

## An Investigation of Obstacles Confronted by Iraqi Teachers of English Language in Teaching Large Classes at the Secondary Schools

*Woroud Tariq Jabir Al- Abdali*



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### *Abstract*

This study aimed at identifying and analyzing the obstacles confronted by Iraqi teachers of English in teaching large classes at the secondary schools. To fulfill the aim of the study, 30 teachers of English were chosen to express their responses about (28) items of a checklist which represented the instrument of the study. After analyzing data collection statistically, the results indicated that teaching English in large classes are really dilemma to be discussed and solved as the respondents showed their agreement of about (23) items of the checklist items focused on students,

teachers, and classroom management difficulties respectively. Whilst only (5) items proved to be not satisfactory and have lowest levels of support by respondents. In the light of findings of the research, the researcher recommended that Ministry of Education as well as competent authorities should increase the number of schools, classes, and educational staff. Besides, using modern teaching methodologies and providing suitable educational aids. The researcher also developed a number of suggestions to do further studies in other subjects and in many countries.

**Keywords:** obstacles, English Language, large classes

**\* The Problem of the Study and its Significance**

It is apparent that increasing in the population will need expansion and construction of many primary and secondary schools; otherwise, this will negatively effect on the issue of the size of class. Nowadays, most countries have schools that suffer from classes which are crowded with a big number of students. Such classes are considered large classes.

In recent times, large class size has become a big challenge that most teachers of English suffer from in learning and teaching effectively. Kennedy & Kennedy (1996) assure that it is difficult to overcome of what occur in class when the number of students exceeds a certain limit (Pg. 351 – 360). In the same trend, Bamba (2012) explains that "large classes may not offer opportunities to teachers to provide quality teaching and learning environment to the learners "(P.19). Moreover, Yelkper, etal. (2012) point out that large class size does not only affect the quality of teaching and learning, but also affect their stress levels (Pg. 321 – 322).

Surveying the existing literature conducting in this area such as Xu, 2001 ; Benbow , 2007; Harrison , 2012; Hindi , 2012 ; Bahanshal , 2013 ; Kadelya , 2015 ; Hadi&Lalu , 2015 ; ...etc. , the researcher has found that large class is really a dilemma which affects negatively on effective teaching and learning process and worries teachers of English of all levels in general and secondary school teachers in particular . Besides , from her experience of teaching English as a foreign language for more than 26 years , the researcher tries to dive into the scope of this problem by finding and identifying the difficulties that hinder the teacher of English of presenting effective teaching and accessing to some solutions or remedies to overcome these difficulties and simultaneously facilitate his/her teaching process . These solutions or remedies can be shown in what the research has reached through her reading to many references. They are some guidances that can help the teacher of English in teaching large classes and also some common strategies to be followed in teaching large classes. (See chapter 2:2.3 and 2.4).

### \* **The Aim of the Study**

The study aims at investigating and analyzing obstacles confronted by Iraqi teachers of English language in teaching large classes at the secondary schools.

### \* **The Hypothesis**

It is hypothesized that Iraqi teachers of English language confronted several obstacles in teaching large classes at the secondary schools.

### \* **The Limits of the Study**

The study is limited to Iraqi teachers of English of secondary schools for the academic year (2022-2023) in Wasit Province.

### \* **Definition of Basic Terms**

Some terms are mentioned in this study that should be defined as follows:-

**Obstacles:** obstacle is defined by different dictionaries:-

Webster's New World College Dictionary (2012) defines obstacle as "it is used of anything which literally, or figuratively stand in the way of one's progress".

It is defined in American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language (2016) as "something that

stands in the way of or hold up progress".

Moreover, it is also defined in MacMillan Dictionary (2021) as "a difficulty or a problem that prevents you from achieving something".

The operational definition adopted here is that an obstacle is a problem or a difficulty that hinder a teacher of English language from achieving his / her aim of teaching English which is to facilitate and enable students to acquire the foreign language, to practice it and ultimately to communicate with others.

**Teacher of English Language:** is a person who teaches students in secondary schools , where she/he prepares plans to provide students with four skills of teaching English : listening , speaking , reading and writing that are required to be mastered.

**Large Class :**to give an accurate definition for this term, the researcher gives a detail explanation for this term in chapter 2 under the title the concept of large class. So, the operational definition adopted in the current study is that a large class is a place in which more than (50) students sit on and

receive learning from the teacher under many factors and variables.

