

Teaching the Course of Business Communication to Large Classes in Pakistani Universities: Challenges & Suggested Strategies

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Abstract

Large classes are an integral part of Higher Education Institutions in developing countries such as Pakistan, posing several challenges for ESL university teachers. This study aims to explore Pakistani ESL university teachers' experiences of teaching Business Communication to large classes. More specifically, it seeks to identify the challenges faced by the university teachers and the strategies they use to effectively teach large classes. By adopting a basic qualitative research design and purposive sampling technique, researchers conducted semi-structured interviews with 10 university teachers from eight private and public sector universities located in Karachi, Pakistan. All the participants were teaching business communication courses to large classes with student strength ranging from 40 to 150. The data were analyzed using the thematic analysis technique. Findings revealed that achieving course learning outcomes, managing large classes, assessing student work, and providing timely feedback were some of the major challenges for the teachers. The participants suggested several pedagogical strategies more suited to teaching large classes including better planning, adopting cooperative learning, integrating technology into large classrooms, encouraging self-assessment, peer-assessment, and project work, and equipping classrooms with multimedia projectors, sound systems and the internet.

Keywords: *Business Communication, Large class size, Lecture, Teaching*

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1. Introduction

Teaching large classes can prove to be a challenge for teachers owing to several factors. They may find it difficult to manage large classrooms, engage students in learning activities, pay individual attention, provide feedback, maintain discipline and accomplish learning outcomes (Shamim & Coleman, 2018). Nguyen et al. (2021) and Wright (2017) have found that teachers face difficulty in deciding class content and methods of instruction when the class size is large.

In the educational institutions, class sizes vary tremendously both between and within national education systems (Shamim & Coleman, 2018). In Pakistani educational institutions at secondary and tertiary levels, the number of students remains on the higher side with variation across public and private sector institutions. In developing countries such as Pakistan, large classes are unavoidable due to a lack of resources and insufficient funding available from the government to educational institutions. Consequently, teaching in large classes is a challenge faced by a majority of the secondary and tertiary level teachers in general and ESL teachers in particular.

Business Administration has been one of the most sought-after fields in Pakistan in the recent decades. Business Communication courses, as a result, have overcrowded classes posing a challenge for ESL university teachers. Large class size creates obstacles in the judicious teaching and assessment of students (Zahid et al., 2017). Generally, lecture format is adopted in university courses depending on the class size and strength. However, all courses may not be suitable to teach in large classes using this particular format. Business Communication courses that require intensive writing and feedback from teachers may not be suitable to be taught through lecture format in large classes. It may be more productive to attempt to align class size with contextual factors (e.g., type of student, teacher attributes, subject area, and grade level) shown to be relevant in the literature. Prior studies in the developing world have found that decreasing class size can boost student achievement, but the magnitude of this effect may depend heavily on the specific educational context (Urquiola, 2006; Maroulis et al., 2010).

A number of studies have been conducted to explore the challenges faced by university teachers in teaching business communication courses and how they try to deal with them internationally; however, limited research has been done in this area in the context of Pakistan. An in-depth exploration of the challenges of

teaching business communication courses in large classes is needed as business communication is one of key courses that enable business students to meet their professional communication needs both in oral and written communication. The study may be beneficial in identifying the specific challenges and effective strategies related to the teaching of business communication courses which may improve the quality of teaching and learning business communication skills in large classes. The study may also inspire further research related to the underexplored area of business communication instruction in large classes in Pakistani universities.

1.1 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this research study included to:

1. explore Pakistani ESL university teachers' experience of teaching business communication courses delivered in large, face-to-face university classes.
2. discover issues associated with teaching business communication courses to large university classes and how teachers find ways to deal with these problems.

2. Literature Review

Various factors may have an impact on teachers and learners at educational institutions but both class size and staff-to-student ratios are assumed as the indicators of quality at colleges and universities. Some studies point out a negative effect of large class size on the learning measures of students (Arias & Walker, 2004; Westerlund, 2008), others suggest either mixed or no effects (De Paola et al., 2013; Gleason, 2012; Matta et al., 2015; Raimondo et al., 1990). Conclusively, large classes affect the learning outcomes differently in various possible situations.

