



Investigating the current class size arguments from the EFL Instructors' perspectives in Saudi Arabia: A case study of the Intensive Language Program (ILP) classes at Qassim University

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to investigate the impact of the class size on the overall improvement of the EFL teaching and learning settings via studying the case of the Intensive Language Program at some Saudi universities; in order to determine their influence on teaching environments; instructionally, managerially and socially. Today, it is common to teach 70 and above students in some (ILP) classes in college of Sciences and Arts, Arras, Qassim university. Therefore, the study attempts at determining the influences of such classes on teaching EFL. Moreover, the study also endeavours to investigate some detailed teaching difficulties faced by those who are currently work at college of Sciences and Arts, Arras. As appears on the university system (ILP) program aims at assisting the preliminary year students who intend to enroll in the English departments at Qassim University to acquire the fundamental English language skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking and vocabulary building). Those new comers have to go through an intensive English language program within a whole semester because they have to pass the required exams that enable them to join the English departments as level- one students.

In this study, the (ILP) is only refers to intensive language program as used officially by Qassim university system. Concerning the data collection, a qualitative method is employed in which the researcher interviewed three respondents from the staff members who currently teach the largest (ILP) classes in College of Sciences and Arts, Arras, Qassim University. Additionally, the researcher has observed some EFL classes in the same college for further investigation. The aim of the observation is to determine what exactly is taking place in classes with huge number of students and limited teaching and learning facilitates. In other words, the observation attempts at identifying the kind of rapport between the teachers and the students as well as determining the real problems faced by EFL teachers in terms of grading students' activities and time management. After collecting the data, the necessary statistical processes were conducted and the researcher finally arrived at some findings, the most important of which are as follows:

1. Simply reducing class size will not guarantee any overall improvement of teaching and learning settings.
2. Small classes are found as much better in terms of grading students' work.
3. In large classes students feel isolated because there are no individual interactions between them and their instructors.

Keywords: ILP, EFL, class size debate, large classes, small classes, PTR, qassim university, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

1. Introduction

During the last decade (ILP) programs in many universities in Saudi Arabia have been experiencing significant increase in students' enrollments, this increase is quite clear in Qassim University, where the researcher is currently work. It seems as if the increase of the students has resulted into what is globally known as a large class. The aim of the present study is to find out the impact of reducing the class size in Qassim University on teachers' planning, classroom management and assessment as well as to seek the nature of the interaction between EFL instructors and students alike. Moreover, the study also attempts to identify the teaching and learning materials used. Finally, the study will suggest intervention measures and strategies to improve general practice in (ILP) programs in Saudi Arabia.

Intensive Language Program at Qassim university is mainly established as one term program. The program is targeting the preliminary year students who are seeking an opportunity to join the English departments. Thus, students who have to go through studying intensive English Language skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking and vocabulary building). The program also provides students with new

language acquisition skills as well as strengthen what is already acquired during their previous academic years. It is also found that via the intensive language program, students will recognize the university system easily. What distinguishes this program in Qassim university is that its result is not calculated as students' Grade Point Average, however, it decides whether the students are qualified enough to join the English department or to repeat in case of failure. This program regularly witnesses the largest EFL classes in college of sciences and Arts, Arras, Qassim University. The data collected for conducting this study shows that it is common to teach 70 and above EFL students in such classes the thing which makes it difficult for instructors to deal with this huge number of students.

2. Statement of the problem

Although an increased (ILP) class size at Qassim university is undeniably raises several basic issues and increases the difficulty of the teaching tasks such as writing assignments, however, decreasing such classes without improving the teaching settings will not guarantee the overall progress required for teaching English today. Given, an increased

(ILP) class size may create a very weak interaction networks and rapport between many preliminary students and instructors alike. Managing a large and more diverse population of students coming from diverse academic backgrounds and levels of competencies is a key question. Today, at many universities in Saudi Arabia (ILP) students often learn English in what is known as large classes; where teachers often do most of the talking and many students are neglected or deprived of participation in classroom activities. Additionally, in (ILP) classes many difficulties may arise, these difficulties can be caused by lack of space and difficulties in using some teaching strategies. It is also difficult to grade students' daily activities especially the written assignments therefore, most instructors tend to avoid the written activities. Moreover, invigilating such classes is challenging and it is customarily requiring three invigilators at least to control theatres where such exams usually take place.