**Secondary school:** "The secondary stage is of three years (10-12 grades). There are two types of secondary schools , general or vocational . The general secondary schools have two sections . The scientific section qualifies one for admission into science, engineering ,medicine,etc. The literary section prepares a student for admission into liberal arts or humanities program in the university .The general secondary program leads to the General Bacculaureate Examination , which is a requirement for university admission" (Saeed , 2015 : 5).

#### \* **Theoretical Background**

#### \* **The Concept of a Large Class**

The related literature reveals that there is no global definition of a large class . This is due to the factors that many specialists in the field of teaching English depend on to give a suitable definition to the large class . Many literatures depend on the number of students that the classroom consists of . The number of students is also varied from one region to another . For instance , in United Kingdom , as Blatchford , etal.(2002;2003;2007) , and Pedder (2006) point out that the

usual number of students ranges from 25 to 30 students ; if the number increases more than 30 students , these classes are called large classes . While in Uganda , Haiti and other developing countries , it varies from 71 to 100 (O'Sullivan ,2006:24-37;Renaud , etal. , 2007 : 12-17 ; & Shamim , etal . , 2007).

Other literatures do not care of the number of students as far as they are concerned with the situation inside the classroom and how much does a student achieve progress . Ur (1996:302) assures that "the exact number does not really matter , what matters is how you , the teacher , see the class size in your own specific situation" . From other hand , Baker &Westrup (2000) argue that "a large class can be any number of students , if the teacher feels there are too many students for them all to make progress " (P.13) .

Some literatures depend on other factors of variables .Shamim ,etal . (2007:13) refer to these variables as the physical conditions . These variables include "the amount of space available teaching focus , teaching methodology and the availability of resource " . Mulryan – Kyne (2010) assures this view when she referred to

a large class as "a class that is too large for effective teaching to occur" (P.176) . Moreover ,Todd (2006) adds other variables such as "the age of students , their motivation and the size of the room in which the lessons are taught" (P.2) .

In the light of what has been discussed above it can be concluded that a large class is a place that is influenced by a number of factors and variables like:-

- 1- Students' number .
- 2- Situation inside the classroom .
- 3- The degree of students' progress .
- 4- Physical conditions include:-
  - A- The amount of space available teaching focus .
  - B- Teaching method .
  - C- The availability of resources .
  - D- Students' age .
  - E- Students' motivation .
  - F- The size of the classroom .

### \* Comparison Between Small and Large Classes in TEFL

	Small Classes		Large Classes
1-	Students are always ready to participate in classroom activities or answer teacher's questions at any time .	1-	Students' participation is very low . This may be due to the limited time which is specified to each activity or the teacher may be busy with pacifying the class .
2-	The teacher can cover the whole materials with specified time .	2-	The teacher can hardly accomplish the whole materials with specified.
3-	Student – teacher interactions are very high as students behave rationally .	3-	Student – teacher interactions are very low as students disturb the teacher in performing his/her duty towards students .
4-	The teacher introduces better methods of teaching that will meet students' individual needs and ultimately raise students' performance .	4-	The teacher depends on simple and traditional methods of teaching that will not even meet students' individual needs .
5-	The limited number of students stimulates competition among students .	5-	Competition among students is rarely or it may not be found .
6-	Classroom management runs very smoothly , so the teacher spends most of his/her time with each student .	6-	Classroom management not streamlined as the teacher is often busy to comfort the students who disturb the class .
7-	The teacher can help and facilitate students' difficulties in learning by implementing intensive activities effectively.	7-	Some students' difficulties may be overcome to some extent .
8-	Students become active members in the class because of intensive and increasing participation in various activities .	8-	Students become fewer passive members in the class because of their poor participation in classroom activities .
9-	Teachers are able to identify problems quickly and put appropriate solutions for them.	9-	Teachers cannot identify and eliminate any problem quickly.
10-	It is easy to establish quizzes and tests regularly.	10-	It is hard to establish quizzes and tests regularly .

11-	Teacher has the possibility of correcting and marking assignments . Hence , they are able to give feed back in time .	11-	Teachers face difficulty in correcting and marking assignments and this is in return affect negatively on providing feed back in time .
12-	Direct interaction is absolutely obvious as the teacher contact with each student directly and personally .	12-	Indirect interaction is really obvious because the teacher cannot contact with each student .
13-	All kinds of students including intelligent and weak or shy students participate in the class activities as "they are on the frying line, by being more visible to the teacher and may be called upon at any time to answer questions or to participate in class activity" (Finn , etal . , 2003:346)	13-	Only active and clever students participate in the class activities while shy and weak students are left behind with a little or without paying attention to them .
14-	Small classes encourage students to speak and participate in class activities as possible as they can .	14-	Because of their large number , students do not have a chance to speak and participate in class activities .
15-	Few or no disturbing students are definitely found in the small classes and if there is some of them , the teacher can control and identify misbehaving students.	15-	The teacher is unable to identify and control noisy students who influence students focus .
16-	Teachers have the chance and enough time to correct students' mistakes either in their oral production or in the written form .	16-	Because of the limited time , teachers , to some extent , correct students' mistakes in their oral production and the written form .
17-	Teachers exploit most of the time trying to use it on more productive actions .	17-	Teachers waste most of the time trying to focus on manners of misbehaved students .

