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Slow Learners' Challenges in Acquiring EFL:

The Case of First Year EFL Students at Belhadj Bouchaib University Centre -Ain Temouchent-

An Extended Essay Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for a Master's Degree in Linguistics

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Dedications

I dedicate this work to:

My dear parents, the source of affection and who have been doing their best to reach my goal and achieve this work at due time.

To my grandparents, for their unlimited love who taught me the value of hard work. To all the members of my lovely family whom I love the most.

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Dedications

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Abstract

Learning English as a foreign language stands as a necessity nowadays, it is considered as a skill that demand several capacities. However, learning English is one of the major problems for learners with below average learning abilities who come across a wide set of difficulties and challenges. The objective of this research is to understand the characteristics of slow learners and the role of teachers in enhancing their learning capacities. Moreover, this investigation tends to expose the obstacles that slow learners face while learning English and demonstrate how they cope with the situation. It also attempts to provide some strategies that teachers can employ inside the classroom. In order to confirm or disconfirm the stated hypotheses, this research work is quantitatively and qualitatively conducted through questionnaires that have been devoted for both first-year English students and teachers from English department at Belhadj Bouchaib university center. The results reveal that slow learners do exist among first year English students who face a set of challenges while acquiring English as foreign language. Based on the obtained results, some recommendations have been proposed for both teachers and students in order to improve slow learners' capacities in acquiring English language.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

EFL   **:** English as a Foreign Language

ELL   **:** English Language Learning

FL   **:** Foreign Language

LMD   **:** License Master Doctorate

List of Tables

List of Figures

Table of Contents

CHAPTER ONE: Slow Learners' Challenges in EFL Classes

CHAPTER TWO: Methodology and Data Analysis

Chapter three: Data Interpretation and Recommendations

General introduction

English is the world's language not because it is the most widely spoken as native language but because it is widely spoken outside its native countries, either as second or a foreign language.

Learning English as a foreign language is essential in the current world but at the same time, it is considered as a complicated process. It is a step-in which learner deals with new concepts that goes with acquiring new vocabulary and grammar. In the process of learning a foreign language, students learn a subject at different rates and with strikingly different levels of completeness. This is due to some features within the learners themselves that influence their ability to learn. The pace and pattern of development vary from one student to another; indeed, not all learners can adapt English language skills. Some of them just cannot cope with the fast-paced in learning English language as a foreign language. Due to this situation, a gap is set between their real ability and their performance level and such learners are then dubbed 'Slow Learners'.

Slow learners are students who need more time and attention than the standard ones to get knowledge. In fact, they do not stand out as very different from their classmates expect that they are always slow on the uptake and are often teased by the other students because of their slowness. However, each student can perceive the situation involved in by first, helping himself via various strategies then by relying on the help of the teacher. Therefore, many researchers try to explain why this category of students do not acquire matters especially foreign languages in the same pace as their peers do and how can teachers help them to overcome this situation.

The aim of this research is to investigate the nature of slow learner and the main features that affect him / her while learning. Accordingly, this study attempts to reveal the rang of challenges and difficulties that slow learner face in the learning process and the possible strategies that the teacher applies to help this category of learners.

This research study attempts to seek the appropriate solutions for the stated problem. For this, a set of research questions are raised as fellow:

1- What are the hindrances slow learners can face in EFL classes?

2- How can EFL slow learners cope with this situation?

The suggested questions are hypothesized as follow:

1-Many challenges can face slow learners in EFL classes as mother tongue interference and getting confused in applying rules.

2-Foreign language teachers enhance their slow learners' competences through applying adequate application of the strategies during teaching / learning process.

In order to examine the validity of the suggested hypothesis, the researchers have adopted mixed methods approaches, using a questionnaire which submitted for first year English learners and seven teachers in the department of English at Belhadj Bouchaib university center. Thus, to provide solutions and strategies for EFL slow learners to overpass the problematic situation. The outcome of these questionnaires will reveal features that may fit the research questions and the set of hypotheses.

This research work is divided into three main chapters. The first chapter is devoted to the theoretical overview about the key elements of the research study. The literature review shows the importance of English as foreign language in the world. Besides the role of motivation in learning English language. Then, it presents the different types of learners including slow learners. Afterwards the rest of the chapter is devoted to slow learners' attitudes, characteristics and the reasons behind being slow learner in acquiring English language. In addition to the challenges that face slow learners in learning EFL and the teachers attitudes towards this category of learners.

The second chapter is exhibiting the methodology and data analysis of both students and teachers' questionnaire. The collected data will be analyzed qualitatively and qualitatively in

order to reveal the kind of obstacles slow learners face and how teachers manage to help those learners.

In the third chapter, the researchers tend to give an adequate interpretation for both students and teachers' questionnaire, in addition to some suggestions and strategies that could help slow learners to cope with their peers in EFL classes. Also, some recommendations are proposed to improve students' competences while learning EFL.

Slow learners encounter many psychological and environmental barriers that prevent them from learning matters, including acquiring English language in the same pace as their classmates. Therefore, it is important to make them aware of the situation and help them to step forward and face these obstacles to cope with it.

This research work is written in order to spot the light on slow learners and how teachers should behave with them. because it was experienced that some of them didn't give that important to this category of learners during the learning process. For that reason, researchers try to lead this case in order to conduct and make the teachers aware about this category of learners.

1.1 Introduction

English is a fascinating and complex language. Learning it can be a challenge, but that doesn't mean it has to drag on or be impossible. Each learner has different objectives and, therefore, different approaches to learn English. It takes time, and it takes a lot of patience. The problem however, is that not all learners can adapt English language skills. Some of them just cannot cope with the fast-paced in learning English language as a foreign language. Those kinds of students are called "slow learners".

This chapter attempts to draw a clear picture about the challenges that could face the slow learners while learning EFL, and it focuses on their characteristics and attitude. Finally, we will try to shed light on the teachers' attitude in improving the level of their students.

1.2 English language learning

English language is being more and more important. English language has been chosen to become the language of communication that is spoken by people who do not share the same tongue. It is the official language of 53 countries and the fourth most widely spoken native language in the world, about 1.5 billion people speaks English what makes it the language of new media and international communication in many fields such as economy, politics, industry and education. English language has official status even in nations where it is not the primary spoken language. Therefore, the emphasis of learning English language is becoming vital because of the amount of opportunities that it may create in international markets and regions. Learning English today is much less easy to define than it was some years ago. People learn English either as first language (mother tongue) in which they acquire the linguistic forms and structures, or as second or foreign language alongside other languages in order to express different social identities. In addition, the purpose of learning English differs from one learner to another and under different conditions.

However, according to Kachru (1992) "It is these two groups of speakers, with English as their other-tongue, who have given English its current status as an international language". The foreign learners are the reason why English language has achieved such status and become the most widely spoken language.

1.2.1 Language acquisition

Language acquisition is accomplished in the first years of childhood i.e. children under the age of five start discovering, understanding and using their native language without being taught the rules of grammar by their parents. It is also regarded as the process of acquiring unconsciously the capacity to perceive and comprehend, as well as to produce the language. To illustrate this process, a number of theories was emerged through the years each with a different perspective. One of the earliest theories was the behaviorist theory by B.F Skinner (1957) who claims that children acquire language through imitating the adults and based on behaviorist reinforcement by which the child either increase his behavior by positive reinforcement or decrease it by negative reinforcement. However, Avram Noam Chomsky (1950) argued in his Innateness theory that language acquisition is an innate process and the student is already born with a special capacity of language learning mechanisms in his brain that enable him to acquire his mother tongue without previous knowledge and according to him the role of social environment is weakened in acquiring the language. On the other hand, the cognitive theory by Jean Piaget (1936) states that language is just one aspect of a student's overall intellectual development i.e. the student capacity of learning language grows alongside his mental development.

1.2.2 English as second foreign language

English language has the same status in every country in the world. English has achieved prime status by becoming the most widely spoken language in the world and global

language based on the huge population that use it in communication. There are about 350 million native speakers in the world who use English in academic settings and in their everyday life communications, and about 430 million non-native speakers who are categorized into second users and foreign ones.

English has become the international lingua franca throughout the 19ᵗʰ and the 20ᵗʰ centuries. Generally, these changes are due to a combination of the geo-historical and the socio-cultural reasons. Thus, English has been expanded due to the pioneering voyages to the Americas.

English language remains second and foreign language in many countries such as Sweden, Finland, Malaysia, Argentine, Germany, Algeria… etc. English as second or foreign language can be defined as the use of English by non-native speakers with different native languages, backgrounds, and cultures. It is used generally by non-native speakers in countries where English is not a local medium of communication.

It is multi important for non-native speakers to learn English as second or foreign language, because whenever someone meets foreigners in foreign cities he can only communicate in English language. More details are exhibit through the figure below:
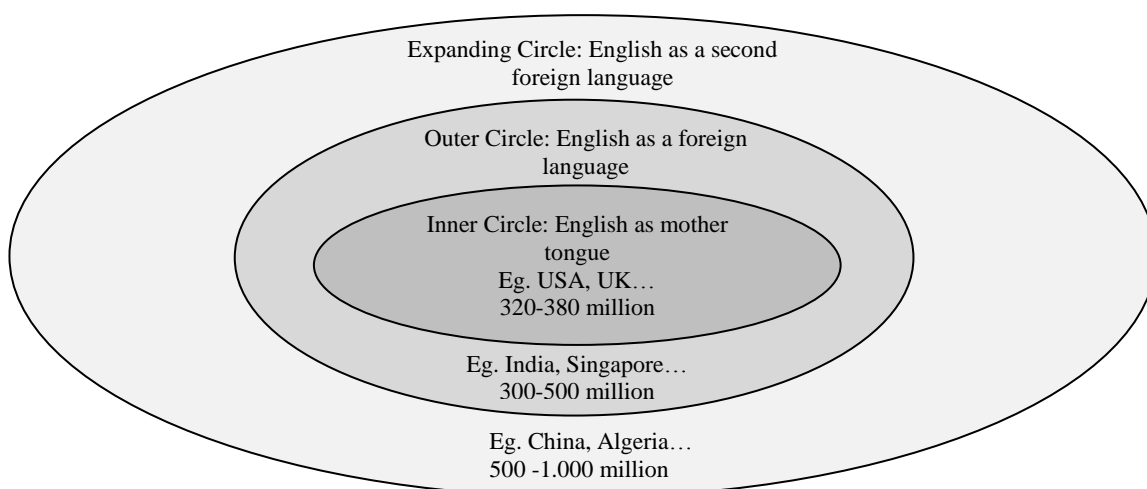
Figure1.1: The statue of English in the world

Source: Crystal (2003) English as a Global Language: 61

The Inner Circle refers to the bases of English language where it is primary used. Then, The Outer Circle involves the earlier phase of the spread of English in non-native settings, where English plays the role of second language. Whereas, the expanding circle includes those nations which recognize the importance of English as an international language.

1.3 Motivation in learning English language

Learners learn better and fast when they are motivated to learn. (Dornyei,1998:117) stated that "Motivation provides the primary impetus to initiate learning the second language and later the driving force to sustain the long and often tedious learning process", that is to say, motivation is one of the most important factors in second language learning. Learners with a good attitude towards English language are more likely to work hard and keep going when learning gets challenging. In other words, learners must preserve what motivate them the most.

Furthermore, English language teachers play a big influential role in motivating learners to engage and persist in the English language acquisition process by a set of motivational strategies. For example, the teacher figures out the learners' reasons and goals for learning English and work on realizing them, show the learners the great benefits of English language and create an enjoyable, interesting and meaningful learning setting. Besides to set a personal behavior example, involve the learners in real situations where they can interact with English native-speakers, increasing the learners' self-confidence, in addition to make a challenging and achievable task.

According to Garders Socio-Educational Model, motivation can be divided in to two main types. First type is the integrative motivation which refers to the learners' desire to integrate with the target language people and their culture or for personal growth in order to

fit in the target language society. Second, the instrumental motivation that points at the learners' willingness to achieve certain goals such as reaching high educational status or at the learners wishes to get financial rewards. The rate of motivation could affect learners' attitudes, this leads to distinguish many types of learners.

1.4 English language learners

English language learners (ELL) are students who come from non-English speaking homes and they are learning English in addition to their native language. Although many EL students have developed basic communication skills in English, they still struggle with academic language this is because they do not have the English-language ability needed to participate fully in academic settings or achieve their full academic potential in schools. This disconnect can make classroom instruction difficult, and it requires modified instruction in the student academic courses.

English-language learners are also students who were formerly classified as limited English proficient, but who have acquired English-language abilities that allows them to participate and succeed in regular academic English courses.

1.5 Types of learners

Learning can be an easy process for some students and hard for the others. It depends either on the method they use to acquire things or on the nature of the students.

Apparently, learners are different, the ways they use to learn are different, the things they prefer are also different and of course their needs are different. Researchers, however, believe that everyone can learn based on how learner fit in the learning setting. This can create multiple types of learners. For example, there are visual learners who prefer to learn through visual objects and they remember better when things are written, but they cannot

focus on verbal explanations. The second type is the auditory learners who retains information through speaking and hearing to explanations. Another type is kinesthetic learners. This type of learners faces difficulties in learning while sitting down, however, they can learn better through physical activities. Besides to the types mentioned before, there is another kind of types that enable us to distinguish between learners.

