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METHODOLOGICAL JOURNAL<http://mentaljournal-jspu.uz/index.php/mesmj/index>IMPACT OF CLASS SIZE ON ENGLISH LANGUAGE
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ABOUT ARTICLE

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Abstract: This research explores the impact of class size on English language acquisition and to evaluate how different classroom environments affect learning efficiency. Class size refers to the number of students present in a single classroom under the instruction of one teacher during a lesson or a class session. In the context of language learning, class size plays a crucial role in determining the quality and effectiveness of instruction, student participation, and individual attention. It is one of the key factors influencing the dynamics of classroom interaction and the overall learning environment. The concept of class size is not only about the numerical count of students but also about how this number affects classroom management, teacher workload, student engagement, and learning outcomes. For example, a class with 10–15 students is typically considered a small class, while a class with over 30 students is generally referred to as a large class. However, what is defined as "small" or "large" can vary across different educational systems, institutions, and countries.

Introduction. According to the ongoing reforms in the education sector of the Republic of Uzbekistan, one of the main priorities is to enhance the quality of English language teaching and learning across all educational levels. In line with the Presidential Decree PQ-5117 dated May 19, 2021, which focuses on the popularization and improvement of foreign language learning, optimizing classroom conditions, including class size, is considered a crucial factor in achieving successful language acquisition outcomes. In the context of language learning, class size refers to the number of students assigned to a single teacher in a classroom. It is a widely debated aspect in educational research, especially in relation to how it influences students' ability to acquire and develop foreign language skills. Smaller class sizes are often believed to provide more opportunities for individual attention, interaction, and participation, which are essential components in second language acquisition (SLA). On the other hand, larger class sizes may limit these opportunities, potentially hindering the effectiveness of instruction and learning outcomes. For instance, in a small class setting, learners may receive more personalized feedback, engage more actively in communicative activities, and feel more confident to participate. In contrast, in overcrowded classrooms, teachers may struggle to manage student engagement and provide adequate support, resulting in less effective language learning environments. Understanding the effect of class size on English language acquisition is vital for educators, school administrators, and policy makers. In this introduction, we will explore the relationship between class size and language learning effectiveness, the benefits and drawbacks of different class sizes, and the pedagogical implications for English language instruction.

Materials and methods. The objective of studying the effect of class size on English language acquisition is to determine how the number of students in a class influences the learning process, classroom dynamics, and language development outcomes. By examining this relationship, the following goals can be achieved:

Understand Class Size Variables: Identify how different class sizes impact teaching strategies, student-teacher interaction, and classroom management.

Assess Language Acquisition Outcomes: Analyze how class size affects students' listening, speaking, reading, and writing development in English.

Identify Effective Practices: Determine which teaching practices are most successful in small vs. large class settings for English language learners.

Inform Policy and Planning: Provide data-driven recommendations for optimizing class size in language education programs.

Ultimately, the objective is to help educators and education planners create more effective learning environments by understanding the role that class size plays in language acquisition, thus improving the quality and efficiency of English language education. The subject of this study is students involved in English language learning programs, particularly in settings with varying class sizes. The methodology for investigating the effect of class size includes qualitative and quantitative research approaches such as classroom observation, interviews, surveys, and academic performance analysis. The theoretical significance of the study lies in its contribution to second language acquisition theory and classroom pedagogy. It provides insights into how learning environments shape language development and the psychological factors influencing student participation and performance. The practical significance is evident in educational policy and classroom management. Findings can guide school administrators and teachers in designing class structures that enhance learning, especially in ESL and EFL (English as a Foreign Language) contexts. In language learning, particularly, class size influences several important aspects:

Teacher-Student Interaction: Smaller classes usually allow for more individualized attention, frequent feedback, and closer monitoring of student progress. In contrast, larger classes can limit the teacher's ability to interact with each student regularly.

Student Participation: In smaller classes, students are more likely to participate actively, engage in discussions, and practice language skills. Larger classes may reduce opportunities for speaking and listening practice due to time constraints.

Classroom Management: Managing a large number of students can be challenging, especially in maintaining discipline, ensuring active participation, and catering to diverse learning styles and proficiency levels.

Assessment and Feedback: Teachers can provide more detailed and timely feedback in smaller classes, whereas in larger classes, assessments might be more standardized and less personalized. In language education, where communication and interaction are vital, class size can significantly impact the success of learning outcomes. Smaller class sizes are generally believed to create a more supportive and effective learning environment, particularly for developing speaking and listening skills. However, due to practical constraints such as teacher availability, classroom space, and funding, many institutions operate with medium to large-sized classes.