18-	Teachers have the ability to assess or evaluate students' work and achievement .	18-	The teacher is always busy with classes that he/she teaches range 4 to 5 per day , so he/she often feels exhausted and uncomfortable . Moreover , he/she lacks enough time to assess or evaluate students' work and achievement or even solve their problems .
19-	The teacher can reach every student one by one personally and mentally during teaching process in the classroom .	19-	The teacher cannot reach every student personally and mentally and ultimately, he/she cannot contact with all individuals especially those who are sitting and hiding at the back .
20-	Students always improve their oral English because of the intensive use and practice of the foreign language .	20-	Students level of oral English could be low because of little practice of the foreign language .
21-	Small class is considered an appropriate and a quiet place in which a teacher can employ effective strategies for teaching .	21-	Large class is considered a troubling place for most of teachers especially the beginner teachers , so they always need to take training and use appropriate strategies to control the class .
22-	Students' motivation of learning the foreign language is very high . This can be apparent by the wide participation of the students in the activities and their focus on the teacher's explanation .	22-	Student's motivation of learning a foreign language is very low . This can be obvious when students show no interest in listening to the teacher's explanation or their little participation in the activities .
23-	The quality and quantity of teaching and learning in small classes are the best . This will definitely increase student's outcomes .	23-	The quality and quantity of teaching and learning in large classes are rather slightly . This will eventually harm student's outcomes .
24-	It is very easy for the teacher to distribute and collect homework , testing papers and posting grades . In addition , he/she is able to discuss some mistakes that have made by some students frugally .	24-	It is difficult for the teacher to distribute and collect homework , testing papers and posting grades . But , he/she doesn't have enough time to discuss some mistakes with students .

25-	The atmosphere of the class encourages teachers to establish many creative activities .	25-	The turbulent atmosphere leads the teacher to be restricted with ordinary and available activities .
26-	The teacher and the students alike develop their use of the language by extensive opportunities offered by the class .	26-	Using the language by students is very limited as they depend on the teacher in understanding the lesson.
27-	The teacher perfectly controls the class easily .	27-	The teacher , to some extent , loses control the class .
28-	Because of the wide spaces in the class and the limited number of students , teachers move around the benches freely . This will help him/her to monitor , observe and assess students during activities .	28-	The large number of students and the limited space among benches to walk prevent the teacher from observing , assessing and monitoring students during activities .
29-	The teacher confirms that every student has followed what has been given in the textbook and paid attention to the teacher's explanation properly .	29-	The teacher cannot assure that every student has followed that has been written in the textbook .
30-	Teachers are able to give individual attention for every student especially weak one to raise their level .	30-	Teacher is unable to give individual attention for each student.
31-	It is very simple to manage groups to supervise students very carefully .	31-	The limited or no space makes the teacher faces difficulty in managing groups to supervise the students .

See (Bahanshal , 2013 : 52 – 55 ;  
&Kadelya , 2015 : 13-24)

### \* Some Guidances of Teaching Large Classes

The teacher should take into consideration the following guidances:-

1- Establishing a collaborate and good educational atmosphere in partnership with students . This will reflect on students' feeling of warmth, comfort , trust , cooperation and obscurity of fear . Xu (2007) assures that" a good class has an atmosphere of a feeling of warmth, mutual support , an absence of fear , a feeling of comfort , mutual respect , people mindful of other people's abilities and limitations , a feeling of cooperation , and a feeling of trust , ....etc" . (P.4).

2- Getting benefit from other experienced teachers who are involved in large class teaching especially in regard of classroom management techniques . Ibid points out that "the teacher's skill in classroom management is the primary ingredient for success with group in large classes"(p.5).

3- Keeping students always busy with different in class exercises (individual, pairs , groups) submitted by the teacher. Hassan (2013) states that "the principal benefit of these exercises is that they get students acting and reflecting , the only two ways by which human beings learn" . She also adds that "the teacher can also use in – class exercises to wrap up lecture period".