1.5.1 Fast learners

Fast learners are learners that have a natural potential and they are born with special gift that enable them to grasp information faster than normal learners. Indeed, they have an exceptional intellectual ability and permanent prominent. According to Howard Garder of Harvard University, learners with special intelligence can make their natural gifting stronger and even strengthen their weaknesses by their own.

Fast learners tend to have a high achievement level in academic setting within a limited period of time. Besides to having a distinguished leadership quality and a tremendous ability of working under pressure and stressful circumstances. What distinguish them from other learners are their high level of creativity, their constructive abilities and the speed of their thinking and reasoning skills. In addition, fast learners enjoy working on hard tasks of generally all subjects and they are always seeking for more information. Hence, they can fit in any academic setting and they succeed better in typical school setting.

1.5.2 Average learners

Most of learners can be considered as average learners. They tend to master average abilities that make them in the midway between fast and slow learners i.e. they demonstrate the average command of skills which make them always seen in the middle order.

Average learners can be identified also as the ones who keep one parameter in mind and they work in medium rate to achieve the middle of the road grades. In other words, they prefer to stay in the safe zone.

Apparently, average learners do not have the courage to go forward and take the risk of trying something new but at the same time they do their best to not fail or going under the medium. According to researchers from South Carolina university, average learners believe that their efforts are way more than their innate abilities which is caused by the learning setting where they cannot stand out and show their unique abilities or even achieve higher positions as fast learners do.

1.5.3 Slow learners

The term slow learner is usually used to describe learners of below average intelligence, whose reasoning skills are delayed and their thinking skills have developed more slowly than their same age peers. They have the ability to learn necessary academic skills and the same basic developmental stages but in slower rate i.e. they face difficulties in learning or mastering new concepts in the same period of time as their peers do because they need more time.

Slow learners tend to have short term attention and they cannot easily remember things. Besides to the lack of concentration inside the classroom that make them always feeling bored and have no motivation in learning.

1.6 Slow learners' identification

Slow learner is not a diagnostic category but rather a term used to describe learners who have problems in coping with their peers in class while learning. It is the teacher's duty

to help slow learners, but first, he should recognize them and assess their needs which are related to their behaviors inside the classroom.

Generally, slow learners are those who need more time and more repetition to understand matters or figuring out things around them and they also rely on the teacher's sources to learn new concepts. Slow learners need more explanation and direct instruction because they understand better direct and clear directives i.e they do not understand the teacher who use complex sentences or sentences with hidden meaning.

Most of the time, slow learners seem to be confused and they tend to have difficulties in focusing or keeping attention on what the teacher is saying because they get bored easily. Besides to those behaviors, slow learners also have issues in organizing their work.

1.6.1 Difference between slow learner and learning disability

It is very important to understand the difference between slow learners and learners with specific learning disabilities and to make a precise identification for each category inside the classroom. Because, being able to differentiate between these two groups would help the teacher to create a suitable learning situation for both in order to give them what they really need based on their differences.

Slow learners as it is mentioned before, is someone that has a slow thinking and reasoning skills development comparing to learners of their age, that would create a challenge for them to learn new concepts in the average time, besides the range of problems that face them in learning and adopting matters in natural rate. It can be identified also as someone who does not have specific disabilities but poor performance in all academic areas.

In contrast, Learners with specific learning disabilities manifest a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or using spoken or

written language. Moreover, learners with learning disabilities unlike slow learners have deficiency in one area of learning and specific difficulties which can make learning process difficult and very challenging for them. This kind of learners can only be diagnosed by trained professionals such as psychologists, educational psychologists because it is often difficult to distinguish between slow learners and learners with learning disability based only on observed behaviors.

1.7 Reasons and causes of being slow learner

Actually, slow learners are students who are simply not interested in studying under system of education. There are so many factors that could cause the process of slow learning, some important ones are mentioned bellow:

1.7.1 Short attention span

Slow learners have short attention span in which they cannot concentrate for a long time. they cannot remember what they learn because of their short memory and they feel bored without giving an interest towards learning process.

1.7.2 Parents

Because of some social constraints and preoccupations, parents do not provide a continuous care for their children. This neglect affects the student, and make him feels isolated and unsecured. He cannot share his problems that he faces in the learning process. On the other hand, Mothers who experience intense and excessive anxiety, worry and stress may give birth to disturbed children, since the mother's state of health affects the child.

1.7.3 Emotional factors

All students are likely to have emotional problems at some point in their school career. According to Damon and hart (1982) "when children begin school life, they tend to judge themselves on specific accomplishments rather than on general truth". this means that we can understand this when we see that each small failure can cause a student to feel worthless.

1.7.4 Personal factors

Besides all these above factors, there are some personal factors which are more or less responsible for slow learning. Personal factors include long illness or long absence from school and lack of self-confidence. It was found that students who lack self-confidence are usually slow learners. Beside all these, there is the Genetic factors in which if slowness run in the lineage, the inherited characteristics may influence the general intellectual development from parents.

1.8 Causes of being slow learner in learning EFL

Slow learners in learning EFL is caused by a variety of factors such as:

1.8.1 The Psychological factors

The capacity of learning differs from one student to another. For example, there are slow learners with limited mental capacity.

Due to limited cognitive capacity, slow learners fail to cope with learning situations, rational thinking become practically impossible. According to Kirk (1962:34) "the slow learners, average and gifted students can be classified according to their rate of learning" this means the rate of learning is the basis of identifying a student as slow learner, average or

gifted .He also refuses to be classified slow learner with mentally retarded; he stated that "the slow-learning student is not considered mentally retarded because he is capable of achieving a moderate degree of academic success even though at a slower rate than the average student" that is to say the slow learner is educated and he could succeed in his educational career although he is slower than the normal students .Bloom (1965) as well supported the idea that the slow learner is not a mentally retarded student, he claims that Slow learners can learn as well as fast learners if instruction is approached systematically and sensitively, if they are given extra time and if they are helped in their learning difficulties. Thus, he considers the slow learner as normal; however, he needs an extra time and specific help. A cognitive psychologist, also has similar views, any concept can be taught to any student if appropriate instructional methods and procedures are utilized.

1.8.2 The Environmental factors

Previously psychologists mentioned that slow learning is directly related to intellectual ability but recent studies in this regard revealed that heredity alone is not responsible for the backwardness of the student, it means there are other factors that cause a slow learning situation.

The slow learner has such serious and long lasting emotional and environmental problems that these hamper his learning process. Parents, teachers and friends are the main part of the slow learner's environment, those factors could affect directly the slow learner. Parents must be careful, sensitive, and caring to help their child keep up with the same pace with his mates, they should make an effort to support their children in the side of education, not just the teacher who is responsible of teaching and education; even the parents have the duty to help their children in learning. Concerning the teacher, it is always seen that in every classroom the teacher gives importance only to the student who learns faster and not to the slow learners this is why the student becomes upset and start feeling as unwanted. Therefore,

it could be the reason that the student (sit at the corner of the classroom and starts doing all sorts of nonsense).

Slow learners could be affected by their friends or classmates who ignore and mock at them. Therefore, they feel embarrassed and alone, this is why we should respect this category of students and try to create a safe environment for them.

1.9 Slow learners' attitude

slow learning is often the result of poor development attitude towards work and some emotional factors in which work or learn is too difficult. The behavior capacities of the slow learners usually result in boredom and poor attention. Frequent failures and frustration may cause impediment to try or to take the initiative. As a result, slow learners are usually convinced that they cannot learn or progress in their study.

Frustration and emotional factors play an important role in the attitude of slow learner where Feng.R and Chen .H (2009) stated that, "Learning process is an emotional process. It is affected by different emotional factors. The teacher and his students engage in various emotional activities in it and varied fruits of emotions are yield". i.e. the attitude can help the learners to express whether they like or dislike the objects or surrounding situations. It is agreed that the inner feelings and emotions of learners influence their perspectives and their attitudes towards the target language.

Slow learners are usually regarded as among the least motivated of pupils and a comparison of attitudes to different subjects provides a valuable perspective that it can differ from student to other. As a result, students who are not motivated are simply not interested and need to be engaged in order to participate fully in class. The teacher observes an attitude of disinterest among the slow learners in the classroom in which the classroom situations include distraction and lack of concentration of slow learners, this typical attitude is associated with poor motivation.

Learners' attitudes are important because they provide insights into inter-relations issues in educational psychology including personality and self-esteem. Generally, motivation and the optimal conditions for learning are the factors which promote the most favorable attitude, the greatest motivation and the best learning conditions are important matters for the school. Overall when the slow learner has the motivation and received by the frequently attention with the eager want to success, of course they will be convinced that they are capable of satisfying that desire. When they discover that they are capable, they are cheerful and exited at least for a time.

1.10 Slow learner characteristics

Slow Learners have several characteristics that make classroom instruction difficult and it may exhibit some or all of these characteristics depending on their degree of problem acquiring knowledge at school.

One of the pertinent characteristics of slow learners is poor memory. Memory is a complex process and is not fully understood although some scholars have established theories to explain the various facts of memory, Flavell and Wellmen (1977:463) define memory as a series of cognitive processes including recognition and recall, knowledge and cognitive strategies, in other words, the problem in there memory is caused by various aspects and types such as short term memory and long one .

Inability to express ideas through language is another significant characteristic of a slow learner, the difficulties are in knowing what to say, or if they know what to say here is the problem of how to say it. Expression is often lacking in other sequence; the difficulty is knowing what to select to say in order to create a clear sentence. In this case some students have poor communication skills, since they do not know how to select correctly their words so they have problems of spelling and use correct grammar in speaking and writing. In fact, they have poor social interactions too and they cannot get along with others easily as

(Borah.R 2013:140) said "Slow learners are recurrently immature in their relations with others and do poorly in school", some of them become aggressive towards their friends and peers on silly matters and they are afraid and self-conscious. In addition of that slow learner have short attention span, that is they cannot concentrate for long. This typical behavior is also associated with short memory where the slow learners cannot remember what they have been taught and this could be the main reason when they are always bored and generally have no interest in learning. On the whole they prefer visual presented materials to make the learning easier.

1.11 Challenges facing slow learners in learning EFL

In Algeria, French is considering as the first foreign language and English as second foreign language, that is, English is learned in various schools, however, it is out of the scene, unlike French language. This situation may inhibit the process of learning and make it difficult.

A student who is considered as a slow learner can face many challenges in his lifetime. He may struggle to stay at the same pace with his mates, find it difficult to stay motivated while learning goes through anxiety, depression or struggle to communicate with others. Slow learners face challenges in the process of education. In fact, they have difficulty with reasoning skills. This suggests that it will be more challenging to learn new concepts. New skills need to be based upon already mastered concepts. Things are made more complicated when the majority of the class have already mastered a concept and is moving on, while the slow learner needs more time. This can lead to gaps in knowledge and basic skills. They may find it difficult to speak clearly, which may result in limited vocabulary development. Self-confidence can also be an issue. They often feel "stupid" and start hating studying. They spend all day doing something that is difficult for them, in other way many slow learners have poor command of vocabulary. They lack facility in expressing themselves, and are frequently

weak in comprehending and listening. Slow learners with limited mental development have restricted abilities in thinking and reasoning, they have poor capacity to develop concepts which are explained through the use of words, they experience particular difficulty with words that are necessary for abstractions, it has been noted that slow learners are generally later in starting to talk. Here the question that may arise is: If these students struggle so much, why are they often not eligible for Special Education?

The answer is Special Education services are provided for students who have a disability. Slow learners tend to perform at their ability level, which is below average; i.e. a slow learner is not a disabled learner, they just require additional help and support through regular education.

1.12 Problems involved in teaching EFL slow learners

Teaching is a very demanding task and hard job. This profession requires creating new ways of motivating student every day, and to be quite tolerant in order to facilitate the development of the teaching-learning process. Nowadays teachers have to face a big challenge in the teaching learning process. In the classrooms there are students with diversities of intelligence, motivation, learning styles, and necessities. That is why the role of the teacher is to identify the various students they have in class and prepare themselves for teaching taking into account all those characteristics, as an example of those students is the slow learners; it is very hard to identify them because of their specific personality.

According to (Mycalebust, 2007: Np), "teachers might be less knowledgeable about teaching students with special educational needs in regular schools, which might have a negative effect on the quality of education and achievement". The reason for this is that those teachers do not receive any particular training on how to support such students, no special services are provided either. It is up to the teachers and parents to provide the help needed for slow learners to progress by using special strategies to assist them. Wilkins & Dawne (2010)

observed that "teachers who were successful in working with slow learners have skills to address students' cognitive and motivational needs". Therefore, the basic problem that could face the teachers is what is the right way or effective skill to teach them and get their attention. Teacher training facilitates teacher's capacity to address problems and foster social, emotional, intellectual, behavioral and academic development. Teachers who care for their students are aware of student requirements even outside the school. (Stronge,2002: Np) stated that students point out that effective teachers are those who care to spend more time interacting and working directly with them, which means, effective teachers work with students as opposed to doing things to or for them. Furthermore, those who have experienced to teach slow learners a foreign language, can find out many difficulties connected with their capabilities. A teacher should have endless patience and high professionalism to cope with these difficulties in the teaching process. The most essential thing for them to realize is that the problem is not that the students are not able to learn, but rather they do so at a different pace.