Other hindrances include lack of the necessary equipment and teaching aids may simply occur in such classes. In addition to the above-mentioned difficulties, organization of the (ILP) classrooms may encourage distraction of students' concentration. Moreover, instructors are likely to encounter difficulties in dealing with crucial matters such as individual differences among students in these classes. This study aims at investigating the actual problems arising from teaching English in (ILP) classes in Saudi Arabia. The study is addressing the above-mentioned problems and also attempting to answer the following questions raised by Stanley, A. C. *et al.* (2002) ^[1]. who believes that large classes are a fact of life in higher education. However, these questions are still unanswered, questions such as how does a faculty member structure with 100 or more students in fixed seating to promote them learning? Are there alternatives to the lecture format? Are there actually advantages to the large class? Additionally, we can say that still there is a need to add one more question to the above - mentioned ones. Thus, it is important to raise the following question: how class size reduction improves the overall teaching quality?

3. Study questions

1. What are the most difficulties faced by the EFL instructors while teaching (ILP) classes in K.S.A?
2. To what extent grading students' work is unchallenging in small classes?
3. How does strong rapport between the (ILP) students and their instructors takes place in these classes?

4. Study hypotheses

1. There are many difficulties confronted by EFL instructors while teaching large (ILP) classes.
2. Grading students work is unchallenging in the situation of small classes.
3. There is a lack of strong rapport between the (ILP) Students and their instructors in these classes.

5. The Literature Review

The literature around class size argument is not very huge with exception the work comes from an experiment known as Tennessee study or the Project STAR conducted from 1985 to 1989 in Tennessee USA ^[2]. Despite the fact that there are insufficient studies on class size debate, but it is also found

that few has been focused their attention around the undergraduate level. For instance, in the Project STAR where 11,600 subjects have participated in conducting it and showing it is fundamental results was mainly targeting kindergarten students who were randomly assigned to three class-size categories as follows: 13–17 students, 22–25 students and over 25 students.

In a comparison between the medium – sized classes and the smallest ones an average student observed was different. The average students assigned to the smallest classes had a reading score nearly 8 percent higher than those in medium-sized ones. Additionally, the study also showed that students assigned to smaller classes have achieved 9 percent higher math scores than their classmates in medium-sized classes.

Additionally, students in smaller classes were more likely to take college-entrance exams after completing high school than those assigned to medium or large classes. Regarding minority and less affluent students it is found that the effects of smaller classes were also stronger. What is interesting in Tennessee study findings is the calculation made by the Education economists Alan Krueger and Diane Schanzenbach who found that, reducing class sizes from 22 to 15 students has a 5.5 percent return in annual benefits. This takes into account students' increased lifetime earnings. Although, the Project STAR produced the most effective data on the field of class sizes, however, some tangible remarks remained unanswered.

For example, the results may not be as strong for smaller suburban schools simply because the experiment was conducted in larger urban schools. Concerning the criteria of selecting the subjects, it seems hard to believe that they were completely randomly assigned because some motivated parents may urge to move their children to the smaller classes. Finally, it is clear that the study was conducted in Tennessee which is a much below-average state for education compared to the rest of states in the USA. This means the Project STAR students may have benefited from the class-size reductions more than students in higher-performing states might. This study is only focuses at the effects on students who were in small classes in their first few years of school. In spite of these remarks teachers are found to work comfortably in small classes than the large ones. Therefore, we can say that the situation of the (ILP) classes in Qassim university are very huge compared to the findings of the class size displayed by this Project STAR. However, the good news is that reducing class size alone will not guarantee the excellence of teaching, it seems as if what is important in this regard is the quality of our teaching materials and approaches.

Commenting on the advantages of small classes, Eric A. Hanushek and his colleague, Steven Rivkin (2006) ^[3]. conclude that many researchers view the issue of small classes conducted by the Project STAR as a cost-effective policy to improve learning. In spite of Hunushek's and Rivkin's doubts, Project STAR has resulted into some concrete advantages of smaller classes over the large ones. For instance, it is found that reducing class size has improved test scores for children ages 5 to 8 in class sizes larger than 17 students. Thus, it is reasonable to expect higher student achievement by moving towards smaller classes according to Project STAR findings. The literature review also shows some political intervention when it comes to reducing class