There is variation in class sizes between and within national education systems. For example, a study on remedial English instruction in Nigerian colleges showed that classes had the strength of 05 to 100 pupils, and over 300 students in each session at a Yobiko (cram school for university entry) in Japan. There are additional accounts of over 500 students in a university English class in Kenya and up to 5,000 students in a class at an open-access university in Thailand. As a result, there is no standard definition of what constitutes a "large-sized class"; rather, a large class is defined as one that is considered large by either the instructor instructing there or the students enrolled in it (Shamim & Coleman, 2018). In the absence of a unanimous definition of large class size internationally, it was decided to adopt the Higher Educational

Commission of Pakistan's definition of a large class in this study for data collection.

The suitable class size at a university is subjective and may incorporate several factors such as motivation of students, materials to be covered, and learning objectives (Wright, 2017). People have diverse views regarding the suitable size of a class, most prefer the small size of class. Many universities develop their students' learning through small classes. For instance, according to Wright (2017), Saint Mary's University of Minnesota (2016) has a student-to-teacher ratio of 13:1, allowing for a better learning environment that promotes greater class discussion. Parents believe that smaller classes mean that teachers will be able to give each student more attention, which in turn makes pupils more attentive and interested. Fewer students mean less grading and simpler management for teachers, and happier stakeholders and a better school atmosphere are two reasons why administrators and teachers prefer smaller classrooms (Rice, 1999).

Teaching styles need to be adapted for effectively teaching large classes. Larger classes always put more strain on the teachers to engage students (Wright, 2017) as students seated in the fifth row onwards at the back of the class may consider their experience as distance learning in large classrooms (Tierney, 2011). Large classes may have a negative effect over teacher-student and student-student interaction. Student interaction with teachers and peers is essential for developing productive language skills as well as critical thinking skills which is generally limited in large classes taught through lecture format (Bligh, 2000). The class format needs to be suitable to allow students opportunities to develop their critical thinking skills. The same lecture format cannot be appropriate for all learning situations. It should be avoided, if the purpose is a change in attitudes of students or teaching behavioral skills (Bligh, 2000; Svinicki & McKeachie, 2014).

Most teachers express their preference for smaller classes. According to Lowman (1984), competent lecturers can maximize learning in large classes through exciting and purposeful educational experiences. Class size should be weighed against educational goals. Large classes have many challenges including more amount of time needed for preparation and managing teaching and assessment activities in the classrooms.

Larger classes demand more effort in order to prepare the material sooner, allowing for spontaneity (Kryder, 2002; Svinicki &

McKeachie, 2014; Li et al., 2021; Yaqoob et al., 2023). Large classes also involve the issues of feedback and proper assessment. Students need to receive comprehensible feedback in the quickest possible time (Khan et al., 2019). These classes are being taught with an online perspective, even when they are taught in a face-to-face format. Instructors often fail to provide sufficient feedback on assignments submitted. This results in a lack of engagement that is detrimental for effective learning (Tierney, 2011). It is obvious students learn more when they get feedback on what to improve and they can work harder according to expectations.

Lecturers may believe that the "intimacy and somewhat casual atmosphere of the small classroom is lost" (Kryder, 2002, p. 91) as a class's enrollment grows and that a gap is instead developed between the teacher and students. Growing class numbers have prompted instructors to use a variety of tactics to change their students from passive learners to actively involved participants in the classroom, particularly in undergraduate courses (Brookfield, 2005). Lecturers have employed a variety of techniques to boost enthusiasm and attendance. Among these have been required attendance policies, PowerPoint slides with blank bullet points, arbitrary assessments and quizzes, and arbitrary name checks (Burke & James, 2008). The backdrop of managing a large classroom shifts from supporting learning interactions to students' management through the employment of control tactics (Kryder, 2002). In order to manage work load in large classes, teaching assistants (TAs) are used frequently (Lowman, 1984; Svinicki & McKeachie, 2014).