1.13 Teachers attitudes towards slow learners

One of the most important aspects of the classroom interaction concerns the ways in which teachers make sense of and respond to the learning behavior of their students. It is the teacher's attitudes and expectations that will either improve or disapprove the students' academic performance. According to Macqueen (2010) "attitude is defined within the framework of social psychology as a subjective or mental preparation for action". The attitude of the teacher towards his students is very important, a positive and practical attitude is an essential ingredient in the recipe of success. we all respond to teachers who are encouraging, who notice and reward effort, who seem to take a personal interest in us, who recognize our problems and difficulties and most importantly make us feel about ourselves. All of these skills originate from an essentially positive set of attitudes on the part of the teacher.

Chauhdary and Hussain (2012: Np) explored the attitude of teachers towards slow learners' academic achievement and reported that slow learners need an interactive teaching methodology and the curriculum content which should meet their academic needs and further, they highlighted that the teachers' positive attitude towards slow learners made them active. Consequently, the success of education programs to the slow learners in a large extent depends on the teachers" awareness, attitude and competencies to deal with students who are differently abled in the regular classroom. Muppudathi (2014), states that "to help a learner to fetch a good grade is a challenge that marks the qualities of a good teacher". Generally positive attitude could help the student to improve his skills and feels that he is comfortable in class. Whereas, there are some teachers have negative attitude towards those slow learners, this attitude affects students in way or another in their academic performance, learning, emotional and lifestyle. As the result of this negativity, students cannot learn more, losing interest in school and prefer not to study anymore.

According to Barros and Ellia (2000: Np), some students' academic performance was negatively affected by some of teachers' attitudes during learning processes. They said that teacher's lack of confidence due to poor conceptual and phenomenological subject foundations may negatively influence academic performance that is to say teachers who have negative attitude towards their teaching and learner assessment due to some factors such as poor incentives and working conditions will affect the students' academic performance. In a like manner some teachers classify their students according to social class, so the slow learner here feels that he under racism, other teachers ignore slow students because of the extra attention that those learners require thus disturbing other students in the mainstream class this of Lack of teachers' attention to individual student may adversely affect the self-efficacy of the learner. In this case Slow learners are very sensitive and self-conscious. Furthermore, the first responsibility of the teacher is to have good attitude to build up

confidence among these learners and make them believe that they are no less than others. There are incidents and evidences in history that many slow learners became scientists, doctors, engineers, writers, etc. The teacher must direct the slow learners in an appropriate way by increasing the learning capability of the slow learner, and making teaching-learning more purposeful. The key point is that if the teacher worries about the students' performance through consistent assessment and monitoring then the students will succeed, but if they are ignorant of the educators' duties then the students will be left behind.

1.14 Conclusion

This chapter attempts to explain some related concepts of slow learners and the importance of English as a foreign language in the current world. Then, it focuses on slow learners' attitude, characteristics and the reason behind their situation. Besides, the challenges and difficulties they face while acquiring EFL. These elements were clarified through the presentation of the major theories from different scholars. finally, it sheds light on teachers' attitude towards slow learners' behaviors. The practical part of this research will be tackled in the following chapter.

2.1 Introduction

The main concern of this chapter is to investigate about the possible challenges that could face slow learners in learning English as a foreign language, besides teachers' attitudes towards those learners inside the classroom. It aims to find realistic answers to the research questions by conducting a questionnaire for both English teachers and first year English language learners. A general description of the participants under investigation and the methodology followed in analyzing the results of the research study is exposed.

2.2 The Population

The sample population used in this study consists of forty (40) first year English students at Belhadj Bouchaib university center, Ain Temouchant. This sample has been chosen for the reason that first year English students are familiar with English language since they already studied it in Middle and Secondary school. However, tertiary studies are different. This case, allows to observe and analyze the students' attitudes and difficulties. A sample of seven (7) teachers of English have been selected since they are in the best position which provides information and this will lubricate the flow of the research.

2.3 Methodology and Tools of Research

The research methodology is a practical part of our study as it shows the structure of the whole work. In fact, this research requires a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches which are the most adequate methods to investigate and explain how and why the participants behave in a certain manner. As already stated, to fulfil the research work, the data were gathered using two different questionnaires which were submitted to both students and teachers.

2.3.1 Qualitative Research

Qualitative research seeks to understand a given research problems from the perspectives of the local population it involves. It is effective in obtaining specific information about opinions, behaviors and social contexts of particular populations. Denzin and Lincoln (2000:03) claimed that qualitative research involves an interpretive and naturalistic approach. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings.

2.3.2 Quantitative Research

Quantitative research is used to quantify the problem by way of generating numerical data or data that can be transformed into usable statistics. It is used to quantify attitudes, opinions, behaviors, and other defined variables and generalize results from a larger sample population. Fellows and liu (2008:18) said that quantitative research methods are typically adopted because they are scientific methods and provide immediate results. Other reason for selecting this approach is that it is more efficient, can test hypothesis and always aimed at clarifying features, count them and build statistical models to explain what is observed during research**.**

2.3.3 The Pilot Study

The researcher has conducted the pilot study as a pre-test to see whether the questions are adequate enough to collect all the needed information about the topic of investigation. This pilot study is submitted to a sample of ten (10) participants. Generally, all the questions were valid, however, the researchers did some changes in section three occurred where all the three questions have been combined in one accurate question which has been presented as follow:

Q8: What are the strategies you follow to cope with the situation?

2.3.4 The Questionnaire

A questionnaire is a structured research instrument consists a set of open-ended, close-ended and long form questions which permit for the participants to elaborate their thoughts under the purpose of collecting primary data. According to Brown (2003:06) "Questionnaires are any written instruments that present respondents with a series of questions or statements in which they are to react either by writing out their answers or selecting from among exciting answers". Which means that the Questionnaire is a series of written questions for which the respondents have to provide the answers. This questionnaire is submitted to first year English students and teachers of English department.

2.3.4.1 Students' Questionnaire

A sample of (40) first year English students from the English department have been selected to answer a questionnaire in order to know the possible challenges that could face them in the learning process which paved the way to examine whether there are slow learners among the chosen population.

2.3.4.2 Teachers' Questionnaire

Since the teacher has a crucial role in observing students' attitudes inside the classroom, he can recognize slow learners. A set of questionnaires were submitted to seven (7) teachers in English department to know better about students' attitude inside the classroom, different kind of difficulties that could face the teacher while dealing with those kind of students and what is the most effective strategies that he uses to make the slow learners cope with the learning process.

2.4 Description of Students' Questionnaire

The questionnaire has been administered to a sample of population of forty (40) first year English LMD students. It consists of eight open and closed-ended questions. The questionnaire contains three parts.

The first part is devoted to "general information", it includes two closed-ended questions which have been asked to have an over view about the participants.

The second part is devoted to "Learners' difficulties", it contains five (05) closed-ended questions in addition to three open-ended questions ("why" and "others option") which have been asked to give the respondents the chance to express their opinion about the situation under investigation and to provide us with extra options.

The last part is submitted to "students' attitude", it includes one closed-ended question that has been asked to know what are the most adequate strategies that participants follow to cope with the learning process.

2.5 The Analysis of Students' Questionnaire

The questionnaire is submitted to first year Bachelor English students.

Question 01: Participants gender

This question is to identify if there is any difference between males and females in terms of facing difficulties in learning.

Table 2.1: participants' gender distribution

Option	participants	Percentage
Male	25	62.50%
Female	15	37.50%
Total	**40**	**100%**
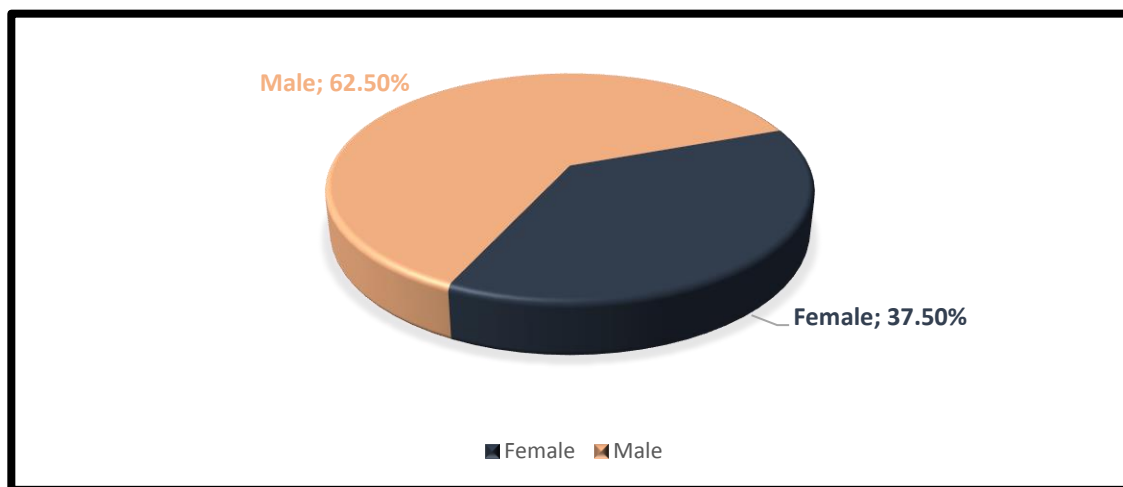
Figure 2.1: participants' gender distribution

The Pie chart above shows the rate of males and females at the English section. As we can notice, male students represent (62,50%) of our participants, while the female represent only (37,50%).

Question 02: Is studying English a personal choice?

The aim of this question is to know whether studying English is the participant's choice or it has been imposed.

Table 2.2: Students' choice to learn English

Option	Number	Percentage
Yes	38	95%
No	02	05%
Total	**40**	**100%**
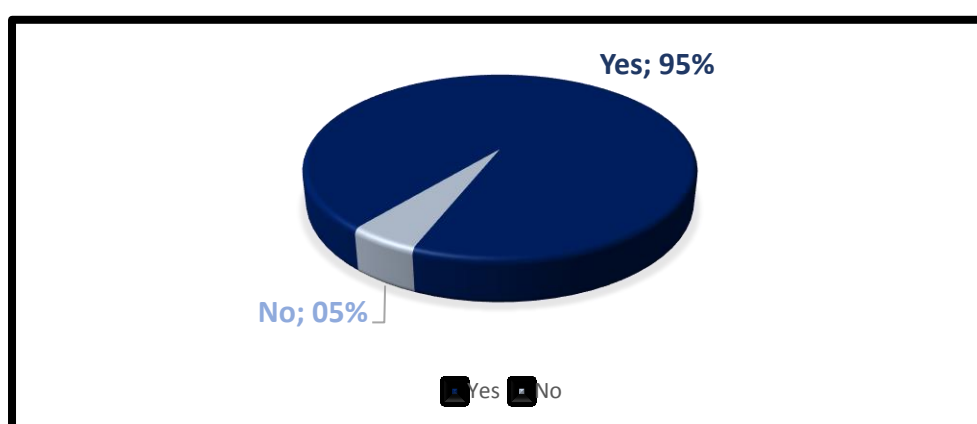
Figure 2.2: Students' choice to learn English

The result of the question reveals that the majority of the sample choose to learn English and they rate (95%), while, only (2) students state that it was not their personal choice in the rate of (5%).

Question 03: How do you perceive your level in English?

The purpose of this question is to know the learner's attitude towards their level in English.

Table 2.3: Student's perception of their level in English

Levels	Number	Percentage
Advanced	06	15%
Intermediate	07	17.50%
Beginner	27	67.50%
Total	**40**	**100%**
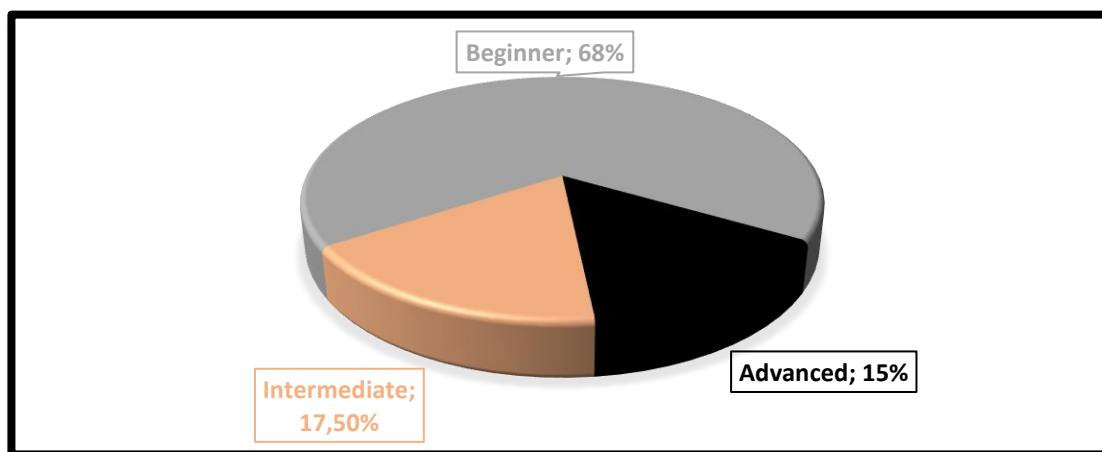
Figure2.3: Student's perception of their level in English

The outcomes show that (15%) of the sample are in advanced level, (17.50%) are in intermediate level and (67.50%) are beginners.