Results and discussion. Educators and researchers have long debated the optimal class size for effective language learning. While some argue that smaller classes are ideal, others suggest that teaching strategies, teacher qualifications, and classroom resources can mitigate

the challenges of large classes. Therefore, class size should be considered alongside other factors when evaluating or designing language learning programs. Class size has long been recognized as a fundamental element that can influence the quality of education in all subject areas, including language learning. It refers not only to the number of students in a class but also to the overall classroom dynamics, teacher workload, and the learning opportunities available to each student. Research in educational psychology and pedagogy consistently shows that class size plays a critical role in shaping the learning environment and educational outcomes. One of the most significant effects of class size is on student engagement. In smaller classes, students are more likely to interact with the teacher and their peers. They feel more comfortable asking questions, contributing to discussions, and participating in classroom activities. Teachers can encourage shy or less confident students to engage actively, which helps in building a more inclusive and supportive learning environment. Conversely, in larger classes, individual students may feel lost or overlooked, leading to reduced motivation and participation. Class size also impacts the quality of instruction a teacher can provide. In smaller classes, teachers can adapt their lessons more easily to the needs and pace of individual students. They can use a variety of instructional strategies, including group work, personalized tasks, and one-on-one interaction. In contrast, in large classes, teachers often rely on whole-class instruction, which may not meet the diverse needs of all students. Differentiated instruction becomes difficult, and students who need extra support may not receive it. Another area where class size has a significant influence is feedback and assessment. In smaller classes, teachers have more time to provide detailed, constructive feedback on assignments, oral presentations, and other classroom activities. This feedback helps students understand their mistakes and improve. In larger classes, teachers may struggle to assess every student thoroughly due to time constraints, resulting in generalized feedback or delayed responses, which can hinder student progress. Classroom management tends to be easier in small-sized classes. Teachers can establish a stronger rapport with students and create a more disciplined, respectful, and interactive learning atmosphere. In large classes, maintaining order becomes more challenging, especially when students have different learning styles, behavioral tendencies, and levels of motivation. Disruptive behavior is harder to address, and valuable teaching time may be lost in managing the classroom.

Importance of Class Size in Language Learning. Class size is especially critical in the context of language learning due to the interactive, communicative, and skill-based nature of language acquisition. Unlike subjects that rely heavily on individual reading or written assessments, language learning requires constant verbal interaction, listening practice, peer

collaboration, and immediate feedback. These elements are deeply influenced by the number of students in a class and the teacher's ability to manage instruction accordingly. In smaller language classes, students are provided with more opportunities to speak, listen, and actively use the target language. This is essential for building communicative competence. Each student has more time to participate in speaking activities, receive corrections, and practice pronunciation, intonation, and fluency. In large classes, speaking time per student is drastically reduced, which can slow down the development of oral communication skills. Error correction is a key component of language instruction. In small classes, teachers can pay close attention to each student's performance and provide immediate, individualized feedback on pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary usage, and sentence structure. This level of attention helps students become more aware of their mistakes and work on them. In larger classes, the teacher may be unable to correct every student's errors, leading to fossilization—when incorrect language use becomes a habit. Language learners often struggle with anxiety and fear of making mistakes in front of others. Smaller classes create a safer and more supportive environment where students feel more comfortable taking risks and expressing themselves. Teachers can foster trust and build each learner's confidence, which is vital for language acquisition. In contrast, students in large classes may hesitate to speak or participate, especially if they feel they are not receiving enough attention or support.

Conclusion. The size of a language class is far more than a statistic—it shapes the very heartbeat of teaching and learning. In small groups, teachers become agile facilitators, able to pivot lesson plans at a moment's notice, address individual pronunciation quirks, and celebrate each learner's breakthroughs. Learners in such settings benefit from lowered affective filters: they risk making mistakes, experiment boldly with new structures, and develop a deeper sense of ownership over their progress. Speaking and listening activities morph into dynamic conversations, writing workshops feel like personal dialogues, and reading lessons turn into collective explorations of meaning, all supported by rapid, tailored feedback that prevents fossilization and nurtures confidence. Large classes, by contrast, demand a choreography of careful design. Here, teachers must harness structured routines—rotating pair work, thinkpairshare cycles, peerreview protocols, and technologyenhanced feedback loops—to ensure every voice finds its moment. Participation may begin tentatively, but with clear expectations and equitable speaking turns, even the most reticent students can become active contributors. Listening tasks evolve from fillintheblank worksheets into miniature debates between “listening partners,” and writing instruction leverages digital platforms for asynchronous, detailed commentary. While the physical constraints and management demands

of a thirtyplus cohort can feel daunting, they also inspire creativity in resource allocation, peer mentoring, and the use of online spaces where teachers and learners converse beyond the classroom walls.

Across both extremes, the interplay between class size and language skills is undeniable. Small classes accelerate oral fluency through constant, realtime correction and scaffolded risk taking. Large classes, when well structured, foster autonomy: students learn to selfregulate, to give and receive peer feedback, and to navigate collaborative tasks with minimal teacher intervention. Reading and writing development follows a similar pattern: intimate classes allow deep dives into texts and multidraft writing processes, while larger ones prize scalable strategies—literature circles, reading journals, guided revisions—that democratize access to individualized support.

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