size. For instance, in a book titled *The Class Size Debate*, Hanushek writes that despite the political popularity of overall class size reduction, the scientific support of such policies is weak to nonexistent. The literature review also showed that it is not surprising to have hundreds of students in EFL classes these days, predominantly in tertiary levels. Gibbs Graham & Jenkins Alan found that: “in France, Holland or Italy first – year classes are commonly between 300 and 1,000 and sometimes very much larger” (1992, P.12)^[4]. Studies of class size also exposed that there is nothing particularly mentioned regarding the exact number in any class. First, class sizes are subjective and also depend on a number of variables. And that is why some teachers build their own perceptions towards large classes depending on the number of students they normally teach. For instance, Coleman, (1989)^[5]. illustrates that: If a teacher used to teach a class of 20 students he will view a class of 30 as a large class. On the other hand, if a teacher teaches 30 students regularly his views towards a large class will exceed this number. However, the good news is that the exact number of students in a class is not a central issue because classroom alone cannot guarantee a good quality output in learning as the literature review shows. Thus, reducing class size alone cannot guarantee achievements in students' performance. Factors such as teaching methods and teaching strategies were found as more effective than the class size itself. The issue of class size is also seen as an argumentative topic between educationalists and administrators in terms of achievement. Therefore, the researcher thinks that in dealing with class size debate in Qassim university the question to be addressed is not the number of students enrolled in the (ILP) system, but what is important is how to act positively with the reality of large (ILP) classes to create a good teaching and learning atmosphere. Additionally, in their studies about class size debate, Glass et.al. (1982)^[6]. found that while small classes were very much better, large classes were hardly any better than very large classes. (p,47). In other words, if we consider a class of 50 students as a large class so it makes no difference to add more 20 students to make it very large. Generally speaking, we can say that the literature reviewed confirmed the fact that teachers around the world prefer small classes rather than the large ones. They simply prefer small classes because they experience less challenges in these classes. Although, insufficient studies have brought into focus the issue of class size discussion, in tertiary levels in Saudi Arabia, however, the literature review shows some remarkable studies displayed the most challenges faced by EFL teachers in secondary stage. For example, in a study conducted by Bahanshal (2013)^[7]. The author summarises some of the problems as heard by teachers. She found out that in large classes teachers suffer because there is a lack of

control as well as a lack of individual attention during group working activities. Additionally, there is no communication and it is also difficult to manage large classes as stated by Bahanshal.

Regarding factors behind the occurrence of large classes and calling of class size reduction in general, the literature review shows that class size has recently doubled in the KSA because of two main reasons: education expansion and population growth. Concerning education expansion, Saudi Arabia has witnessed a huge establishment of schools, universities and colleges during the last decades. Today, most universities in Saudi Arabia have either recognized intensive language program (ILP) or preliminary year program (PYP) to serve the newly enrolled students and to provide them with the basic skills of English language before they take their main majors at English departments. Therefore, the importance of English language will continue in Saudi Arabia as the economy is growing; and the country is expanding in terms of higher education institution represented in founding new colleges in rural areas.

A good example is the case of both Qassim and Majmmah universities where its main campuses are located in AL-Molaida and Majmmah respectively. Additionally, there are some colleges and branches of these universities in the following nearby towns (Arras, Onaiza, Maznab, Bekairia, Al.Badaye, Oglatsogor, Alnabhanian, Riaydh Al-khabra, Al-Assyah and Oyoon Al- Gawa), for Qassim university. And the same situation is true for Majmmah university where the following colleges serve the communities of Zulfi – Al-Ghat - Remmah - Hawtat Sudair. Therefore, we can simply say that the two universities serve a large geographic area covering several counties and cities with several colleges of Arts and humanity studies. Thus, the demand for English seems to increase creating what is globally known as large classes.

In terms of the population growth, the (2012 revision)^[8]. of the world population prospects show that Saudi Arabia has witnessed a dramatical demographic changes during the last three decades. As part of its vital roles, united nations publish statistics and assessment of each country every two years to display the latest global demographic estimates. Concerning population growth rate of Saudi Arabia, the latest figures demonstrated by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs at the United Nations Secretariat shows that population aging is entering a new phase and approaching its highest ever rate. For example, the population predicted for Saudi Arabia is approximately 40 million in 2050, twenty five percent of whom will be aged 60 or more. The following figure illustrates the demographic estimates of Saudi Arabia between 2006- 2016.