Question 04: What are the difficulties you face while learning English?

This question aims to find out the kind of difficulties that the learners face while learning English.

Table2.4: Learning English difficulties

Options	Numbers	percentage
Do not understand what the teacher is saying.	04	10%
Be confused in applying rules	16	40%
Do not manage to communicate in English	05	12.50%
Mother tongue interference	12	30%
Be confused in applying rules+ Mother tongue interference	02	05%
Do not manage to communicate in English+ Mother tongue interference	01	2.50%
Total	**40**	**100%**
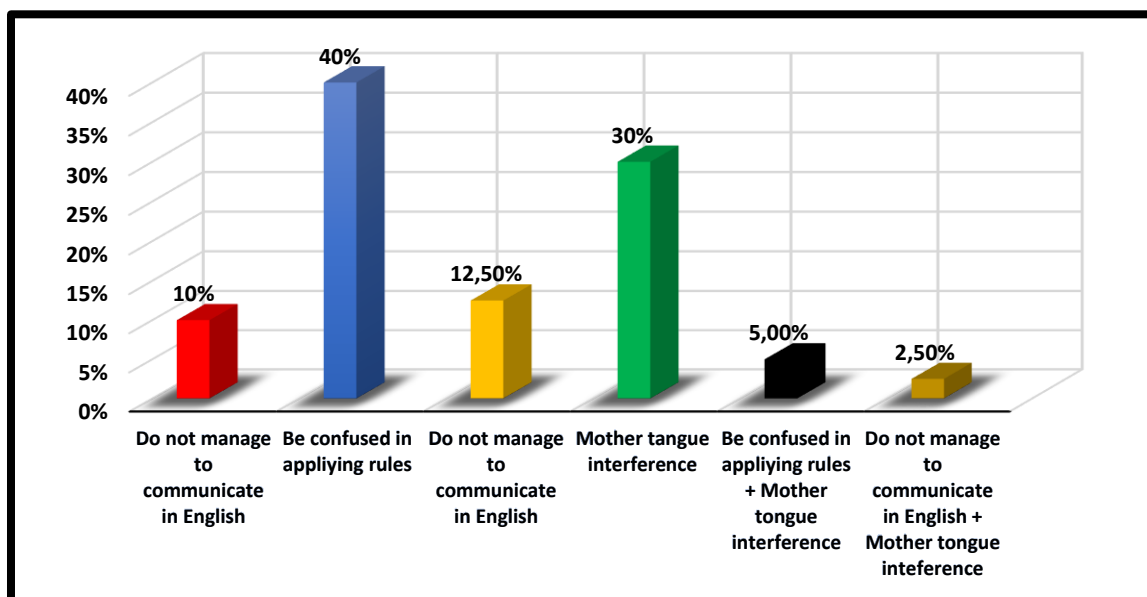
Figure 2.4: Learning English difficulties

The findings reveal that (10%) of the sample find difficulties in understanding the teacher, (40%) of them face problems in applying English rules, (12.50%) have issues in communicating in English. Whereas, (30%) of the learners get affected by their mother tongue. Indeed, we can notice that (07.50%) face more than one hindrance while learning English.

Question 05: Do you face difficulties to stay in the same pace as your classmates?

This question was asked to examine whether the learners have difficulties to keep up with their classmates.

Table 2.5: Learners attitude towards the difficulties they face

Option	Number	Percentage
Yes	05	12.50%
No	35	87.50%
Total	**40**	**100%**
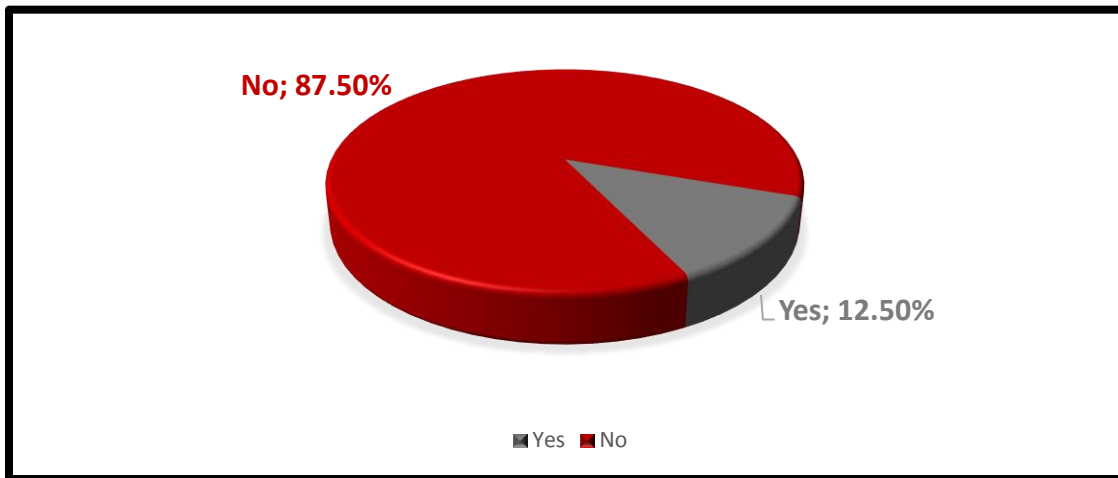
Figure 2.5: Learners' attitude towards the difficulties they face

From the figure above we can see that (87.50%) of the learners are able to stay in the same speed with their classmates, whereas, (12.50%) are not.

Question 2.6: What are the main features that affect the learning process?

The purpose behind this question is to know about what could affect learners while learning English.

Table 2.6: Hindrances features for the learning process

Option	participants	Percentage
The psychological features	13	32.50%
The environmental features	27	67.50%
Total	**40**	**100%**
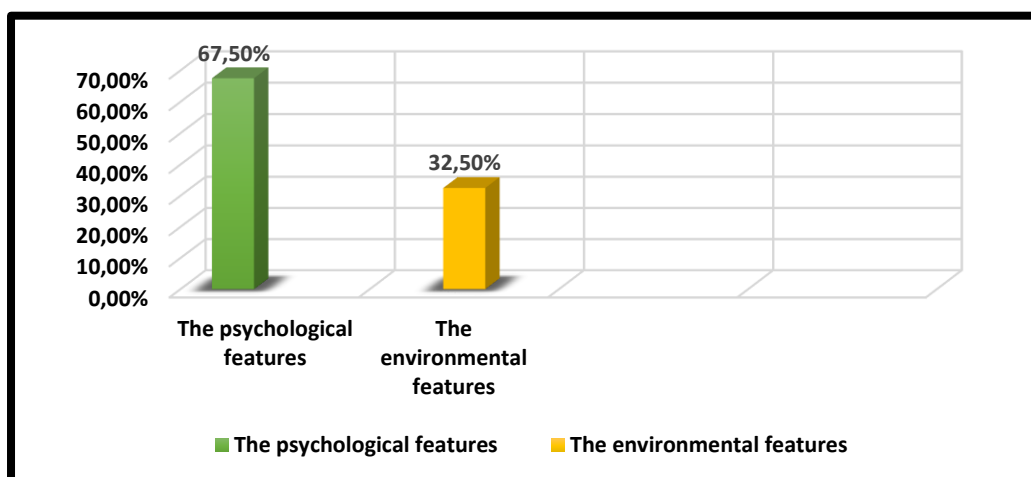
Figure 2.6: Hindrances features for the learning process

According to the bar chart and the table overhead which are comparing between the psychological and the environmental features, we can recognize that the psychological features take the biggest part in affecting the learning process.

Question 07: What may hinder the learner in learning English?

This question aims to show the possible obstacles that could prevent the student from learning English.

Table 2.7: Learners' personal obstacles in learning English

Option	Number	Percentage
Lack of motivation	23	57.50%
Attention problems	11	27.50%
Difficulties to learn a foreign language	06	15%
Total	**40**	**100%**
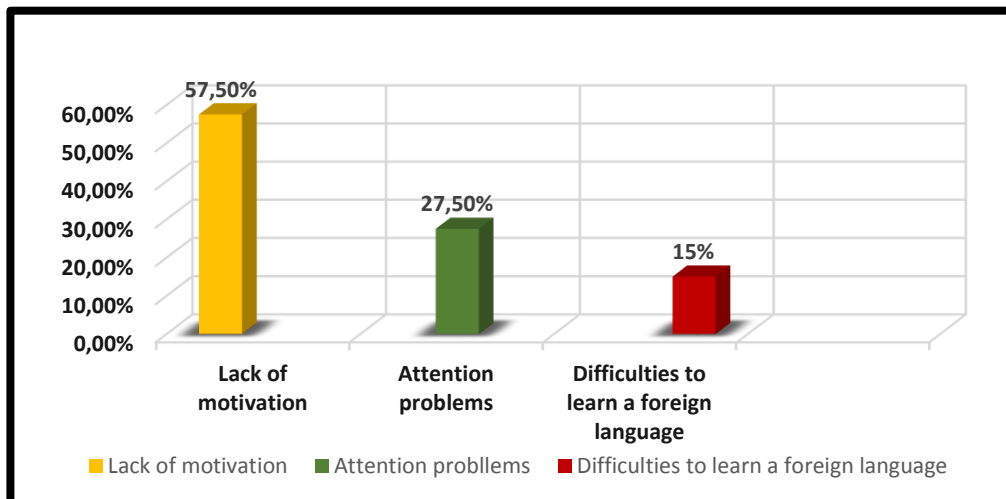
Figure 2.7: Learners' personal obstacles in learning English

Following the bar graph, we can observe that the majority of the students which represents (57.50%) claim that lack of motivation is what prevent them from learning English, whereas, (27.50%) of the population consider the attention problems as the main obstacle for them. However, (15%) state that what prevent them the most is facing difficulties to learn a foreign language.

Question 08: What are the strategies you follow to cope with the situation?

The last question is closely related to the problematic. It aims to find out the different strategies that students follow when they cannot stay in the same pace as their classmates

Table 2.8: Learners' strategies

Options	Number	Percentage
Ask your teacher to explain again	15	37.50%
Ask your classmates to clarify things for you	08	20%
You pretend that you get the message, then you go home and make research by your own	04	10%
Write down all the key words	04	10%
Ask your teacher to explain again + Ask your classmates to clarify things for you	04	10%
Ask your classmates to clarify things for you + You pretend that you get the message, then you go home and make research by your own	02	05%
Ask your classmates to clarify things for you + Write down all the key words	01	2.50%
Ask your teacher to explain again + Ask your classmates to clarify things for you + Write down all the key words	01	2.50%
Ask your teacher to explain again + Ask your classmates to clarify things for you + You pretend that you get the message, then you go home and make research by your own	01	2.50%
Total	**40**	**100%**
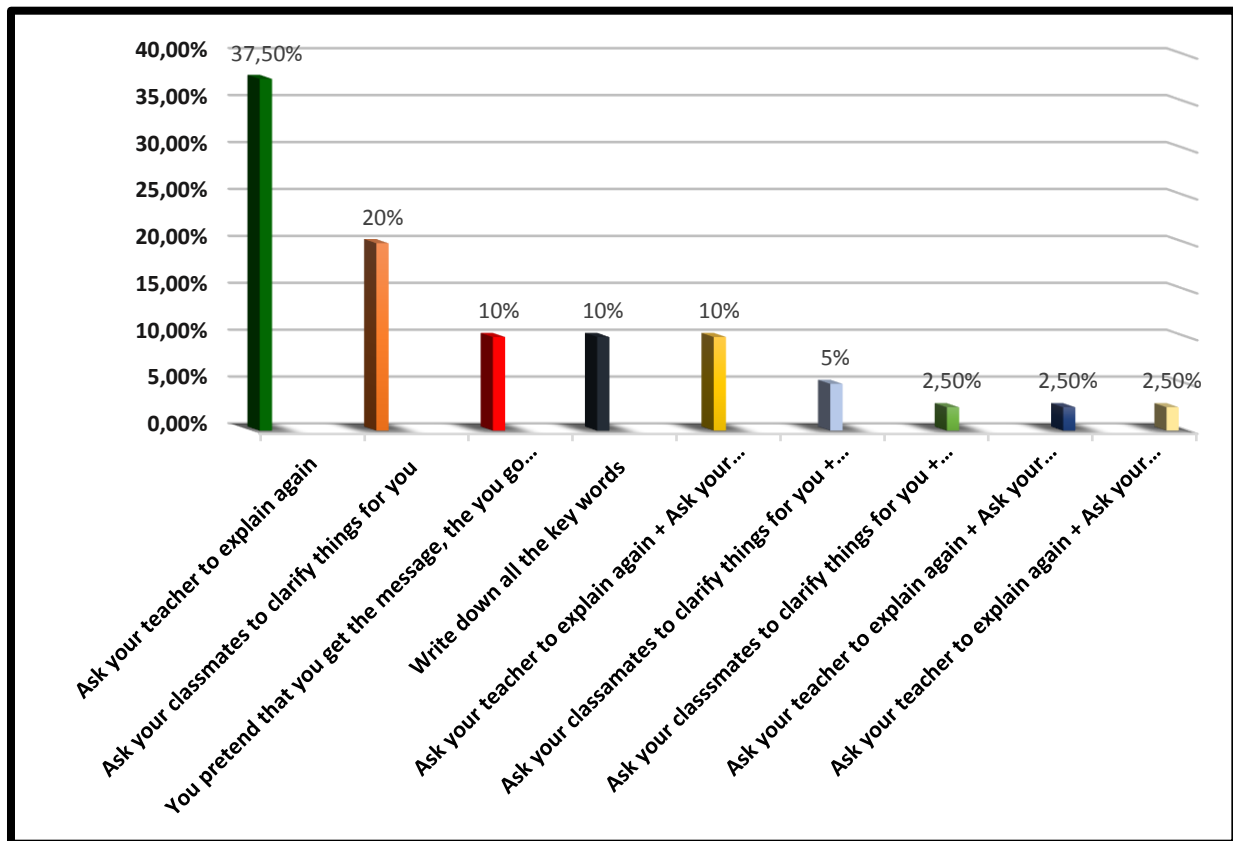
Figure 2.8: Learners' strategies

The results in the bar graph above exhibit the strategies students follow to cope with the situation. Indeed, (37.50%) of the sample prefer asking their teacher to explain again, (20%) choose to ask their classmates to clarify things for them. However, the last two options (pretend that they get the message, then go home and make their own research or write down all the key words) share the same rate which represents (10%) for each one. Since we did not restrict the participants, some of them picked more than one answer. Four learners (10%) choose both to ask their teacher to explain again and ask their classmates to clarify things for them. Two students which represent (05%) of the population like to combine between asking their classmates and pretending that they understand the lesson then go back home to do their own research. In addition, one student (2.50%) said that he relies on asking his classmates to clarify things for him and write down all the key words. Furthermore, two students like to use more than two strategies. The first one, it represents the rate of (2.50%) claimed that he prefers to ask

his teacher to explain again, ask his classmates to clarify things for him and write down all the key words. The other one (2.50%) chooses to ask his teacher to explain again, ask his classmates to clarify things for him and pretend that he gets the message, then he goes home and make his own research.