Interestingly, however, studies have shown that students do not view class size as a factor in their learning; instead, they place more value on the quality of the course and the enthusiasm of the lecturer (Kryder, 2002). Thus, the focus needs to be on the quality of the experiences and learning that the students have throughout the course. Therefore, speaking to large classes should be "a two-way adjustment process between the students and instructor" as opposed to using the conventional, one-way information technique (Du-Babcock, 2002, p. 87) and as such necessitates shifting the emphasis from the quantity of students to the quality of their education as well as switching from a surface to a deep learning strategy (Biggs, 2003). Academics have advocated for a more collaborative and explicit sharing of effective teaching practices with all teachers dealing with the problems posed by large classes. This sharing of practice should address concerns of teaching techniques, assessment, learning, and context (Rodaway, 2007).

Generally, business communication is introduced as a writing-intensive course. Writing intensive courses require more feedback to improve the students' writing ability and are mostly offered in the form of smaller classes internationally. Rieber (2004) points out that, "most of universities are diverting from small (25–30) composition courses to larger (70–90) discipline-specific writing classes" in the USA. However, in the context of Pakistan, 'the average number of students in most (Pakistani university) classrooms ranges from 70 to 120' (Khan & Iqbal, 2012, p. 162). Therefore, business communication courses are mostly offered in large classes, unlike the context of the USA.

Over more than 30 years many studies have been done on business communication classes. Wardrope's (2002) study suggests that 76% of business schools across United States of America need a business communication course, innermost half of the court at junior level in business colleges. Moreover, Russ (2009) reported that 60% of business communication courses offered at Business Schools, and the most focused topic was written communication, and this course was offered to 21 to 30 students per section. According to this study most of the teachers, about 70%, preferred to teach less than 20 students in the course, while 17.3% teachers taught 31 students, but only 2.4% preferred doing so. Although instructors prefer these smaller classes, they often must teach larger ones.

Sharp and Brumberger (2013) analyzed business communication course syllabi available on US university websites and found that that 38% of courses concentrated on both written and oral skills, 76% of courses were offered at the junior or senior level, and 71% of schools mandated at least one business communication course. Moshiri and Cardon (2014) discovered that 70% of business communication classes were taught in business schools, and 98% of instructors thought that the class size should be less than 30 students in the most recent study about the delivery of business communication courses in the US. Additionally, they noted that 55% of instructors still required eight or more writing assignments for the course, indicating that the majority of classes were still taught as writing-intensive courses.

Similarly, business communication is a mandatory course for Business students studying at all Pakistani universities. The same course is taught as professional communication or technical communication to engineering students and students from other disciplines. Business Communication curriculum, as outlined by the Higher Education

Commission (HEC) of Pakistan, is also similar to the international syllabi reviewed by Sharp and Brumberger (2013). It is designed to equip students with essential communication skills required in the corporate environment. It emphasizes both written and verbal communication, including report writing, memo drafting, professional email etiquette, and business correspondence. The curriculum typically includes modules on presentation skills, public speaking, and negotiation techniques to enhance students' confidence and effectiveness in various professional scenarios. Additionally, students are taught the principles of effective interpersonal and intercultural communication, emphasizing clarity, conciseness, and the appropriate use of business vocabulary. Critical thinking and problem-solving are integrated into communication strategies; ensuring students can adapt their communication style to different audiences and contexts in the global business landscape.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The basic qualitative design (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) was adopted as this study focused on exploring the experiences of Pakistani ESL university teachers teaching business communication courses to large classes in Sindh, Pakistan. Informed by Interpretivist research paradigm, the chosen research design allowed researchers to explore the participants' experiences in detail and understand their perspectives to interpret their social realities.

3.2 Population & Sample

The target population of the study was ESL university teachers who were involved in teaching business communication courses to large classes in universities of Karachi, Pakistan. Using purposive sampling techniques, 10 university teachers were inducted into the sample from 08 public and private sector universities of Karachi. The selected universities belonged to the public sector (04 universities) and the private sector (04 universities), were recognized by the Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan and are considered reputable institutions due to the quality of Education. All the selected universities offered degrees in business administration and business communication as a compulsory course to their business students.