Fig 1: Population growth expectations in Saudi Arabia

Given, such dramatical evaluation of population growth makes it difficult for countries like Saudi Arabia to consider the recommendations on reducing class size into (22 – 25) maximums which was conducted by the Project STAR of Tennessee (1985 - 1989). It seems very costly and both time effort wasting process to a country with such a huge demographic estimate to minimize its classes to this standard, particularly, the EFL classes. Therefore, debates on large classes versus small ones will last in Saudi Arabia. In fact, the reviewed literature on this field shows that reducing class size alone will not guarantee the excellence of teaching, but what is extremely important is the quality of teaching materials and approaches. As mentioned above, Gibbs Graham & Jenkins Alan (1992) found that classes of 1000 students and more are common in some developed countries, but what makes these classes special is the quality of teaching rather than the number of students being enrolled. Thus, it is likely for EFL instructors in Qassim University to work easily and effectively in the (ILP) classes where 70 and above students were enrolled, only when the dream of the overall improvement of teaching and learning settings becomes true. To sum up this section, we can say that the key inquiry around this ongoing debate is what is clearly stated by Hanushek who believes that when talking about improving teacher quality rather than decreasing class sizes, still there are indeed a strong need for simplifying this issue via attempting to answer the following questions: first, regarding improving teacher quality, are we talking about higher salaries to attract and retain better teachers? Are we talking about higher credential requirements for new teachers (which has been shown to be ineffective)? Are we talking about more on-the-job training? Teacher quality means different things to different people; this suggests caution should be taken when comparing teacher quality with class sizes.

Towards the best of the researcher’s knowledge, responding to the above-mentioned questions on class size debate and many more require more investigation to be conducted by instructors, researchers and decision makers alike. However, in a brief comparison it seems as if the (ILP) classes in Qassim University can be regarded as very large classes simply because they are triple to the average class size found by the Project STAR. Therefore, instead of engaging in such a huge debate it is time to think deeply on how to improve the overall teaching and learning settings as well as to address the question of what kind of reforms produce the biggest impact for the money spent in achieving the ultimate goals.

6. Material and methods

The researcher has collected the required data for the current study via designing and distributing some interview questions to a sample of EFL instructors who are currently teaching the (Intensive Language Program) syllabuses. The study subject is randomly selected from college of sciences and Arts, Arras, Qassim University. The interview questions endeavoured to cover some five main areas where class size effect is seen as a main factor and challenging to both EFL teachers and students alike. For instance, the study attempts at determining how class size correlates with managerial problems, lack of individual interaction and grading students’ daily activities. Additionally, the aim of the interview was to gather the necessary data base on the selected instructors’ attitudes towards challenges of teaching English in large classes, particularly the situation of the (ILP) classes in Qassim University.

This study is basically concerned with problems faced by the preliminary year Program students, who are officially known as the intensive language program learners in Qassim University. In short, Intensive language program is a one term course base on teaching the main language skills to the newly appointed students who are intending to join the English department after successfully accomplishing the required courses. In order to check the apparent validity for the study, the interview questions and the validation of its statements according to the formulation and explanation, the researcher showed them to a number of referees. The referees are specialists by the study field. Some of the referees make some suggestions, while others agreed that the interview questions are suitable. The researcher then studied all the suggestions, and corrected them before distributing them into several axes according to the study hypotheses. After collecting the data, the researcher has conducted a manual calculation to analyse the data collected. The following procedures show the data analysis.

Table 1: The interview questions base on the first axe: difficulties faced by the instructors in (ILP) classes.

1. What is the largest (ILP) class you teach today?
2. To what extent teaching such classes is challenging?
3. What are the most difficulties you face in dealing with these classes?

To summarise the main difficulties faced by the instructors who engage in teaching (ILP) classes the researcher puts the

above key questions. As resulted by the interview questions the three respondents state that the actual class they teach is ranging between 75 to 80 students. This huge number of students is regard as a very large class according to Glass et.al. (1982). For the first respondent 82 students were registered at the beginning of the academic year (1437 – 1438) however, almost 75 of them are consider as regular at the end. In a situation of such a huge number of students, a lot of problems can arise according to the study respondents. Regarding exact difficulties faced by instructors and students alike, the first respondent confirmed that while teaching large classes, he noticed several encounters. For instance, some students regularly use their mobiles while the instructor is busy on the white board. Furthermore, some late comers do sleep in the class, so they divert instructors’ attention from the subject.