2.7 Description of the Teachers' Questionnaire

The questionnaire is submitted to seven (07) teachers from the department of English. It contains three parts. The first part is devoted to "general information", it consists of three (3) closed-ended questions and they have been asked in order to have an overview about the respondents.

However, the second part is for the teachers' attitude towards their students inside the classroom. It consists of three open-ended questions which are asked to gather information concerning the difficulties teachers face while dealing with slow learners.

The third part which is composed of one closed-ended and two open-ended questions devoted to obtain detailed information on teachers' opinion about slow learners.

2.8 The Analysis of Teachers' Questionnaire

The questionnaire is submitted to seven teachers from English department.

Question 01: Participants' degree

This question was submitted to have a general information about the research participants.

Table 2.9: Participants' degree

Option	Number	Percentage
Bachelor	00	00%
Magister	05	71%
Doctorate	02	29%
Total	**07**	**100%**
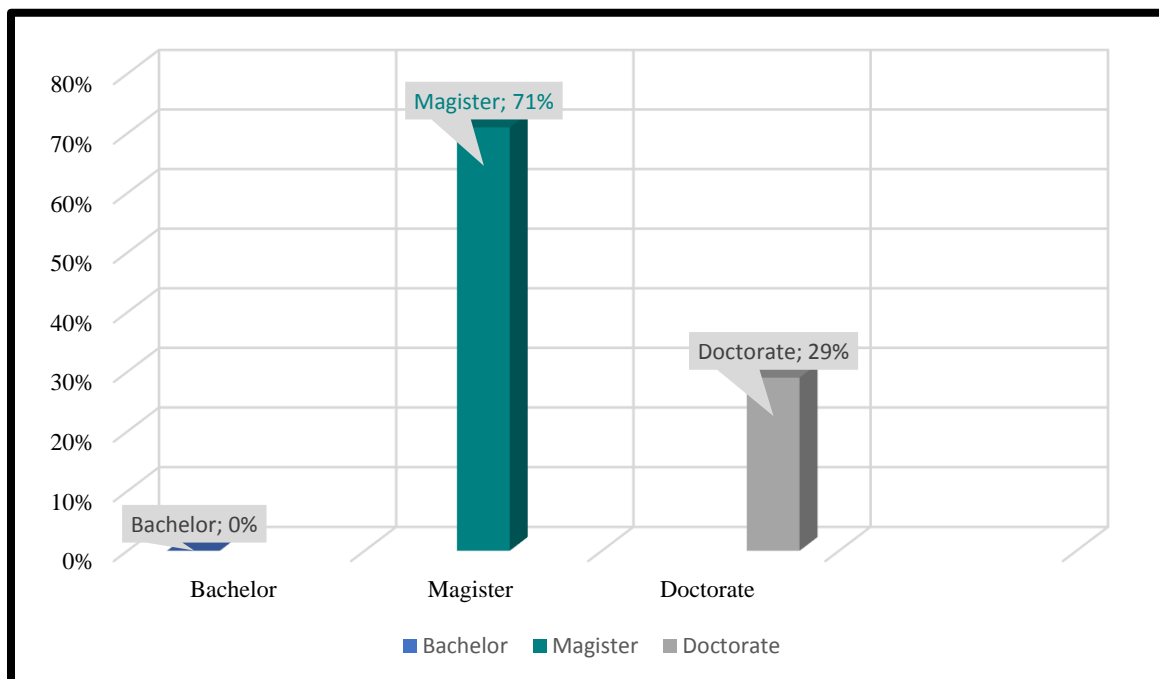
Figure2.9: Participant degree

According to the bar chart above, (71%) of our participants have the magister degree and (29%) have doctorate.

Question 02: How many years have you been teaching English?

This question is asked to know the experience of teachers in the field of teaching English.

Table2.10: Teachers' experience in teaching

Option	Number	Percentage
(5-10) years	02	28.57%
(10-15) years	03	42.86%
More than 15 years	02	28.57%
Total	**07**	**100%**
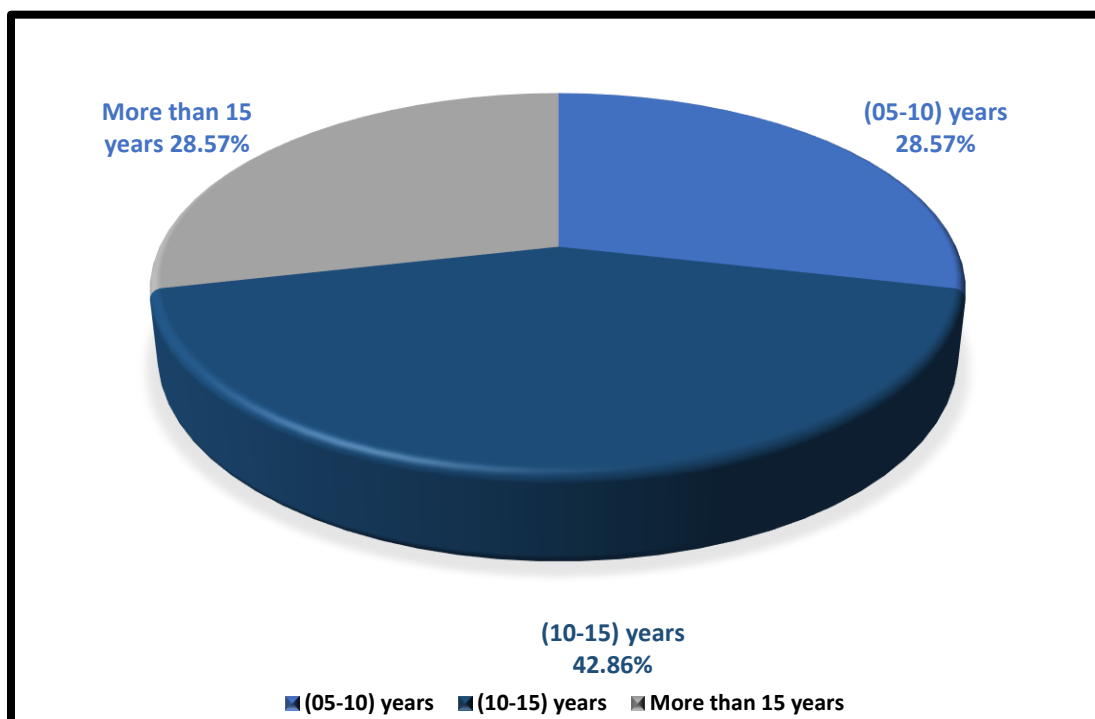
Figure2.10: Teachers' experience in teaching

The results shown in the pie chart above revealed that three teachers have ten to fifteen years of teaching experience who represent the rate of (42.86%). Additionally, two teachers (28.57%) state that they have from five to ten years in the teaching field, and the last two teachers have more than 15 years of teaching which share the same rate as the previous answer (28.57%).

Question 03: **How can you recognize slow learners in the classroom?**

This question was asked to see how teachers can notice slow learners' behaviors inside the classroom.

Table 2.11: Slow learners' behaviors

Option	Number	Percentage
Taking too much time to understand what the lesson is about	01	14.29%
They cannot concentrate for a long time	1	14.29%
They get bored easily	00	00%
Taking too much time to understand what the lesson is about + They cannot concentrate for a long time	3	42.84%
Taking too much time to understand what the lesson is about + They get bored easily	1	14.29%
Taking too much time to understand what the lesson is about + They cannot concentrate for a long time + They get bored easily	1	14.29%
Total	**07**	**100%**
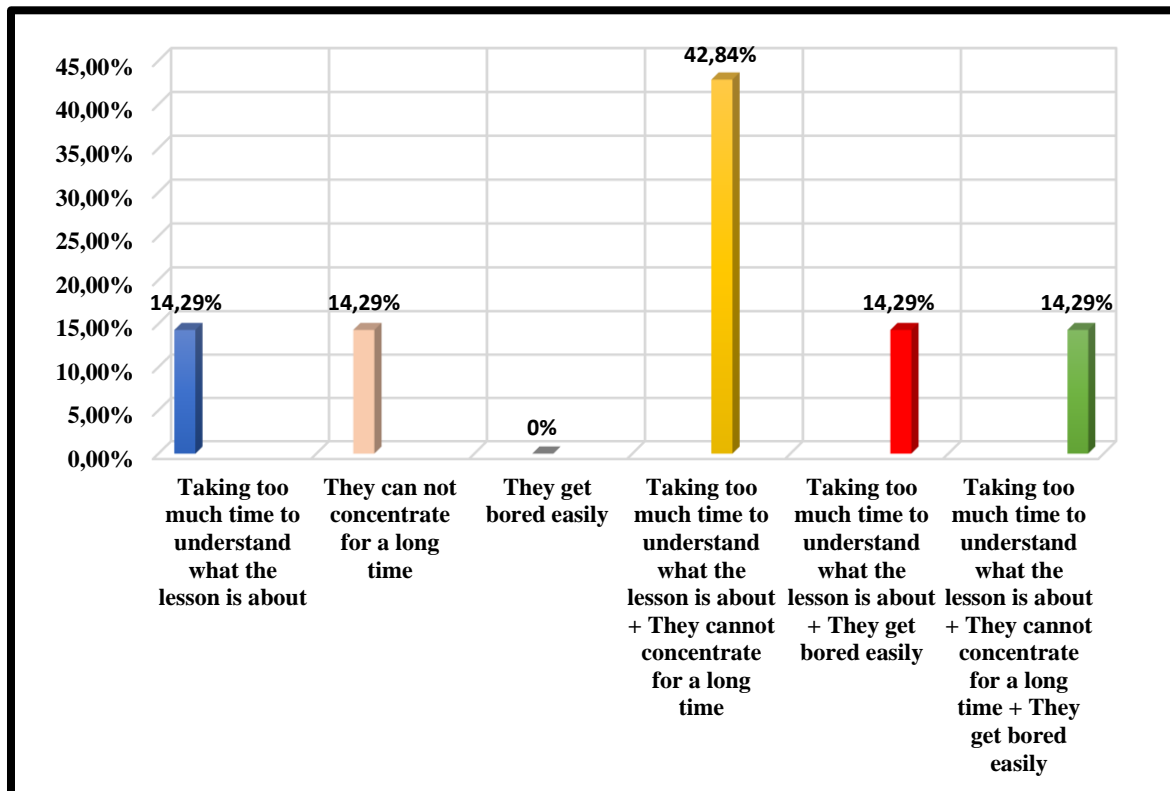
Figure2.11: Slow learners' behaviors

Student's behavior inside the classroom can be the main co-factor that help teachers to identify their learners' categories. As the results shown in the graph above, one teacher (14.29%) said that taking too much time to understand the lesson is what makes him recognize slow learners. Another teacher claimed that he can notice slow learners by their lack of concentration, which represents (14.29%) of the sample. However, the majority of the participants stated that they can notice slow learners from the first and the second behaviors (Taking too much time to understand the lesson and the lack of concentration) in the rate of (42.84%). In addition, one teacher (14.29%) finds that Taking too much time to understand the lesson and getting bored easily are the behaviors that help him to notice slow learners, while the last teacher (14.29%) combines between the three options, since they were not restricted to choose one answer. Though, none of the participants has chosen the third option.

Question 04: Do you have difficulties in dealing with slow learners?

The purpose behind this question is to know how often the teachers have difficulties with the slow learners.