The sample size in qualitative research ranges from 5 to 30 in most qualitative studies (Braun & Clark, 2013). A sample size of 10 was selected for this study as conducting detailed interviews with more university teachers for a larger sample proved to be difficult due to their

hectic teaching schedules. The sample comprised 10 ESL university teachers who had been teaching business communication courses to large classes and their experience ranged from 05 to 15 years. They had a Masters (MS/M.Phil.) degree in English Linguistics or English Literature as the minimum qualification. They were all male with ages ranging from 30 to 40 years.

3.3 Data Collection

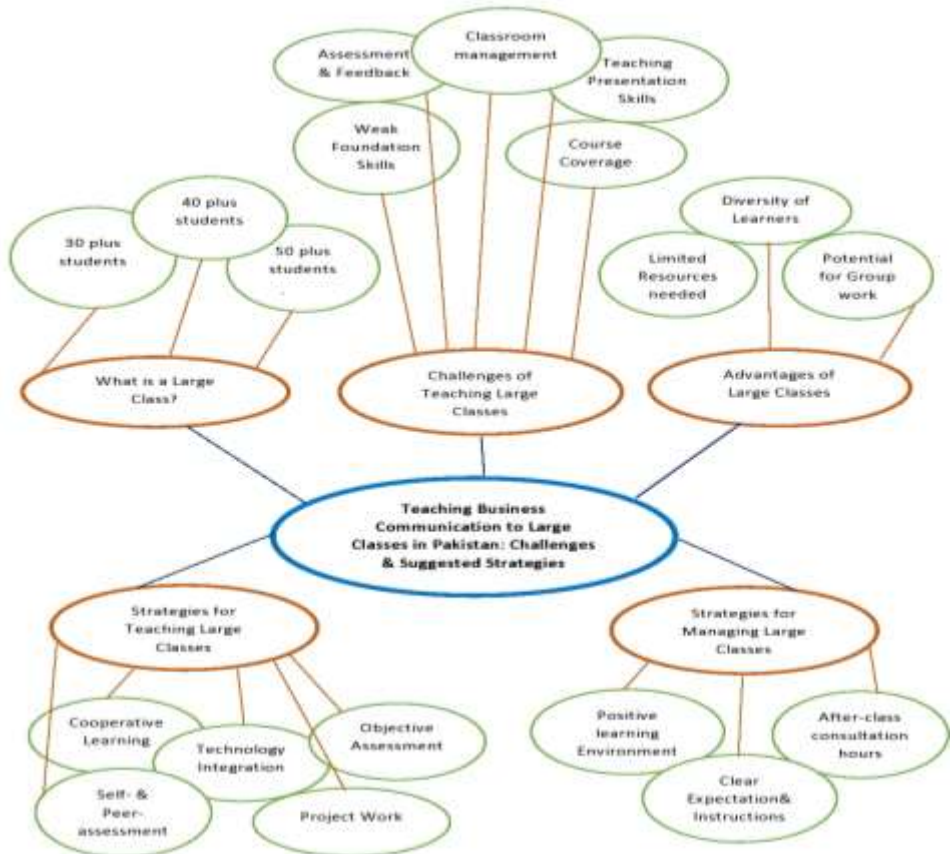
Semi-structured interviews were selected as the data collection tool as they allowed to conduct an in-depth discussion with participants on their experiences while giving them an opportunity to freely share their experiences. An interview guide was prepared after the review of the literature which included questions focusing on participating teachers' conception of large classes, challenges in teaching large classes, and the strategies they have found useful in teaching them. It was piloted with one university teacher to assess its suitability and the changes were made based on her feedback. The interviews were conducted face-to-face and audio-recorded for the subsequent analysis.

4. Data Analysis and Interpretation

The data were transcribed verbatim from the audio recordings and it was analyzed using the reflexive thematic analysis technique recommended by Braun and Clark (2022). The six stages recommended by the authors were duly followed and the six key themes were constructed through an active process of interpretation.