4- Encouraging students to do some quizzes at the end of every two lessons. By comparing the results of quizzes , students will be stimulated to present class orderly and engaged in the exercises . From other land , it encourages and helps the teacher in choosing some questions that could be included on the mid – semester exams or the final exams .

5- The teacher must be accessible to the students by using various ways such as introducing himself to students and explaining the reason/s of choosing

this subject (English Language) , greeting students as they came in , knowing his/her student's names , answering individual questions , sharing his/her experience with students ... etc.

6- The teacher must have the ability to control and manage the exam very carefully and avoid cheating during the exam . There are several ways to do this such as:-

A- Making up different sheets of tests (Arce , 2007 :2).

B- Using the essay form whenever possible in tests . (Norman , 2007:3).

C- Selecting topics that reduce the likelihood of students using previously written papers (Lowman , 1995:281).

D- Specifying students to seat and separating friends (Christopher , 2007:3) .

E- Calling an additional person to monitor with him/her .

6- Varying active learning activities by asking questions that require higher level thinking skills , encouraging students to summarize the main and important points of lesson and allowing students to discuss the answers either individually or collectively .

7- Providing several kinds of visual aids that help a great deal . Trying to

mix up films , overhead projectors , computer graphics , and even guest lectures (Richards & Theodore , 2001:156) .

8- Appreciating students when they have responded correctly . Freeman (1986) declares that "if you (teacher) ignore student responses , you (teacher) will tend to extinguish them together" (P.129).

9- The teacher should be careful enough in choosing the topic of the lesson . This topic should be kept with learners' interests .So , they will engage actively and use the language actively and interactively .

10- Helping students to direct their attention and thoughts to the topic of the day by giving a brief outline on the board at the beginning of class .

11- Making students share in some tasks such as distributing handout collecting homework and arranging groups as the teacher will be unable to get around to all students . This will ultimately give responsibility for students to do so and feel confidence in themselves .

12- Putting some instructions that lead to create a disciplinary commitment with the students . It'd prefer post them on the wall to be taken seriously when an inappropriate behavior arises or

commits . Johnson & Johnson (2006) declare that "we need to hand over responsibility for ensuring the appropriateness of behavior" .

13- Arranging students to some groups with regard to the size of the classroom. This will encourage students to depend on themselves in using and correcting the language with limited help by the teacher .

14- Encouraging students to use authentic materials after their lessons such as : newspapers , magazines , photos , ....etc . These authentic materials can be used as sources or content for the lesson . This will raise students' ability in using and employing the language .

15- Being aware of the level of students carefully and making sure to distinguish among those who are shy students and those who are brave enough to speak comfortably in front of their classmates .Keeping those shy students in small groups and giving them time to practice the language and monitor their progress closely .Ultimately , they will be active with a whole – class .

16- As the classes are considered large classes , the teacher should choose stronger students as "teaching assistants to help him/her in his/her



task . Sometimes , those students feel difficult at the beginning but with the passages of time they become account of doing this . This of course , will increase their confidence levels .

See (Hassan, 2013 ; Hadi & Lalu , 2015& Practical Tips for Teaching Large Classes : A Teacher's Guide , 2015) .

### **\* Strategies to be Followed in Teaching Large Classes**

To overcome and dominate some challenges that encounter English language teacher in teaching large classes , the researcher found many strategies that should be followed in teaching English as a foreign language . Among them, the researcher focuses on the most effective ones . They are summed as follows:-

#### **1- Interactive teaching techniques**

Interactive teaching techniques "are the pedagogical techniques that allow teacher to engage learners in the lesson effectively during teaching and learning process" (Kadelya , 2015 : 67) . This engagement can be done by making students participate , communicate , interact with others . This is in line with what Treko (2013) points out that interactive teaching techniques make students interact ,

communicate and share knowledge with others . They include different types of methods such as : role play , interactive lecturing , questions and answers and group discussion . Every type has its affect in the learning and teaching process (243 – 251) . For instance ,Mgeni (2013) asserts that , the use of group discussion fosters students' participation , self – confidence and leadership ability of students in classroom . Moreover , it encourages students to substitute their attitudes and knowledge in the lesson that will ultimately increase student – student and teacher – students interactions (114 – 116) .