Table 2.12: Teachers' attitude towards slow learners

Option	Number	Percentage
Always	02	28.58%
Not all the time	05	71.42%
Rarely	00	00%
Total	**07**	**100%**
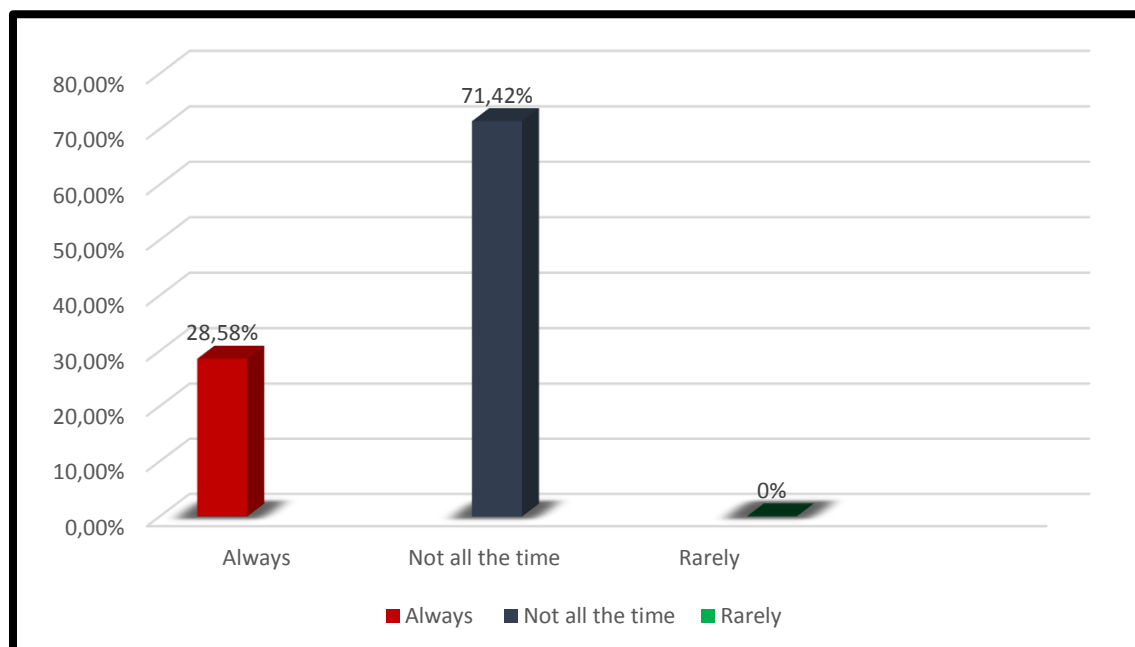
Figure2.12: Teachers' attitude towards slow learners

The returns demonstrate that five teachers which represent (71.42%) of the sample claimed that they do not face difficulties with slow learners all the time. Whereas, two teachers (28.58%) stated that they always struggle while dealing with them. However, none of the teachers have chosen the third option.

Question 05: What kind of difficulties you face with slow learners?

This question aims to know the difficulties that could face teachers while dealing with slow learners.

Table2.13: Teaching slow learners' difficulties

Option	Number	Percentage
They impede the lesson	00	0%
Consuming too much time in explaining the lesson	03	42.86%
Need extra effort dealing with them	03	42.86%
Consuming too much time in explaining the lesson + Need extra effort dealing with them	01	14.28%
Total	**07**	**100%**
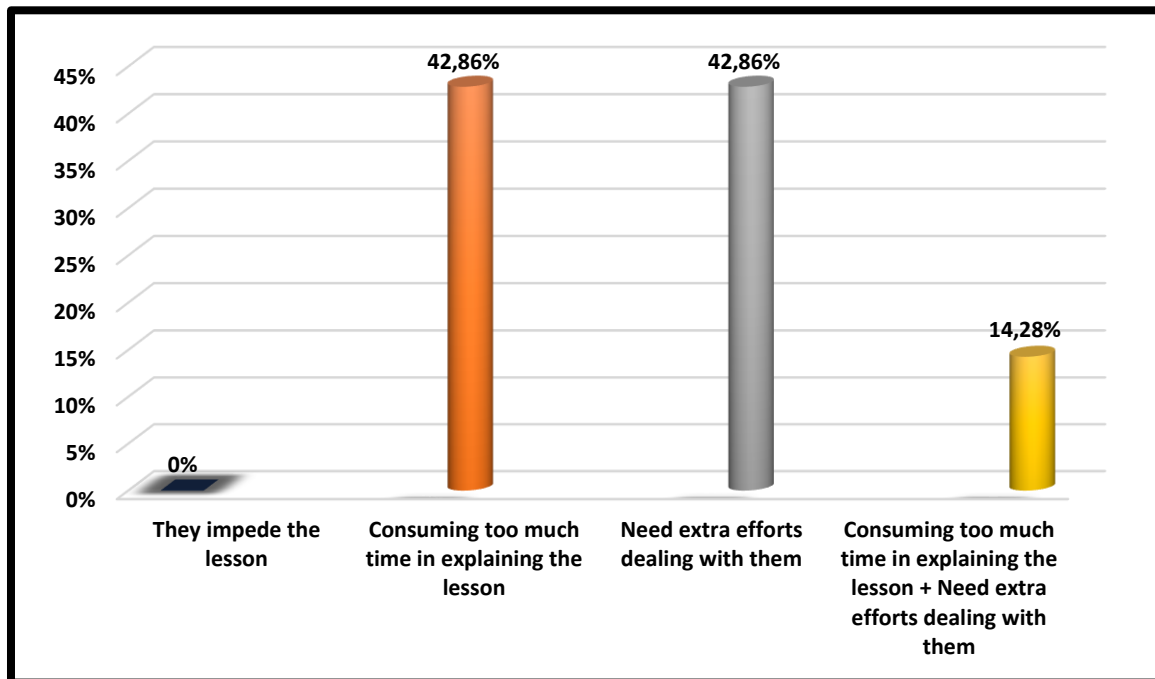
Figure2.13: Teaching slow learners' difficulties

The results clearly reveal that three teachers have agreed that consuming too much time in explaining the lesson is what impede them the most while presenting the lecture in the rate of (42.86%). On the other hand, three other teachers which share the same percentage as the previous answer (42.86%) stated that they need extra efforts while dealing with slow learners. Whereas, one teacher (14.28%) find that consuming too much time in explaining the lesson and giving extra efforts are the main difficulties that he could face with slow learners. However, none of the teachers have selected the first option.

Question06: What is the most effective way to make slow learner cope with the learning process?

This question was asked to investigate teachers' strategies to make the slow learner fit the learning process in the same rate as his/her classmates.

Table 2.14: Teachers' strategies

Option	Number	Percentage
Create a suitable environment	00	0%
Make them work in group	01	14.28%
Give them interest	00	0%
Rely on advanced learners	00	0%
Create a suitable environment + Make them work in group	02	28.58%
Make them work in group + Give them interest	02	28.58%
Create a suitable environment + Make them work in group + Rely on advanced learners	01	14.28%
All the options	01	14.28%
Total	**07**	**100%**
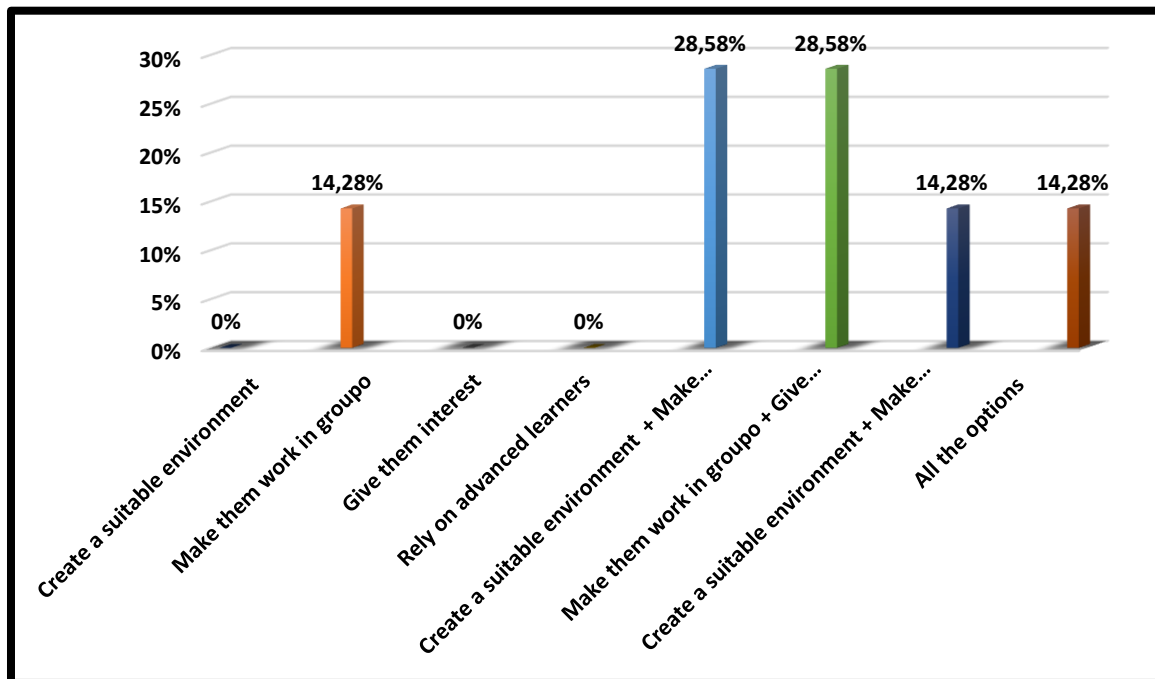
Figure 2.14: Teachers' strategies

The outcomes reveal that one teacher (14.28%) find that working in group is a good strategy to improve slow learners, while the remain six teachers find that working with more than one strategy would be more affective. Two teachers which represent (28.58%) like to create a suitable environment for slow learners and make them work in group. Furthermore, according to another two teachers (28.58%), giving extra attention to their slow learners and make them work in group are very useful strategies to deal with them. Whereas, (14.28%) of the teachers intend to create a suitable environment for their slow learners, make them work in group and rely on advanced learners to clarify things for them. However, one teacher which represent the rate of (14.28%) prefers to use the four strategies provided for him.

Question 07: Do you think classroom interaction is important in the teaching process?

This question determines teachers' opinion about the importance of classroom interaction in teaching slow learners.

Table2.15: Teachers attitude towards classroom interaction

Option	Number	Percentage
Yes	07	100%
No	0	0%
Total	**07**	**100%**
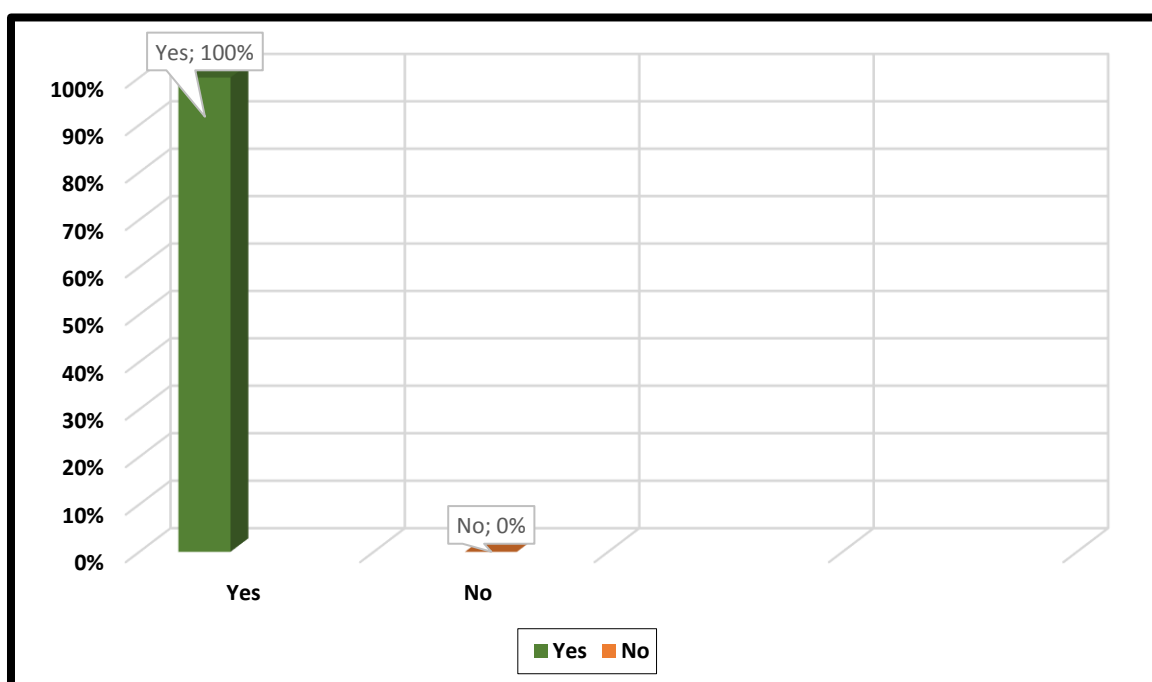
Figure 2.15: Teachers attitude towards classroom interaction

As the result reveals in the bar graph above, All the teachers (100%) agreed that classroom interaction is very important to improve slow learners' capacities.