For creating rigor and trustworthiness in this study, several steps were taken. The findings of the thematic analysis were shared with the participants to gain their feedback on the accuracy of the interpretation of their responses. A reflexivity journal was maintained to ensure that the data collection and analysis are not unduly biased. Moreover, a complete audit trail was maintained of the data collection and analysis.

Key ethical considerations were duly observed during the planning, execution and reporting of the study. Informed consent was obtained from the participants and was given the right to withdraw from the study at any stage of the research process. The data were kept confidential and anonymized in the reporting of the findings. The following key themes were constructed during the thematic analysis of the data.



4.1 What is a large Business Communication Class?

The first theme that was constructed through the thematic analysis of the data was the teachers' conception of a 'a large business communication class.' Most of the respondents, belonging to different public and private universities, have similar views regarding the number of students which makes a large class in the Pakistani context, particularly in the province of Sindh. According to them a class of forty plus students is considered as a large class. Defining a large class, a respondent expressed, "If a university has more than forty students in a class, it is called a large class" (R1). Another participant added, "The number of 50 students in a class is considered a large class" (R4). In this way, most of the respondents called a class large when the students were 40 to 70 plus in a class but there was only one respondent who

called a class large which has less than 40 students, as he said “*Any class which has more than 30 students at my university, I consider that class a large class*” (R10). Therefore, it can be concluded that in the context of this study 40 plus students make a large class.

4.2 Challenges of teaching large business communication classes

Another key theme identified in the data was the challenges of teaching large business communication classes. The important challenge of such large classes, according to the majority of participants was of managing and controlling the large class. Throwing light on this issue, a respondent pointed out that “*Mismanagement, noise, lack of control, and keeping students on task is difficult to handle.*” (R8). A large number of students create problems for a teacher in controlling the class, as many students endeavor to divert the teacher to another topic or point. It may cause the teacher to lose focus while delivering the lecture or instructing the class. One of the respondents highlighted the issue “*while teaching large sections of classes, I am often distracted by movements, voices, and interruptions of students*” (R9). Instead of students’ different diverting tactics a teacher always endeavors to manage the situation for the learning of the students.

Moreover, another factor highlighted by many participants was assessing the business communication students in writing or speaking. In this respect, a respondent said “*The biggest disadvantage of large classes is assessing and grading because you have to monitor their all activities in a limited time*” (R5). Additionally, most teachers found it difficult to rectify the mistakes and provide feedback to students on their work. As one of the respondents said “*It becomes challenging for a teacher to provide corrective feedback to each of the students in a large class*” (R9). Furthermore, they indicated that presentation cannot be accomplished properly in large classes due to lack of time because it is a time consuming and individual task. Another reported drawback of the large classes is that student could not get individual and proper attention of the teacher. Being a writing intensive course, large classes may be less effective when students do not get feedback on their writing in their business communication course.

Another challenge pointed out by the respondents is teaching writing and presentation skills which are considered highly significant in business communication classes and courses. According to them teaching writing skills in business communication class becomes very difficult for most of the teachers in universities. Because the foundation

language skills of the students are not well-established, they make mistakes even in general writing, so business writing becomes a more difficult task for them, as a respondent said in this regard “*Most of the time students do not have basic knowledge to make complete sentences*” (R9). It can be assumed that students at college and school levels do not receive quality language instruction and they cannot develop their language skills which is a matter of serious concern. Expressing the situation, another respondent said “*Most of our students are from science and commerce intermediate backgrounds. I don’t know why their linguistic skills are below par*” (R3). When students lack basic language skills in the large university classes, it becomes more challenging for the teachers to make them understand the lecture, particularly in large classes.

