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Effects of Individual Differences On Second Language Learning: The case of Secondary School Brothers Attar and Ized school pupils.

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requirements for the degree of Master's in Language Sciences

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Declaration

I, Ms. *Lamia Zair, declare that this Master's Dissertation in Language Studies entitled Individual differences in second language learning is the result of my own work. All information included in this dissertation have been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules. I also certify that the present work contains no plagiarism in quotations.*

Miss Lamia Zair

Dedication

I dedicate this work to:

- ✓ the great persons in my life, my parents, who have always supported me, and giving me inspiration and infinite love. I thank them for their psychological and financial support to finish this work;

- ✓ my beloved sisters Asma &Sihem for their continuing encouragements

  and eternal love.

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Abstract

The study of language learners' characteristics or individual differences is an important part of second language studies. These characteristics involve mainly language aptitude, motivation and personality which are the contributors to success in mastering a second language. The aim of this study was to identify the learners' differences attempting to show how they affect learning a second language, and to mention the teaching methods used by foreign language teachers. For this purpose, two research instruments were used to collect data, namely the questionnaire and observation. The questionnaire was addressed to teachers of French and English and another questionnaire was administrated tosecondary school and private school learners. The observation process also considered learners in both education settings. Qualitative data analysis revealed that learners differ in characteristics which contribute to learning a second language. For instance, Ized school learners are better motivated than Secondary school students and this is due to reasons revealed from teachers' questionnaire and classroom observation which are specifically the different methods used by teachers. As for public school teachers, they use the classical methods. However, Ized school teachers apply developed materials and new methods in teaching which help students learn better. Finally, it is worth mentioning that whatever the teaching method used, some students will prosper, some will not, often despite their intentions.

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General Introduction

Language is an important part of any culture. It is a way by which people interact and communicate. Therefore, acquiring a mother tongue is a subconscious process but learning a second language occurs consciously.All around the world, students of all ages are learning to speak a second language, but their reason to learn a language differs according to their intentions and purposes. For instance, some students want to learn a second language just because they are obliged to (school curriculum). Others are studying certain languages for their choices and specific purposes. In the field of education, psychologists have tried to theorize how people learn a language. The different investigations have brought many theories and approaches concerning this issue.

In the Algerian community, a huge number of students learn French as a first foreign language since the primary school. English is added in the middle and secondary schools. Students do not choose to learn them, but they are obliged to study both languages, being mandatory subjects in the curriculum. Individual differences in learning a second language are the concern of many researchers in general and teachers in specific.

Thus, this research attempts to explore the extent to which theory meets practice in ESL classrooms. In other words, this research aims at identifying the individual differences and strategies in learning and second, and shedding light on teachers' approaches and methods used in classrooms.Consequently, the research is guided by the following questions:

1- What are the students strategies used when learning a second language?
2- How do individual differences relate to second language learning?
3- What methods and approaches are used by teachers when teaching a second language?

The hypotheses are as follows:

1- The most common strategies used by learners are clarification, memorization, guessing and practice.

2- The individual differences relate to the learner's personality, motivation and language aptitude. Each characteristic directly affects learning.

3- The teachers use the eclectic approach while teaching a second language.

In order to reach the objectives of the research, a case study was designed. The informants taking part in the study included students from Brothers Attar secondary school and students enrolled in Ized professional education school both located in Chetouane Tlemcen. As for the organisation of the work, it is divided into two chapters. The first chapter is theoretical in essence, providing the main related literature. It introduces the main concepts, like krashen's hypothesis in second language acquisition, students' strategies in second language learning and teaching methods and approaches. The second chapter is practical. It is divided into two parts. While the first part introduces briefly the methodology framework, the second part is a space for data analysis and discussion.

Chapter one

Literature Review

1.1 Introduction:

Language is an important aspect in any culture, therefore language acquisition requires meaningful interaction in the target language in which speakers are concerned not with the form of their utterances but with messages they are conveying and understanding. Second language acquisition does not require conscious grammatical rules process.