#### **2- Remedial Classes**

Remedial classes "are the classes which are conducted on extra time out of normal school time – table , these remedial classes could be conducted during the evening time or on weekend days" (Kadelya , 2015 : 68) . Those classes are specified to slow learners to get an opportunity for effective learning . They are useful for both teachers and slow learners . Regarding teachers , they give them more time to explain and reinforce the lesson by using extra techniques of teaching . So , teachers will be sure that these slow learners understand the

lesson well . On other respect , these classes help slow learners to go together with fast learners and to get more learn than they used to get in the normal classes of school. Group Work

In simple way , group work can be defined as an interactive teaching technique used by more than one person working in a social manner in order to complete a task . Kadelya (2015 : 69) specifies himself by giving an accurate definition to group work by saying "group works are tasks that a subject teacher provides to pupils in small groups during the lesson presentation (P.69)" . Some specialists like Kadelya (Ibid) ; Treko , (2013) ; & Burke (2011 : 88) explain some benefits of using group work inside the classroom such as :-

- A- It makes easier of class management and teaching .
- B- It enables students to share in using textbooks and other instructional materials when needed .
- C- It helps students to participate in conversation as well as exchange knowledge and facts among them . In other words , it helps them to gain more information than in a single individual.
- D- It forces any students to work with other one he/she may never have chosen to work with . This will

encourage him/her to communicate without previous notification .

### **3- Teaching and Learning Materials**

Teaching and Learning Materials are those materials which are supposed to be used as subject syllabus directives . They help teachers make teaching work as simple as possible by assigning works to students by providing books to them rather than depending on writing on whiteboard.

(See Denis , 2009.&Kadelya , 2015 : 67 – 70)

#### **\* Literature Review**

This part takes up an analytical presentation to the previous studies which had been conducted on large classes and had a relationship with the present study .Reading these studies thoughtfully is necessary. This is due to the following reasons:-

- A- It reflects the extent of researcher's interest in this phenomenon that she cared about personally.
- B- It is useful in knowing the curricula adopted by previous researchers to tackle the phenomenon and their finding.

After surveying Arabic and foreign studies , the researcher finds many studies that are really focused on TEFL in large classes . Hence , to limit herself , the researcher will refer only

to the studies that are closely related to the present study .

A study conducted by Xu (2001) entitled "Problems and Strategies of Teaching English in Large Classes in the People's Republic of China" . The study aimed to:-

First – examining and analyzing the problems of teaching English in large classes in the People's Republic of China , and second – seeking strategies to cope with them . A number of second – year college students of about 380 was chosen to be a sample of the study . A questionnaire was conducted to ask students to make their commentaries on the merits and demerits of learning English in large classes.

The study reached to the following results:-

1- The dilemmas derived from teaching in general such as the lack of teaching staffs , equipments and classrooms , ... etc : can be cringed through teaching in large classes as it keeps human and materials resources to ease.

2- As it is possible to use innovations in teaching methodologies in small classes , they can also be stratified in teaching large classes.

Another study carried out in Bangladesh by Chowdhury &

Shaila(2013) entitled "Teaching Speaking in Large Classes: Crossing the Barriers" . The objectives of this issue are to concentrate on how the teachers of English language transact with large classes at the university level and to find out the problems teachers encounter when they administer and observe speaking classes. The participants of the study include (52) teachers of English language working at different private universities. The two researchers have adopted a questionnaire as a research tool which contains some steady alternatives and some open – ended questions. After collecting data , the responses were counted into percentage. So , the two researchers have reached the results that "students' less exposure to the real-life interaction to the target language , their nervousness , influence of the first language , and adverse social environment along". Besides , another result indicates that in teaching speaking in classroom, most of the teachers can apply different new methods and many innovative techniques.

"Barriers in Teaching English in Large Classes: Voice of an Indonesian English language Teacher" is a study

conducted by Hadi & Lalu (2015) in Indonesia. This study was fulfilled to recognize challenges encountered EFL teacher when teaching in a private school in East Lombok Regency Indonesia.

More than 30 students were chosen randomly to be participants. To collect data , both an interview and classroom observation were applied. The results of the study assured that seven challenges encountered the teacher while he was teaching English in large classes. These challenges were in:-

- 1- "Evaluation and providing individual feedback,
- 2- controlling issues (discipline) ,
- 3- learning effectiveness and learning outcomes ,
- 4- engaging students to the lesson , the use of local language by the students ,
- 5- reducing interest (motivation) to learn English , and
- 6- paying individual attention."

To remedy these difficulties , the researcher suggested appropriate strategies to be employed by the teacher. These were:-

- 1- Using variety of games.
- 2- "Setting an outdoor English class in order to attract students' attention".

## **\* Procedures of Collecting Data**

### **\* Sample of the Study**

Sample of the study can be defined as "the group of elements, or a single element from which data are obtained" (McMillan, 1996).The total number of teachers of English is (90) teachers of both sexes in Al-Suwaira/Wasit/Iraq. The researcher has chosen teachers of English for public secondary schools counting (40) teachers and excluded teachers for intermediate schools. The teachers are selected randomly. Brooks (2005) asserted that "a simple random sample is that sample selected in such a way that every possible sample of the same size is equally likely to be chosen".