Presentations were also considered a difficult and time consuming task in large business communication classes. One of the respondents described it as “*Due to the limited time in large classes, all students cannot complete their presentations. They may also be distracted by the noise and everybody cannot pay attention towards the students*” (R1). Large classes already have a large number of students and presentation is an individual task, so it will take too much time to complete resulting in delay in syllabus completion. Moreover, teachers also reported poor presentation skills of their students in business communication courses. Many reasons have been observed by the teachers for the lack of presentation skills. Among other reasons, the hesitation of the students, fear from the negative reaction of classmates, and lack of confidence and time are the important causes are the bad performance of the students during their presentations in large classes.

Another challenge which was identified by the teachers was the time allocated for the completion of the course was not enough. Pointing to the situation one respondent clarified, “*So syllabus is too detailed, and we are given hardly four months in which we have to conduct midterm exams, final exams, presentations, assignments and quizzes. This is why whatsoever we do, we always run short of time*” (R3). Outcomes of that appear in teachers’ difficulties in completing the syllabus of the course in large business communication classes. Furthermore, assessing students in large business communication classes is another important issue that was identified by the teachers. As another respondent commented, “*Well the only problem that I face teaching business writing skills in a large class is that of assessment and feedback*” (R5). Assessment is an important

part of the teaching and learning process. Without proper assessment of the student learning cannot take the right direction. Therefore, difficulty in the assessment of large business communication courses is one of the serious concerns of our respondents.

4.3 Advantages of teaching large business communication classes

One of the surprising themes that researchers identified was the advantages of teaching large classes reported by our respondents. One of the key reported advantages of a large business communication class is the diversity of students in a single classroom who come from different cultures, communities and socioeconomic backgrounds. In this respect, a respondent says *“We have got a multifaceted class where we get students from different mindsets and backgrounds in the classroom, so it becomes a diverse class and we are able to have more insightful and meaningful discussions. That’s the way I like it”* (R9). According to (R7) *“Students from different cultures and with different backgrounds bring new perspectives on the same idea”*. Teachers appreciated the fact that large classes enable students to share their experiences in the class and learn from each other to maximize their learning and broaden their perspectives.

Another advantage identified by the respondents was how large classes were suitable for their limited resources and faculty in their university. One respondent expressed his stance, *“Due to a lack of resources, my institution follows the large format of classes as it needs fewer teachers and more students can be taught using less time and energy”* (R3). Therefore, we may see that a lack of resources such as classrooms and teachers necessitates large classes in developing countries such Pakistan to cater to the large number of students.

Finally, our participants highlighted the potential of large classes for effective collaborative learning through peer and group work activities. Research has shown that students at times learn better from their peers rather than their teachers. Students learn from each other in such large classes because of the large number of students. Discussing this point, one of the respondents said, *“Providing feedback by their classmates, peer feedback and peer assessment, it helps them to correct their mistakes in a large class conveniently”* (R2). *“Peer feedback and assessment lead learners to use their mind to find out mistakes of their classmates”* (R6). Peer feedback creates a sense of self-confidence in the provider and peer assessment brings forward their weaknesses and strengths before them and saves their time.

4.4 Strategies for teaching large business communication classes effectively

One of the key themes, constructed from the analysis of the data was “strategies for teaching large business communication classes effectively”. The respondents shared with the successful pedagogic techniques they found to be useful over the years while teaching large business communication classes.

The first strategy that the majority of the respondents identified was *‘planning for teaching large classes was extremely important’* (R3). They highlighted that ESL university teachers need to plan more meticulously, creatively and comprehensively to teach larger classes than the smaller ones. Their classroom materials for large classes should include *‘a variety of power-point slides, worksheets, handouts, videos, and interactive activities for each minute of the 3-hour session all carefully prepared well in advance for effectively teaching a large class’* (R7).

Another effective strategy identified by the majority of participants was the use of cooperative learning techniques in large business communication classes. The participants shared that they regularly utilize a variety of cooperative learning techniques for teaching business communication skills. For instance, respondent 5 said *‘My go-to strategy for teaching large classes is peer and group work. I involve my students in these activities in almost every lesson. I make groups of 4 to 5 students and assign them a reading and discussion task on the key concepts of business communication that I want them to learn. This is much more effective than giving a lecture for non-stop 3 hours.’* Another respondent added *‘Individual presentations are not possible in my class of 75 students. I always ask students to prepare group presentations for this reason, and manage my assessment speaking skills of large classes’* (R4).

