.2 To Teachers

When teaching the speaking skill in large classes, teachers should:

- Ensure proper discipline by being firm, fair and friendly to his/her students; undisciplined students should be made to sit in the front row so that the teacher can watch them directly;
- Teachers should not be dependent on lecture method only. Many contemporary communicative teaching methods should be applied for effective class management;
- Teachers should teach classes in groups of 15 to 20, instead of trying to teach a whole class at once. For example, if a teacher has 60 students, he may have three or four groups respectively of 15 or 20 students. The small groups may be, easier to teach and will enable the teacher to pay closer attention to individual learners;
- Assign students to small groups of 5 to 7 learners and give them simple tasks or projects to do together. The teacher should do this as often as possible so that they can get used to group work;
- Establish simple rules (didactic contract) of acceptable behaviour for everybody to observe when working in groups or individually such as:
 - How to get together in groups and develop the speaking skill
 - How to talk softly without disturbing others during group work
 - How to take turns and how to wait for one's turn
 - Be in control of everything going on in the classroom setting.

5.3 To the Institute for Applied Pedagogy

The Institute for Applied Pedagogy should:

- Give teachers special training on the management of large size classes. Normal and traditional methods will not prove as effective as the special ones;
- Avail time/a day to speak English or public speaking competitions in English on a given topic at school;
- Create a Communication Training Centre (CTC), a centre that can empower faculty, and undergraduate students to become better oral and visual communicators in the classroom;
- Re-establish linguistic immersion in English speaking countries;
- Organize, English clubs, English evening entertainment opportunities.

5.4 To the Government

The government should:

- Provide the Institute for Applied Pedagogy with modern teaching aids. Those materials may be available in all the large classes. In this age of technology, just chalk and blackboard may not prove that effective as a language laboratory, TV, VCR, etc. All these aids will make teaching interesting as well as effective;
- Organize workshops and seminars for English teachers in general and for those dealing with large classes in particular so that they can exchange on varieties of methods and techniques for teaching the speaking skill in large classes.

5.5 Suggestions for Future Research

On the basis of the findings, the researcher recommends that:

- a. The problems of managing large size classes in institutions in the other areas of the country should be explored.
- b. A study be conducted to find out the nature of problems in managing large size classes in other higher education institutions

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