The study respondent also states that, few students come late to the class with intentions as he feels. Moreover, others come without having the relevant books even and that is why using smart phones cannot be stopped. But, large classes can be handled nicely to some extent if students are divided properly as confirmed by the first respondent.

Respondent two believes that (ILP) classes are the largest in Qassim university, simply because he has 82 students registered while up to 75 have been attending the class regularly.

Regarding teaching listening and speaking, he states that there is a lack of laboratories to accommodate such a large number of students and this is a biggest hurdle for the module. However, by forming small groups and moving frequently around students to check their performance at speaking skills we may reduce these challenges. Additionally, the second respondent thinks that smart phones are misused by EFL students to converse social media while classes. But they may be used as dictionaries, thesauruses or they can be used to find out examples and uses of different shades of words under strict observation. Thus, smart phone usage is a problem but can be turned into a positive habit.

According to the second respondent, the best way in dealing with large classes is to give students tasks, forming groups (like a workshop) then rewarding them with 1 or 2 participation marks each time. He also thinks that large classes are seen as a phenomenon by most educationists in the developing countries. Today, even UNESCO source available on: www.unesco.org/bangkok, recommends maximum numbers of students in a class to make schools and classrooms more inclusive, learning-friendly and gender-sensitive. It is also found, when a large class student is allowed to choose his friends to form smaller groups and to establish problem – solutions tasks that assigned with strict use of the target language, students may feel more comfortable, active and efficient in solving questions or problems within their own groups of fellows. This means that, sense of competition will enhance the output and by doing so, EFL classes will be more student centred. The third respondent states that he teaches two similar number of students, the first class consists of 75 students while the second one of the general course has 75 students enrolled. For this respondent, the biggest problem in teaching large (ILP) classes is the process of checking whether each and every student is attentive or not and whether they are busy in using their smartphones. Additionally, he states that, every

class needs pindrop silence to teach but most of the time we must warn students to be silent. Checking students’ work is listed among problems of teaching large classes, as confirmed by the third respondent.

The respondent also observes that some late comers do sleep in the class, so they divert the lecturer’s attention from the subject and it is also stated that engaging all students at the same time is impossible. To sum up this section, we can say that some newly appointed instructors may feel uncomfortable facing a huge number of students in large classes which might be interpreted as psychological problem. Furthermore, the majority of the respondents think that students’ concentration in large classes tend to wander and this situation may put some instructors under pressure while trying to bring them back on track. Grading students works in large classes is also found as challenging simply because it takes time and efforts to go through many pages particularly when it comes to essay writings.

This situation may direct some instructors to avoid giving more academic writing activities the thing which will negatively impact the students’ overall proficiency of writing skills. Finally, it is found that taking a large number of students to English language laboratory is not an easy job, simply because language labs are always designed for a small number of students.

Table 2: The interview questions base on the second axe: Individual interaction level in (ILP) classes.

1. How do you interact with students in (ILP) classes?
2. To what extent establishing strong rapport is important in these classes?
3. How does social media facilitates interaction between EFL instructors’ and students’ in (ILP) classes?

In terms of the interaction level in (ILP) classes, the first respondent agreed that it is not an easy job to give individual attention to every single student in a lecture of 50 minutes. Thus, such situations can result into lack of classroom control. For instance, some may continue using their smartphones while the lecturer is busy on the white board. The second respondent on the other hand, states that, in large classes it is impossible to engage all students at the same time. In social sciences, such as history or Islamic studies, for instance, you can deliver lectures to even much bigger classes very conveniently but, we cannot do so in large classes. In this regard, the second respondent believes that, he tries his best to interact individually with all the students, however, he cannot satisfy himself. For the third respondent interaction is only done with only the out spoken students because it is hard to interact one by one, but despite this reality, he also tries to do his best so as to involve all students. To bring students together in large classes, Carbone states that: *“if you would like to give the class an informal, personal feel, plan to arrive a few minutes early and chat with students as they arrive”* (1998, p.4) [9].

Concerning question three where the researcher aims at knowing the impact of some social media means on facilitating the level of interaction in today’s large classes. The study found that interaction between the students and their instructors is sometimes taking place via emails as stated by the majority of the respondents, this indicate that some instructors are making their best to activate the process

of Electronic learning today.

Table 3: The interview questions base on the third axe: Managerial problems arise in (ILP) Classes.

1. What are the main managerial problems occur in (ILP) classes?
2. How do you manage a class of 50 students?
3. To what extent time management is difficult in (ILP) classes?