‘Technology-integration in large classes’ was another important technique shared by a majority of the respondents. For instance, respondent 9 said *‘Technology is a life-saver in large classes. The availability of a sound system and projectors makes the teaching and learning process easier and favorable in such large classes. I use a mic and speakers to deliver my lectures, and believe you me, they are a blessing. Being a soft-spoken person, I cannot speak loud enough to reach the last row of students in the large hall of 80 – 100 students.’* Another respondent told us *‘Using a multimedia projector is very*

beneficial for us. Through audios and videos, we make the students understand and we have found it much easier to manage these things in such large classes. I can show my slides, play videos, and open different websites for sharing learning material. It is a blessing for teaching a large class effectively. I show students TED talks to help them learn effective business presentation skills’ (R1). Moreover, Respondent 8 emphasized the use of ‘google classroom’ for assignment submission and conducting quizzes. ‘I use the google classroom tool with my students. They can submit their assignments on it and I can conduct my quizzes on it as well which are automatically checked by the software. It saves me a lot of time and effort.’

Finally, the teachers shared their strategies for dealing with the challenges of assessing and providing feedback to large classes in business communication courses. These strategies included objective tests, online quizzes, self-assessment, peer-assessment and project work techniques. Considering the large number of students, teachers resorted to using objective quizzes instead of subjective ones in the formative assessment and a substantial part of summative assessment also included objective questions, as Respondent 1 said *“When we talk about the large business communication class, then the technique of the teacher should be to design closed-ended questions. I also make my classroom quizzes objective as conducting subjective quizzes will take a lot of time in grading a large class. I also include at least one objective question in my mid-term and final term papers.’* Another respondent said *‘Online quizzes save a lot time in my classes and they are automatically and correctly checked as well. I use google classroom to conduct my online quizzes.’ (R7)*. Self-assessment and peer assessment techniques were also popular among ESL university teachers teaching large classes, for instance, Respondent 2 said *‘I allow the students to give feedback to each other; it makes the assessment easier. I give students a checklist to check their letters/emails written during the business communication course. Students can self-check their work as well as provide peer feedback with the help of the checklist. It saves my time and effort in a large class where I cannot individually check 100 students’ writing in every class.’* Lastly, they highlighted the use of project work as an important assessment activity in large classes of business communication course, as Respondent 2 said *‘I often give them a project work as 10 – 20 marks activity in my business communication courses. They either have to develop a business proposal by working in groups of 3 to 5 students and*

present it to the whole class, or create an advertisement for any product or perform a simulation based on a business activity.'

4.5 Strategies for managing large classes effectively

Managing large classes has been reported as one of the biggest challenges by respondents in the study. Researchers were able to construct an important theme of how teachers tried to navigate the challenges of classroom management in large business communication classes. The majority of the participants emphasized the need to create a positive learning environment in the classroom at the beginning of the semester. This could be achieved by informing students of teachers' expectations about classroom conduct, assignment and quiz submissions, and assessment tasks. Respondent 3 told 'I make students sign a classroom contract after a discussion with them about their responsibilities during the course and how they are expected to conduct themselves in the classroom. It helps me a lot in managing my large classroom effectively.' Respondent 5 shared some useful tips in this regard 'I try to memorize as many names as possible in a large class. Calling students by their names always has a positive impact on classroom management.' Another teacher said 'Keep your instructions very clear about all tasks that you set in a large classroom. Be extra careful here. Unclear instructions will create chaos in the classroom and waste your precious time.' response

Teachers also admitted that teaching large classes always puts an extra demand on the teachers. They should make themselves available after the classroom hours as well for students to come to them and discuss their problems to manage their classrooms effectively. Respondent 7 highlighted this aspect, '*A 3-hour session is never sufficient to deal with the issues of around 100 students in my classroom. I always inform my class about my counselling hours when I will be available in my office to listen to their issues related to the course and solve them. This extra time provided to students' increases our burden, but it does wonders as far as managing a large business communication class is concerned. Teaching large classes always requires some extra work*'.