In fact, Teachers somehow agreed that teaching nowadays is supposed to be learner-centered which is a proven way to keep learners engaged in the learning process. According to them learners should be involved by working collaboratively and interactively with their peers. Moreover, some teachers think that classroom interaction attracts the learners and make them

feel concerned since it gives the opportunity to speak and integrate with the teacher and the other students. They also consider classroom interaction as an opportunity to determine their students' level, needs and lacks.

Question 08: **Do you think they need a special attention?**

This question is devoted to know whether slow learners should be treated in a special manner inside the classroom.

Table2.16: Slow learners' attention needs

Option	Number	Percentage
Yes	05	71.42%
No	02	28.58%
Total	**07**	**100%**
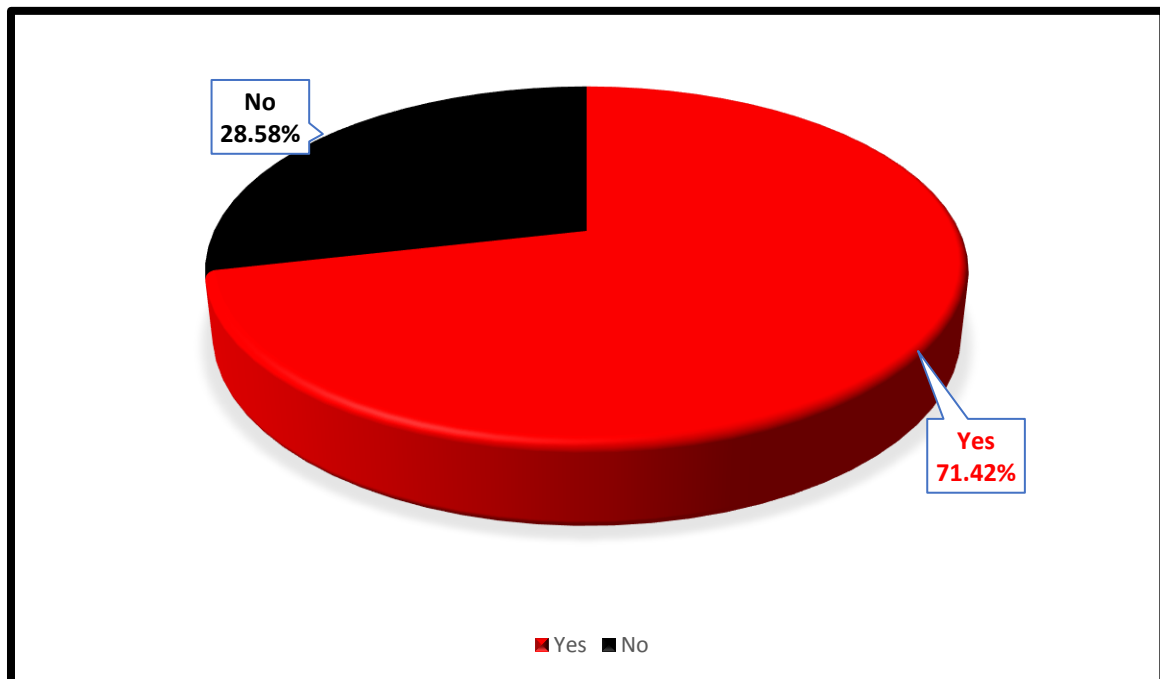
Figure 2.16: Slow learners' attention needs

The figure displays that the majority of teachers (71.42%) do agree that slow learners need special treatment. Some of them claimed that slow learners have special psychological aspects which affect negatively on their capacities and performance, that is why it is important to know how to motivate them. Meanwhile, other teachers think that they can cope with such situation by applying special teaching techniques derived from new trends of teaching such as adopting lessons designed for all learner's levels and focusing on group works which will create a pleasant atmosphere where all the learners are included whatever their level is. For other teachers, it is important to show slow learners' special attention in order to help them believe that they can learn in the same pace as their classmates. Nevertheless, two teachers which represent (28.58%) of the sample do not think that slow learners need special interest. According to them showing special attention would create a problem for those students, on the other hand they think that they are responsible and aware enough to rely on themselves.

2.8 Conclusion

Through this analytic chapter the investigation has been performed by using a questionnaire for both students and teachers in order to have an overview about the multiple kind of challenges that learners face in learning EFL. This comprises a qualitative and a quantitative methodology, a broad description of the research tools and the population besides the pilot study. The feedback of students' questionnaire revealed that number of students may be considered as slow learners. Besides the teacher's questionnaire which stated some useful techniques and strategies to overcome this situation. Furthermore, the students and teachers' questionnaires that have been shown will be analyzed and interpreted in the following chapter.

3.1 Introduction

The goal and objectives of this chapter is to represent the interpretation of the results obtained from students and teachers' questionnaires. It also sheds light on teachers' strategies to fulfil students' need to help them overpass the challenges they face while learning English language. Furthermore, some recommendations are provided to students in order to enhance their learning capacities.

3.2 Interpretation of students' questionnaire

The outcomes of students' questionnaire clearly reveal that first-year students do face challenges and difficulties in learning English as a foreign language. The findings of the first question expound that Male (62.50%) face much more difficulties in learning EFL than Female (37.50%) and this can be interpreted as a fact that girls generally appreciate learning foreign languages more than boys.

In the second question, the majority of the sample (95%) has claimed that they have chosen to study English based on their personal choice. This can be understood as a sign of their awareness of the importance of mastering English language since it is considered currently as the language of communication, technology and science in the world.

In question three, the participants were asked about how they perceive their level in English; most of them (67.50%) stated that they have an average level in English and that can be due to their familiarity with the culture of English language which make them have a significant background. Indeed, (17.50%) see themselves as beginners, it might be because they were not in literary stream at the secondary school. Whereas, (15%) consider themselves in advanced level which can be related to their rich background or to their high capacity of acquiring matters.

The following question is devoted to know the difficulties learners face while learning EFL, the main difficulties that student have revealed are getting confuse in applying rules (40%) and get affected by the mother tongue (30%), this can be a sign of their lack of grammar and vocabulary. Moreover, some students (10%) revealed that their ultimate difficulty is when they do not understand what the teacher is saying which can lead to break the students' concentration. Whereas, other students (12.50%) stated that their biggest difficulty is when they do not manage to communicate in English which is kind of related to mother tongue interference. However, the rest of the students (7.50%) do face more than one difficulty while acquiring EFL.

Meanwhile, a high rate of the sample (87.50%) tends to have no difficulties to stay in the same pace as their classmates, although, they mentioned in the previous question that they do which create a contradiction and this can be a sign that those students are not aware that they have problems in learning. However, being not aware of the situation can be an obstacle for them to increase their level in English.

Furthermore, the majority of students believe that the environmental features are what affect them the most while learning EFL, this can be related to the feedback that they receive from their parents, teachers and classmates. Unlike, the rest of the students whom claimed that they get affected by the psychological features while learning, it is because of their mental capacities which could impact on their acquirement.

When the participants were asked about the hindrances that may impede the learning process, (57.50%) of the students stated that the lack of motivation is what prevent it the most which was expected, since moving to university is a new experience for the learners, they supposed to be in their highest level of motivation. Meanwhile, (27.50%) claimed that attention problems are a main obstacle, this matter might find explanation in the lack of concentration or

in the learners' behavior itself. However, only (15%) think that having difficulties to learn a foreign language is what hinder the learning process, in other word, adopting new concepts, new vocabulary and new grammar rules could hinder the progression of the learning process.

At the finale stage, students were asked about their attitude towards the difficulties they face while learning EFL. From this perspective, the researchers equipped some strategies to the participants in order to know how they cope with the learning process. Consequently, (37.50%) of the respondents opt for asking their teacher to explain again, this can be explained that learners appreciate the teachers' feedback and they also consider interacting with the teacher as an appropriate method that could help them in learning a foreign language. Furthermore, (20%) prefer to ask their classmates to clarify things for them, this might be because they feel at ease when they interact with their classmates since they are in the same level.

These confessions clarify and spot light on the fact that when students are aware of the problems they face while learning, they would be more concern about the strategies they should apply to cope with such situation.

3.3 Interpretation of teachers' questionnaire

The results obtained from the teacher's questionnaire declared that five teachers (71%) have magister degree, while two teachers (29%) have doctorate degree and they are highly experience in teaching. Furthermore, the teacher's responses about their experience in teaching have revealed that they have an acceptable acquaintance with teaching English as a foreign language.

In section two, teachers were asked about their attitude towards their learners. First, teachers agreed that student's behavior is what make them recognize slow learners. For some teachers when the learner takes too much time to understand the lesson is a sign that he is having difficulties to adopt matters which can be related to his limited mental capacities. In addition,

other teachers consider the lack of concentration as the main factor that could help them to identify slow learners inside the classroom and this can refer to their short attention span i.e they cannot concentrate for a long time. However, the rest of the teachers said that it is not enough to recognize slow learners from just one conductance this is why they choose to rely on more than one sign.

The following question was dedicated to know how often do teachers face difficulties with slow learners. The majority of them do not face difficulties all the time and this can be due to their abilities to cooperate with this category of students. Whereas, the other teachers clarified that they always find obstacles in dealing with slow learners which could prevent the learning process for both of them.

At the final stage of this section, the results clearly reveal the kind of obstructions that the teacher experience while teaching slow learners. The teachers' responses were mainly concerned about the two final options, consuming too much time while explaining the lesson which could create a problem for the teacher to balance between the slow and the other learners. Besides, teaching slow learners demand extra efforts compared to average students. In other word, the teacher will be obliged to explain several times which could make the teaching process much harder for him.

The results also suggest in section three that the teachers are very supportive because they help students to overpass the obstacles they face while learning EFL. In fact, they apply effective strategies in order to fill their students' needs. For instance, all the teachers agreed that working in group is the most efficient way to make slow learners fit in the learning process, because it reinforces the students' capacities and help them to interact with advanced learners. This is another method that some teachers rely on to help slow learners; actually, they are allowed to exchange and have support their ideas. Moreover, other teachers think that they

would help slow learners by creating a suitable environment. In such situation, learners feel comfortable, motivated and ready to give more.

In fact, all Teachers (100%) agreed that classroom interaction is important to provide slow learners with the help they need in order to be more productive. According to some teachers, learners should be involved by working collaboratively and interactively with their peers. Moreover, other teachers think that classroom interaction attract the learners and make them feel concerned since it gives the opportunity to speak and integrate with the teacher and the other students. They also consider classroom interaction as an opportunity to determine their students' level, needs and lacks.

In the last question, most of the teachers are likely aware that slow learners do need special interest inside the classroom. Some teachers think that they can cope with such situation by applying special teaching techniques derived from new trends of teaching such as adopting lessons designed for all learners' levels and focusing on group work which will create a pleasant atmosphere where all the learners are concerned. For other teachers, it is important to show slow learners' special attention in order to help them believe that they can learn in the same pace as their classmates. Nevertheless, two teachers do not think that slow learners need special interest. According to them showing special attention would create a problem for those students, on the other hand teachers think that they are responsible and aware enough to rely on themselves.

The outcomes from the students and teachers' questionnaires are likely to support the research studies, by emphasizing that there are slow learners among the participants whom face different kind of challenges in learning EFL.

3.4 Suggestions and recommendations

Learning English as a foreign language is very hard task especially for slow learners. It requires a mutual contribution between learners and teachers. Therefore, the student cannot achieve all what he/she wants alone. For that reason, a number of procedures, strategies and activities could be taken into account once it talks about teaching English for slow learners inside the classroom. The current studies and as well as the results taken from the questionnaires have paved the way to think of some solutions for both teachers and learners to deal with the situation. In fact, the following suggestions and recommendations aim in one way or in another to solve the stated problematic.

3.4.1 Teachers' strategies to improve slow learners' level

Teachers have a main role in the teaching / learning process and the effective teaching is one of the key propellers for school improvement. Every teacher faces the problem of dealing with slow learners. Each classroom consists of gifted, average, below average students and slow learners. The teachers may take a variety of approaches to teach important subject matter to them that may enhance the interest of slow learners and help them get involved in learning English. These students need special instructional methods, frequent feedback, corrective instruction, and modified materials. Some methods include developing lessons that incorporate students' interest, needs, and experiences. This helps to address the short attention spans of the slow learners. Besides, they will feel that these instructions have been designed for their specific interests.

3.4.1.1 Keep students' attention

In order to keep slow learners' attention, the teachers should vary in his techniques by switching from lecture to discussion than to practice i.e each time, the teacher should use different skills to teach and brings something new to his students like individual, pairs and

group work which allowed the student to express his ideas and offer the opportunity for him to see the same content presented in different ways. In the same manner, this could increase the opportunities to accommodate the different learning styles and stay at the same pace with the rest of the students. Furthermore, the teacher is obliged to have students' attention focused on him before he starts the lesson; instead of teaching with sophisticated language, he can use simple language and speak slower, teach new vocabulary, review and recycle on regular basis. This can be very helpful to foster long-term memory for slow learners.

3.4.1.2 Using audio-visual aids

Using audio-visual materials could be among the important skills of learning a foreign language. Many students rely on audio-visual tools as a technique to memorize matters. This allows slow learners to learn better by seeing and hearing than by reading. Indeed, emphasizing concrete and visual forms of content helps compensate difficulty slow learners have in grasping abstract ideas and concepts.