### **\* Research Instrument**

The checklist is designed to be the instrument of the study .It has been developed by the researcher. The aim of teaching English and the level of students are taken into consideration while construction the items of the checklist. It is drawn from many sources like Iraqi and foreign checklists and related literature .After reading those sources ,the researcher was able to formulate the checklist in its initial form which consists of (31)items divided into three phases as follows: the first phase (students'

difficulties) includes (1-9) items, the second phase (teachers' difficulties) consists of (10-23) items and the third phase (classroom management difficulties) consists of (24-31) items.

#### **\* Face Validity and Reliability of the Checklist**

The initial form of the checklist was exposed to experts in the field of TEEL to decide its face validity. Chi-square was used to explain the agreement and the disagreement of the jury members about the items of the checklist. So, the final form of the checklist consists of (28) items.

To check the reliability of the checklist, the researcher chose ten teachers of English randomly from secondary schools. They were excluded later when choosing the main sample of the study.

#### **\* Application of the Checklist**

After ensuring the face validity and the reliability of the checklist, the checklists are distributed to the main sample of the study which consists of (30) teachers.

#### **\* Date Analysis and Findings**

#### **\* Results and Discussions**

The researcher has tabulated the data in the checklists in the final form by arranging and putting teachers' responses on a schedule using some

statistical means. The weighted average is used to find out the degree of power for each item of the checklist. After arranging the results of the checklists to the rank of each item, it was found that the weighted average is ranged between (1.9 – 0.86) and the centennial weight is ranged between (95%-43). Accordingly, the results indicate that (23) items have a high weighted average arranged between (1.9-1) and only (5) items have a low weighted average arranged between (0.96-0.86). By this result, the research hypothesis has been achieved since more than three quarters of the items are upheld by teachers of English which amounted to 23 items (See Appendix 1). The items have been discussed and analyzed in detail as follows:-

**1- "Making groups makes the spaces in the classroom very limited and this will prevent the teacher from moving around and changing the shape of the class".**

This item has got the first rank as it has got 1.9 of the weighted average and 95 of the centennial weight. The percentage of the respondents which is 95% declare that most of the teachers face difficulty in making groups as they cannot reach all

the groups to guide them, to supervise them and to check their work properly. This fact is in line with what Yazedjian & Kdkhorst (2007) declare that "instructors often see the physical process of moving around to facilitate group work as too unorganized or time consuming... and unwieldy" (P.166).

**2- "The teacher has little time to use authentic materials like tape-recorder, video programs and computers".**

This item is employed by 27 teachers who represent 90% of the total number of the sample. This item has got the second rank as it has got 1.83 of the weighted average and 91.5 of the centennial weight. In spite of the fact that using those equipments by teachers make their students hear and see clearly. "But inadequate use of such classroom equipments may lead to the lack of interest and involvement of the students in the classroom learning" (Xu, 2001).

**3- "A few numbers of students have opportunities to effectively participate in classroom activities and stimulate the rich use of the foreign language".**

This item has got the third rank as the weighted average is 1.76 and the centennial weight is 88. This result

means that most members of the sample agree that students have less chance to participate and use the target language during classroom activities. According to Bahanshal (2013) the reason beyond this fact is the growth of class size (P.55). Furthermore, Wang and Zhang (2011) argue that "teachers were unable to provide equal chances for the students to participate and practice as well as to satisfy all the needs of students who have different interests, personalities and capabilities".

**4- "The teacher faces difficulty in managing group works as the desks are arranged in rows".**

This item is agreed by (24) teachers who represent 80% of the total number of the sample. It has got the fourth rank as the weighted average is 1.73 and the centennial weight is 86.5. The large number of students who are sitting in desks in rows makes the space of the class is very narrow. This usual shape of classroom will hinder the teacher of moving those desks to make groups. This fact assures by Brady (2013) who confirms that "teachers cannot manage groups if there is no space to walk around the room to supervise them". Moreover Bamba (2012) adds another fact by

admitting that moving desks to make group takes time because of the large number of students (P.11).