Some learners achieve the native speakers' levels of competence in a foreign language while others progress very slowly with great difficulty, it is because people are not homogenous they have different personalities and styles. They differ from one another due to biological or unconscious factors, these differences that are commonly explored are personality, motivation and language aptitude which play an important role in language learning and teaching. Foreign teachers are using strategies and course designed syllabus in order to fit the learners' needs.

1.1   Second Language Acquisition

Second Language Acquisition (hereafter SLA) refers both to the study of individuals and groups who are learning a language subsequent to learning their first one as young children, and to the process of learning that language. The language that is acquired after the mother tongue is called a second language (L2), even though it may actually be the third or fourth language acquired.

SLA has been broadly defined. The terms that are commonly used in the literature are as follows:

Second language: is generally dominant and formal language required for education, employment, and other purposes. It is often acquired by individuals who speak another language natively like immigrants.

Foreign language: is one not widely used or spoken in the learners' community, that is to say; any different language than its' native one. For example, Spanish is a foreign language for Algerians

Library language: its function is the translation of any text into another language; it occurs in books and novels. For instance, English is a library language because it is easier to understand certain documents.

Auxiliary language; is a language that aims at communication for the ones who do not speak the same language; it is a constructed language. An example of auxiliary language is Esperanto.

Another important function for 'second language' is *Language for specific purposes*(such as French for hotel management, English for aviation technology, Spanish for agriculture). And the learning of these mainly focuses only on specific uses and functions.

1.2   The Five Krashens' Hypotheses:

Stephen Krashen is well known for establishing sound theories of second language acquisition which had an influence on second language learning and teaching. Krashen's hypotheses (1981) of second language acquisition consist of five:

- The acquisition-learning hypotheses
- The monitor hypothesis
- The input hypothesis
- The affective filter hypothesis
- The natural order hypothesis

The ***acquisition-learning*** distinction is the most fundamental of the five hypotheses in Krashen's theory and the most widely known among linguists and language teachers. According to Krashen, there are two independent systems of foreign language performance: 'The acquired system' and 'the learned system'. The acquired system or 'acquisition' is the product of a subconscious process very similar to the process children undergo when they acquire their first language-natural communication-in which speakers are concerned not in the form of their utterances, but in the communicative act.

The learned system or 'learning' is the product of formal instruction, and it comprises a conscious process which results in conscious knowledge 'about' the language, for example knowledge of grammar rules. A deductive approach in a teacher-centred setting produces 'learning', while an inductive approach in a student-centred setting leads to 'acquisition'.

The *Monitor* hypothesis explains the relationship between acquisition and learning and defines the influence of the former on the latter. The monitoring function is the practical result of the leaned grammar. According to Krashen (1981), the acquisition system is the utterance initiator, while the learning system performs the role of the 'monitor' or the 'editor'. The 'monitor' acts in a planning, editing and correcting function when three specific conditions are met:

-The second language learner has sufficient time at their disposal.

-They focus on form or think about correctness.

-They know the rule.

It appears that the role of conscious learning is somewhat limited in second language performance. According to Krashen, the role of the monitor is minor, being used only to correct deviations from normal speech and to give speech a more 'polished' appearance.

Krashen also suggests that there is individual variation among language learners with regard to 'monitor' use. He distinguishes those learners that use the 'monitor' all the time (over-users); those learners who have learners who have not learned or who prefer not to use the 'monitor' appropriately (optimal users). An evaluation of the person's psychological profile can help to determine to what group they belong.

In the *Input* hypothesis, Krashen's explains how the learner acquires a second language. The input hypothesis is only concerned with 'acquisition', not 'learning'. According to this hypothesis, the learner improves along the 'natural order' when he/she receives second language 'input' that is one step beyond his/her current stage on linguistic competence. For example, if a learner is at a stage 'i', then acquisition takes place when he/she is exposed to *'comprehensible input'* that belongs to level 'i+1'. Since not all of the learners can be at the same level of linguistic competence at

the same time, Krashen suggests that natural communicative input is the key to designing a syllabus, ensuring in this way that each learner will receive some 'i+1' input that is appropriate for his/her current stage of linguistic competence.