Finally, managing large classes can be a daunting task for novice university teachers, but with experience and continuous effort teachers may learn to teach them effectively, as Respondent 10 told us "*I believe that since I have been teaching quite a long time and I have been*

teaching large classes regularly over the years, so I now find it easy to cope with large classes through my experience.”

5. Discussion and Conclusion

The findings of the study indicated that the majority of the participants conceptualized a large business communication class to comprise 40 plus students. The participants revealed that they had been teaching large classes with the number of students ranging from 40 to 150. One of the major findings of the study was the challenges teachers faced in teaching business communication to large classes. The challenges included classroom management issues of large classes including lack of discipline, noise, distraction and timely completion of classroom activities. Teachers also reported difficulty in assessing and providing feedback to a large number of students in large classes. Teaching writing and speaking skills also becomes a challenge due to poor basic English language skills. Teaching presentation skills and observing students' individual presentations also become a challenge, while the limited time available to complete the business communication course outlines is also a challenge. These key themes are in alignment with the previous research on the challenges of teaching large university classes, for instance, Wibow (2023) and Khan and Iqbal (2012) also documented the challenges associated with large classes in business communication courses, particularly in managing student engagement, providing effective feedback, and teaching essential skills such as business writing and presentations.

Another key finding of study revealed the strategies Pakistani ESL university teachers utilize to effectively teach business communication courses to large classes. The teachers emphasized the importance of planning meticulously for teaching large classes, using cooperative learning methods including pair work and group work, and integrating technology into the large classes through multimedia projectors, mic, sound systems, internet and google classrooms. The assessment and feedback practices found to be effective for teaching large classes were shared by the participants including self-assessment, peer-assessment, project work and online quiz techniques.

These findings are in sync with previous research findings as several studies have indicated that peer assessment not only fosters student engagement but also encourages collaborative learning, which is crucial in a business communication context where skills such as writing and presentation are paramount (Babaii & Adeh, 2019; Hasnani &

Mubarak, 2020). Babaii and Adeh (2019) also highlight the positive impact of paired peer assessment on students' writing abilities, suggesting that peer feedback can be as effective as teacher assessments in developing these skills. Furthermore, peer assessment can reduce the workload for instructors while simultaneously engaging students in the assessment process, thereby enhancing their understanding of assessment criteria (Krouglov, 2020). The implementation of group work and peer review mechanisms cannot only facilitate a more interactive learning environment but can also encourage them to reflect on their learning (Anggraini et al., 2020). This reflective practice is essential in business communication courses where students must critically evaluate their writing and presentation skills.

Moreover, the integration of peer feedback into the curriculum has been shown to promote a culture of constructive criticism among students, which can lead to improved academic performance (Huy, 2021). In terms of course content delivery, focusing on essential topics can help streamline the learning process in large classes. By prioritizing key areas of business communication, instructors can ensure that students gain the necessary skills without becoming overwhelmed by the breadth of the syllabus (Wibowo, 2023). Additionally, the co-creation of assessment rubrics with students can further enhance engagement and ownership of the learning process.

6. Recommendations

Based on the findings of study, following recommendations are drawn:

1. ESL university teachers need to become aware of the challenges and strategies that work in teaching business communication to large classes. They should plan meticulously, use cooperative learning methods and integrate technology into their lessons to teach business communication courses to large classes effectively.
2. ESL university teachers should use self-assessment, peer-assessment and internet tools for efficient, accurate and timely assessment of large classes. They should also create a positive and active learning environment through setting classroom conduct expectations, giving clear instructions, and keeping their large classes activity-based.
3. Teacher educators need to train novice ESL teachers to teach large classes effectively by adopting effective pedagogic strategies as well as classroom management techniques.

4. The university management needs to provide infrastructural facilities such as multimedia projectors, mic, sound systems, and internet connectivity in the classrooms for effective teaching of business communication to large classes.

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