**5- "Some students suffer from hearing and concentrating with their teacher".**

**6- "Some students feel shy to speak the target language, besides they have less opportunity to express themselves'**

Both items have occupied the fifth and sixth rank accordingly. They have got 1.7 of the weighted average and 85 of the centennial weight. This means that some students really face difficulty in hearing the lesson. Yelk pier, etal. (2012) assure that "students who sit at back usually have difficulties in hearing from lectures in the lecture halls; therefore, some end up writing down wrong information with cross checking with colleagues" (P. 322). Besides AL-Jarf (2006) indicates that because of the size of the class, some students especially the shy or weak students do not have the chance to participate and practice the target language. Ultimately, they would be neglected or left behind (P.24).

**7- "The teacher does not have enough time to pay attention to each student and give him / her a chance to participate and practice the language".**

This item is agreed by 18 teachers who represent 60% of the total number of the main sample. It has got 1.5 of the weighted average and 75 of the centennial weight. This finding was in line with Yelk pieri, etal. (2012) who maintain that "individual attention is not given to students who may need it" (P. 329). This may be due to the reason that the teacher is restricted to a specific time for the class which makes the student's participation is very limited. This fact clarifies by (OECD, 2012) which argued that "Class size may affect how much time and attention a teacher can give to individual student as well as the social dynamic between students". It is also confirmed by AL-Jarf (2006) who pointed out that "Because the size of the class, they do not have enough time to pay attention to each and give every student a chance to speak and participate" (P.24).

**8- "The teacher cannot correct students' papers rapidly and give them personalized feedback".**

This item has occupied the eighth rank. It has got 1.43 of the weighted average and 71.5 of the centennial weight. As it is known, teacher is asked to exam his / her students every semester and give them the test paper as quick as he / she could. But with the expansion number of students, the teacher face difficulty in correcting test papers or he / she may feel boredom. This will affect negatively on knowing their personalized feedback. This finding was concurred with Blatchford, et al.,(2002; 2003; 2007) who argued that large classes make it difficult for teachers to spot students' problems and provide them with appropriate and immediate feedback on an individualized basis. Generally speaking, "in large classes feedback is often inadequate while feedback plays an important role in learning process of students" (Kadelya, 2015: 17).

**9- "Some students face difficulty in seeing and reading what has written on the whiteboard because of the long distances".**

**10- "Some students are passive, not dynamic, unmotivated and lose interest in the class".**

**11- "Students' cooperation with the teacher in directing the classroom activities is very limited".**

These items are supported by (17, 16, and 19) respondents respectively. They have got 1.4 of the weighted average and 1.4 of the centennial weight. Most large classes are crowded with students that need many desks to sit on. These desks arrange in rows that make them take long distances. Hence, most students, especially those who are sitting in the back seats, suffer from seeing the whiteboard clearly. Besides, Hadi& Lalu (2015) add another fact that is most students lack interest in learning English. This will cause to make them un active and lazy to learn English.

**12- "Some students who sit in the back seats disturb the students who are sitting in the front seats".**

As it has shown in Appendix (1) this item has got the twelfth rank as the weighted average is 1.3 and the centennial weight is 65. It is used by 14



teachers who represent 47% of the main sample. This means that this kind of students is always engaging themselves in argument and chatting far away from what has happened inside the classroom. Yelkper, et al., (2012) reveal that most students, especially those who sit in the back, do not participate or know whatever goes on in the class. They referred to them as gossipers (P.324).

**13- "Students are often anonymous to both the teacher and to each other".**

**14- "Classroom environment is extremely troublesome".**

**15- "The teacher is busy with noisy students that makes the teaching process is ineffective".**

All items 13, 14 & 15 are supported by 11, 15 and 7 teachers who represent 37%, 50% and 23% respectively. They have got the weighted average 1.16 and the centennial weight 58. "Felling of anonymity and passivity reduces the learners' ability to take personal responsibility of their own learning. On the other hand, lack of rapport that students feel with the instructor and with other students can prevent students' motivation to engage in the learning process" (Yazedjan

&kolkhorst, 2007: 164). Concerning classroom environment, large classes are considered more noisier than small classes. This fact is in line with Shamim, et al., (2007) who indicate that teachers in large classes have problems establishing discipline in their classrooms and dealing with the increasing noisy level. In addition to that, Hadi & Lalu (2015) explain that "although the teacher had tried to remind students and to get their attention frequently, the students would stop for a while and made noise again. When they were doing so, they disturbed other students". In fact, they only increase the number in classroom and this will negatively affect on the teaching process.