3.4.1.3 Repetition

Repetition is something important and considered as useful technique. The teacher might feel like he is saying the same thing over and over, but it helps make a concept more concrete. A slow learner with limited reasoning skills will take longer to comprehend what may seem easy and almost natural to other students. Thus, the teacher should repeat each learning point more than he normally would because slow learners need to hear information a few times more than other students in order to understand it.

3.4.1.4 Positive attitude

Teacher attitudes can have a profound impact on students'' educational growth, besides they should work on an attitude that all students can achieve to the teacher's level of expectations thereby giving the sense of confidence too. Positive teacher attitude is a great asset in teaching and learning life and this will help teachers cope with both fast and slow learners

and influence their academic performance. Chauhdary and Hussain (2012) highlighted that the teachers' positive attitude towards slow learners made them active i.e the success of educating slow learners depends on the teachers' awareness, competences and positive attitude.

In fact, all types of labeling such as "stupid", "the slow learner, "the back bencher" should be avoided by the teacher as this may lower the student self-concept, self-esteem and lead to frustration. In stand of that, the teacher should show them care, interest, support and help them to improve their self-confidence.

In addition to the previous strategies, the teacher can also rely on:

3.4.1.5 Group work

Group work is considered as another strategy that may help learners fulfil good achievement in acquiring foreign language and engage them to use English in the classroom. It is also a good method to manage large classes with different abilities in which average students work with slow students (Barker and westrup, 2000). When students work together, they will encourage, support and motivate each other. Meanwhile group work is one of the most effective procedures that the teacher can establish to develop the students' learning capacities this is because cooperative situations have a positive attitude on students.

3.4.1.6 Motivation

The word "motivation" is used to describe a drive or need to do something. Harmer (1001:51) stated that motivation is "some kind of internal drives which pushes someone to do things in order to achieve something". Which means that motivation comprises psychological and educative desires that have to be present along the whole lesson. It is the teacher's responsibility to wake up the cognitive interest of the students. Meanwhile, the student should be motivated and rewarded for every success. If the teacher appreciates him with encouraging words and give confidence, the slow learner will definitely come out with flying colors and the

sky will be the limit for them. Besides, when students are given more advanced opportunities to learn, they can make more progress than might previously have been thought possible. This is why teachers should never stop searching for better ways to educate, engage, and motivate students.

3.4.1.7 Classroom interaction

Classroom interaction is a term refers to the interaction between teacher and learner or between learner and learner in the classroom that allows enhancing the students' capacities and get involved in the learning process. It is considered also as a key to effective teaching and learning the foreign language. In addition, classroom interaction is a task that help students to share their views, develop their thinking and create a pleasant atmosphere for discussions. Furthermore, it improves the relationship between teacher and students in which the teacher will be able to recognize better their learners' needs and lacks in order to help those who face difficulties in learning foreign language. Besides, it gives the opportunity for learners to exchange their knowledge which pave the way for slow learners to get influenced by averaged learners, in which the latter tries to explain things that the former does not understand with their teacher. Therefore, learners may correct one another's mistakes before the teacher does, or at least learn from the mistakes they made in order not to repeat them.

3.4.2 Students' strategies

From the part of the slow learners, they have to listen carefully to their teachers, ask them if they didn't understand the lesson and interact regularly as an attempt to get rid of their shyness and hesitation. They should make efforts to develop their capacities by practicing and following teachers' strategies. Create their own environment with their classmates, listening to recorded materials, watching films or short stories and after that discussing about that helps to integrate abilities. Furthermore, repetition is one of the simplest ways to memorize any new piece of knowledge, it is identical action over and over helps to build long- term memory for

the slow learners. All in all, the slow learners are normal students they need just extra efforts to cope with the learning process and following some techniques to facilitate the acquirement of foreign language.

To sum up, much can be done by teachers to help slow learners inside the classroom. They can improve their teaching methods, the tasks they assign to their students and the way they assess their work. Below are presented some strategies and ideas that could be employed by educators to cope with such students.

1) Employ simple language while speaking and try to speak more slowly and make the students motivated.

2) Tables, charts, graphs and pictures are helpful tools for presenting the new material

3) The teaching materials should also be concrete and simple.

5) The material should be presented by employing various teaching methods to meet different language styles (orally, visually, etc.)

6) When dividing the class into groups, teachers had better pair the slow learner with a strong learner to guide him/her.

7) Summarizing the key points at the end of the lesson is also helpful.

.3.5 Conclusion

This chapter has been submitted to interpret both students and teachers' questionnaires. Based on the results that have been collected, some recommendations have been equipped for English language teachers in order to reinforce the teaching process and making their students able to overcome the challenges that prevent them from acquiring English language. Furthermore, the researchers have revealed the importance of group work, classroom interaction and motivation in enhancing learners' abilities to cope with the situation.

General conclusion

Learning a foreign language has some obvious benefits, however, it is challenging for the slow learners for their limited reasoning skills and their intellectual abilities. This extended essay shed light on the various challenges that could face the slow learners while acquiring English as a foreign language and teachers' attitude towards these learners. It has dealt with first year LMD students at the department of English in Belhadj Bouchaib University Center. The fundamental purpose of this study is to investigate about the reasons behind being slow learner and try to provide a suitable solution that can help both teachers and learners to cope with this situation.

Slow learners are very sensitive and self-conscious as they are very well aware of their weakness in comparison with the other learners. They have below average cognitive abilities and struggle to cope up with the traditional demands of the regular class room. Therefore, the first responsibility of the teacher is to help learners be self-confident and make them believe that they are no less than any other learner. Furthermore, the techniques and strategies that should both the learners and teachers follow in order to overpass the difficulties that they face in the learning process.

This research has been divided into three chapters. The first one has been devoted to the importance of learning foreign languages and the reasons that make this language hard for the slow learners. Therefore, the various challenges that could face those learners while acquiring English as foreign language have been exhibited. In fact, English is a fascinating and complex language. Learning English can be a challenge, but that does not mean it has to drag on or be impossible. Each learner adopts different strategies and cope with the difficulties they face. The researchers have also shed light on the importance of teachers' attitude inside the classroom. Actually, Teacher attitudes can have a great impact on students' educational growth and may affect the rate of success.

General Conclusion

The second chapter has been designed to describe the methodology used to carry out the practical side of the research in order to analyze the data collected from the questionnaires submitted to teachers and learners. The findings of this chapter revealed that the most hindrance features that could affect the slow learner the most is the environmental feature. The outcomes also showed that classroom interaction is so important to make the learning process more successful for the slow learners.

The third chapter is devoted to data interpretation and recommendations where the researchers have suggested a number of recommendations be applied. Accordingly, some useful strategies to make the slow learners cope with the learning process. In addition to some ways for students to enhance their capacities and some methods to avoid the lack of self-confidence. Learners are appealed to be motivated and ready to participate and share knowledge in group work.

Finally, and based on the outcomes revealed by the questionnaire's outcome, the hypotheses have been proved about the main hindrances, being confused in applying rules was the most hindrance that slow learner face and the second hypothesis was about different strategies suggested to cope with this phenomenon.

This research work has also many limitations. To start with, the results cannot be overgeneralized to all EFL students at the university center at all levels since the study is concerned only with LMD1 students who came from secondary schools. Second, the researchers tried to make a classroom observation but the strike prevented it otherwise would have been more than one instrument in the research. Furthermore, if the researchers have had enough time, they could have enlarged the sample population.

Through this study, the researchers also hope to present some further suggestions and ideas for further research. First, they attempt to suggest an investigation of the negative attitude of the teacher towards the slow learners and how can that affect them.

Second, show the importance of strong interaction between the students and the teachers in order to overpass any difficulty in the learning process.

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<u>**Students questionnaire**</u>

Dear students

      This questionnaire is designed to collect data about main challenges that could face the slow learners in learning EFL. We would be very grateful if you could answer the following questions. Please give your answer sincerely because it will be very helpful for our research. You are allowed to mention more than one option.

                                               Thank you!

<u>Section one: general information</u>

1.Gender: Male ☐   Female ☐

2. Is studying English is a personal choice?

                 Yes ☐   No ☐

<u>Section too: Learners difficulties in learning EFL</u>

3.How do you perceive your level in English?

Advanced ☐   Intermediate ☐   Beginner ☐

4.What are the difficulties you face while learning English?

☐ Do not understand what the teacher is saying

☐ Be confused in applying rules

☐ Do not manage to communicate in English

☐ Mother tongue interference

Others ………………………………………………………………………………

5.Do you face difficulties to stay in the same pace with your classmates?

Yes ☐   No ☐

Why?

……………………………………………………………………………………..

6.In your opinion, what are the main features that affect you while learning EL?

☐ The environmental features

☐ The psychological features

Other?

....

8.According to you, what may hinder (prevent) the learning process?

☐ Lack of motivation

☐ Attention problems

☐ Difficulties to learn a foreign language

Others?

………………………………………………………………………………….

Section three: students' attitude towards learning

9. What are the strategies you follow to cope with the situation?

☐ Ask your teacher to explain again

☐ Ask your classmates to clarify things for you

☐ You pretend that you get the message, then you go home and make your own research

☐ Write down all the key words

Appendix II

The following questionnaire aims at gathering data about the attitude of slow learners. As teachers,we want to know your opinions about this situation and your strategies of teaching inside the classroom.Would you please answer this questionnaire?

Thankyou!

Section one: General information

1.What is your degree?

☐ bachelor   ☐ Magister   ☐ Doctorate

2.How many years have you been teaching English?

☐ (05-10) years   ☐ (10-15) years   ☐ more than 15 years

Section two:Teachers' Attitude

3.How can you recognize slow learner in the classroom?

☐ Taking too much time to understand what the lesson is about

☐ Lack of concentration

☐ Getting bored easily

4.Do you have difficulties in dealing with slow learners inside the classroom?

☐ Always   ☐ Not all the time   ☐ Rarely

5.What kind of difficulties you face with slow learners?

☐ They impede the lesson

☐ Consuming too much time in explaining the lesson

66

☐ Need extra efforts dealing with them

Others? ……………………………………………………………………………

Section three: Teacher's opinion

6.What is the most effective way to make the slow learner cope with the learning process?

☐ Create a suitable environment to learn

☐ Give them interest

☐ Rely on advanced learners

☐ Make them working in group

7.Do you think classroom interaction is important in the teaching process?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

How?

…………………………………………………………………………………….

4.Do you think they need a special attention?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

Why?

…………………………………………………………………………………….

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ملخص

يواجه العديد من متعلمي اللغة الانجليزية كلغة اجنبية العديد من المشاكل والتحديات وخاصة ذوي القدرات المحدودة. تهدف الدراسة الحديثة لفهم سلوكيات وخصائص المتعلمين ذوي القدرات المحدودة بالاضافة لكشف الصعوبات التي يواجهونها أثناء تعلمهم اللغة الانجليزية كلغة اجنبية. كما انها تسلط الضوء على دور المعلمين في تحسين مستوى المتعلمين. وتهدف ايضا الى تزويد المعلمين والمتعلمين باستراتيجيات وحلول للحد من هذه الاشكالية. ومنه يسعى الباحثين من خلال الاستبيان المقدم من طرف الكلية الى طلبة سنة اولى لغة انجليزية وكذا الاساتذة الى التحكم في المنهجية التعليمية كما ونوعا. بناءا على نتائج البحث تم اقتراح بعض الحلول للمعلمين والتي يمكنهم من خلالها مساعدة المتعلمين ذوي القدرات المحدودة على تجاوز العقبات التي تواجههم خلال المرحلة التعليمية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: اللغة الإنجليزية، لغة اجنبية، ذوي القدرات المحدودة، التحديات، الاستراتجيات.

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Résumé

De nombreux apprenants de l'anglais en tant que langue étrangère sont confrontés à moult problèmes et défis, en particulier ceux des compétences réduites. L'objectif de la didactique nouvelle est de comprendre la déontologie de la pédagogie en la matière ainsi que le comportement des apprenants en vue de mettre en évidence les difficultés auxquelles ils font face lors de l'apprentissage de l'anglais en tant que langue étrangère. De surcroit, elle améliore non seulement le niveau des apprenants, mais elle vise également à fournir aux enseignants et aux apprenants des stratégies et des solutions tant au niveau pédagogique qu'au niveau d'apprentissage, et aux enseignants et aux enseignés. Par le truchement d'un questionnaire envoyé par le collège aux étudiants de première année en langue anglaise sera un viatique invitant les enseignants à maitriser la méthodologie d'apprentissage et par la même élaborer un canevas didactique idoine permettant aux apprenants de niveau qui laisse à désirer à surmonter les obstacles qu'ils rencontrent pendant la phase d'apprentissages.

Mots clés : Anglais, langue étrangère, ceux des compétences réduites, défis, des stratégies.

Summary

In the process of learning a foreign language, Learners may face a wide range of obstacles and challenges especially those with low competences. The present study attempts to understand slow learners' characteristics and to expose the difficulties they face while learning English as foreign language. In addition, it spots the light on teachers' role in enhancing students' level and it also attempts to provide some useful strategies for both teachers and learners to overcome this situation. The researchers have conducted both qualitative and quantitative methods through questionnaires that have been devoted to first year English students and seven teachers from the department of English. Based on the results of the research work, the researchers have suggested some recommendations for teachers in order to help slow learners to overpass the obstacles they face while learning EFL.

Key words: English, foreign language, slow learners, challenges, strategies.