In terms of the managerial problems associated with (ILP) classes the interview respondents show that it is difficult to control EFL students in large class particularly in exam room where invigilators have to double their efforts to accomplish such tasks. Some respondents also agreed that they need to prepare the lesson before the class while others are viewing the noise height in large classes as one of the managerial problems. Such noise height is caused by the movement of the students during classes the thing which will definitely disturbs both the instructors and the learners. The issue of time management is also mentioned among the hindrances of teaching in large classes simply because instructors find it difficult to distribute time given to each skill so as to correlate with the time given for the entire lecture in a situation where there are so many students. Therefore, some might not even get an opportunity to state their ideas clearly due to time lacks and this situation will negatively impact their proficiency at skills such as speaking and listening.

Table 4. The interview questions base on the fourth axe: Effective Teaching materials and strategies implemented in (ILP) classes.

1. What are the most effective strategies that can be used in teaching (ILP) classes?
2. What is the impact of the group work strategy in teaching such classes?
3. To what extent lecturing method is still preferable in teaching these classes?

Concerning teaching strategies used in the situation of large classes the study shows that some respondents manage to divide students into groups to get them involved. Thus, for some respondents, group working is the best strategy to handle the situation of the huge number of students. But for others, teaching large classes are mainly done through lecturing and this is seen as ineffective for improving students' overall language skills. Lecturing is only found as suitable for social sciences such history or Islamic studies, where a professor can easily deliver speech to even hundreds of students conveniently, but it seems as if lecturing is not effective for a language teaching.

The respondents also agreed that they prefer using eclectic teaching strategies in large classes ranging from the traditional ones such as the grammar – translation method to the modern communicative language teaching. Some even go further stating that using a variety of teaching materials have positively influence their students' language performance. Additionally, they agreed that using several strategies in large classes enable them to organize learner – centred situation where everyone plays a positive role in learning the language actively instead of being passive listeners in case of teacher – centred situation.

Table 5. The interview questions base on the fifth axe: Some advantages of teaching in (ILP) classes.

1. What are the main advantages of teaching and learning in (ILP) classes?
2. How can a large class improve students speaking skills?
3. To what extent (ILP) classes bring a kind of diversity among learners?

Regarding the main question for the final axe, the researcher attempts at determining whether teaching classes similar to the large (ILP) classes in Qassim university have some brushes on teaching and learning or not. As resulted by the interview questions, the first respondent states that while teaching large classes he observes no advantages at all. Moreover, in large classes, a teacher can spend his time with students nicely but he cannot teach them accurately. The second respondent believes that he hardly remarks any advantages for large classes, on the contrast they have many disadvantages. However, the literature reviewed shows some general learning advantages within small classes. For instance, it is found that small EFL classes provide an opportunity of effective communication between students that may occur easily and productively and thus students can improve their speaking skills as a result of such interactions.

7. Summary, Findings and Recommendations

In the light of this study, it is found that in (ILP) classes., instructors face difficulties to grade students work. It is also found that problems such as lack of communicative opportunities and neglecting of learning productive skills (writing and speaking) can easily occur in these classes. Second, when the respondents were asked about the individual interactions in (ILP) classes, most respondents confirmed that interaction between the instructors and students is very rare. But the good news is that some instructors have agreed that they sometimes interact with their students via emails.

Third, concerning the usage of some learning materials and strategies the study shows that some teaching aids are difficult to be used in such classes and that teaching is mainly done via lecturing.

Fourth, when respondents were asked about some advantages of teaching and learning EFL in such classes, the majority stated that large (ILP) classes have no clear advantages for both learners and instructors alike.

Finally, the researcher recommends the following:

Class size debate is a very huge area of research that requires more investigation. Thus, instead of just expressing displeasure while teaching large classes and assuming that the small ones are much better, instructors, administrators, and decision makers have to focus on the most effective strategies that facilitate EFL instructors' mission. It seems as if there is inadequate teacher training program provided to EFL instructors in dealing with large classes in Saudi Arabia today. Therefore, there is a great need to invest more money in in-service training, professional development activities and English language laboratories with up-to-date teaching and learning facilities such as smartboards, speakers, headphones, data shows and displaying screens. In Saudi Arabia, this need is great at undergraduate level but even greater for EFL

programs that are mainly designed for preliminary year students in general, simply because reducing class size alone does not mean that we will guarantee an overall improvement of teaching and learning settings.

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