**16- "Student's interaction with their teacher is less active".**

**17- "The teacher is unable to establish quizzes for his / her students regularly".**

Both items 16 and 17 are supported by (12) and (11) respondents who represent 40% and 37% of the total number of the sample respectively. They have got sixteenth and seventeenth rank as the weighted average is 1.13 and the centennial weight is 56.5. There is no doubt that to make lesson go on smoothly and to

achieve the aims of presenting English lesson which are to acquire the language, to practice it and ultimately to communicate with others, students must prove their presence by taking active roles in interaction with their teacher. But "In large classes there are little teacher – student interactions and this reduce the effectiveness of teaching and learning in classroom" (Dachs, 1998). Concerning establishing quizzes regularly teachers also face difficulty in organizing such quizzes because of the large number of students which needs a lot of time and effort to correct. This fact comes in touch with kadelya (2015) who reveals that "it is difficult to organize quizzes and class tests regularly" (P.75).

**18- "The teacher spends long time in correcting test papers; thus, students forget what they have tested on".**

This item has got the eighteenth rank. It has got 1.1 of the weighted average and 55 of the centennial weight. Because of the large number of students in large classes, the teacher also faces difficulty in correcting their test papers. As a result, he / she returns them after a long time. This will negatively influence on students' performance when he / she checks with

them their responses as they have forgotten what they have tested on.

**19- "The teacher, to some extent, cannot control and identify students who have disturbance behaviors".**

**20- "The teacher spends a large amount of time taking students' attendance".**

**21- "The teacher is unable to monitor and observe all the students properly and gives them an appropriate support when they need it".**

These items 19, 20 and 21 have taken the nineteenth, twentieth and twenty first rank respectively. They have got 1.3 of the weighted average and 65 of the centennial weight. Some teachers' ability to control the classroom is limited as they are unable to reach, to observe and to deal with every student one by one. Hence, students from their side will do unacceptable behavior (kuczynski, 2012&Bahanshal, 2013: 55). Briefly, Xu (2001) summarized these problems by declaring that large classes would cause problems such as "monitoring, attendance and checking assignments".

**22- "The teacher is unable to provide students with suitable solutions or remedies based on feedback from their assessment".**

**23- "To save time, the teacher focuses on active students more than the shy ones".**

As indicated in appendix (1), both items 22 and 23 have got the twenty second and the twenty third rank respectively. They have got 1 of the weighted average and 50 of the centennial weight. The lack of evaluating students' performance continuously will prevent teachers from providing appropriate feedback about them, identifying their problems, knowing their progress and ultimately putting remedies and solution to solve such problems (Shamim, etal: 2007: 41). Concerning students' participation, the teacher depends on students who have ability to do the four skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) of the foreign language easily and neglect the students who are shy or afraid of speaking the foreign language. This state will make them passive or just like audiences (Blatchford, etal., 2002)

**24- "Some teachers find their teaching job is encumbrance because they are worried about students' passing for the exam".**

**25- "Some teachers need longer time to cover the curriculum as students take longer time to understand materials".**

**26- "The teacher is unable to assess and evaluate his / her students' progress regularly and continuously".**

**27- "The teacher does not take individual differences into his / her account".**

**28- "Some teachers cannot improve their teaching organize effective and creative activities".**

All these items 24, 25, 26, 27, and 28 are occupied by 3-6 teachers only who represent 10%-20% of the whole sample. They have got the weighted average 0,86-0,66 and the centennial weight 43-33. However, these items are considered unachieved items, i.e., weak and unsatisfactory challenges since they are occupied by the very little number of teachers

### **\* Results , Recommendations and Suggestion**

#### **\* Results**

1- Most of obstacles have got agreement among teachers of English

as they assure through their responses that such obstacles are really obstacles confronted them while they are teaching the large classes.

2- The items (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 21, 23, 25, 26, and 27) have got the highest levels of support by teachers of English who represent the research sample.

3- The items (11, 20, 22, 24, and 28) have got the lowest levels of support by teachers of English who represent the research sample.

#### **\* Recommendations**

1- The researcher hopes to inform Ministry of Education as well as competent authorities to increase the number of school buildings, the number of educational staff, and the number of classes in schools to break the momentum resulting from the large number of students per class.

2- Informing English language teachers about the problems that English language teachers face while they are teaching large classes in order to prevent them from occurring or to avoid them as much as possible.

3- Paying attention to use modern teaching methodologies and provide advanced educational aids in order to overcome the difficulties faced by the

English language teachers while they are teaching large classes.

#### **\* Suggestions**

1- Conducting a study aimed at researching and identifying the obstacles that teachers of English language face in other stages of study in both intermediate and primary schools.

2- Taking advantages of the problems that the researcher found in conducting similar studies in other school subjects.

3- Making similar researches to the current research at the level of Iraqi universities.

4- Conducting a comparative study to find out the performance of the teacher of English language while they are teaching large and small classes and its effect on students' level in language acquisition.

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