The *Affective filter* Hypothesis incorporates Krashen's view that a number of 'affective variables' play a facilitative role in second language acquisition. These variables include: motivation, self-confidence, anxiety and personality traits. Krashen claims that learners with high motivation, self-confidence, a good-self image, a low level of anxiety and extroversion are more successful mastering a second language acquisition. Low motivation, low self-esteem, anxiety, introversion and inhibition can raise the affective filter and form a 'mental block' that prevents comprehensible input from being used for acquisition.

Finally, the *Natural order* hypothesis is based on research findings which suggested that the acquisition of grammatical structures follows a 'natural order' which is predictable. For a given language, some acquire the grammatical structures early while others late. This order is obviously independent of the learner's age, L1 backgrounds, conditions of exposure, there were statistics showed similarities which ensured that the natural order exist in language acquisition.

Thus, the main purpose of theories of second language acquisition (SLA) is to shed light on how people who already know one language learn a second language; they can also guide teachers to find helpful conditions to provide successful language learning.

1.3   Learning Strategies

The learning strategies in second language acquisition was the concern of some researchers in linguistics, these strategies were observed and reported by students when acquiring a second language that can be described and classified. O'Malley and Chamot (1990) have recognized learners' strategies as follows:

- Cognitive strategies: These strategies work directly on information and involve translation(depends on first language knowledge), note-taking, Auditory representation(using sounds), repetition(repeating what teachers say), deduction(the

use of rules for learning process), key word, transfer(using rules from first language), question for clarification(asks for explanation), Interference(prediction of meaning).

- Metacognitive strategies: these strategies include self-reinforcement, advance preparation, directed attention, self-management, self-evaluation and self-monitoring.

- Social and affective strategies: it requires the help of others in order to learn, these social strategies are asking for explanation, verification and example about a given topic (questioning for clarification), group working in activities (cooperation) and self-talk to gain confidence and talk freely.

In fact, the theory of learning strategies plays an important role in the language acquisition process and how second languages are acquired. It is also used to organize the presentation of research results, examine the findings and integrate the results with other studies.A theory of SLA, to be successful, must be able to describe how knowledge about language is stored in memory and how the process of SLA alternately results in automatic language comprehension and production (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990).Looking beyond L2 learning, it has been widely observed that there is a variation among students when learning a second language, especially that of language aptitude and language learning motivation.

1.4   Learning Styles:

The term learning style refers to the differences in individual's learning. A style is a way to process, comprehend and obtain information. Learning styles are known in education as a way to express the idea that every student learns differently, they help a teacher recognize and choose preferred way in which a student get the information. Below are the four preference types of learning styles:

Visual learners: they absorb information most effectively if it is provided through the visual channel, that is to say; they like to learn using pictures, videos and concrete things, and if some large chunk of information is presented orally their understanding is considerably enhanced by a handout and various visual aids.

Auditory learners use more effectively auditory input such as lectures or audiotapes, they benefit from written passages to be remember. They also like to 'talk the material through' by engaging in discussions and group work, as Ethrman (1996) observed, they prefer oral practice without their books.

Kinaesthetic and Tactile learners: They are grouped together but not identical, The Kinaesthetic style refers to learning most effectively through complete body experience, whereas Tactile learners like a hands-on, touching learning approach. They enjoy making posters, collages and engage in crating various forms pf artwork. For kinaesthetic learners, walking around while trying to memorize something is beneficial. (Zoltan Dornyei.2005).

The different sensory preferences do not exclude each other. For example, successful learners often use both visual and auditory input, but they usually display slight preferences, or *modality strengths,* one way or the other. As students grow older, those with mixed modality strengths have a decidedly better chance of success than do those with single modality strength because they can process information in whatever way it was presented (Kinsella, 1995).

1.5   The individual Differences and Characteristics:

We should know that while learning styles are much important, they are partly from a several individual differences. These characteristics involve personality, motivation and language aptitude.

1.5.1 *Personality Traits:*

It is agreed that personality is an important aspect in human beings, especially when learning. According to Oxford Learner's Dictionaries; "personality is the qualities of a person's character that make them interesting and attractive". For others, it is a characteristic way of thinking, feeling and behaving. Personality embraces moods, attitudes, and opinions and is most clearly expressed in interactions with other people.

Although personality traits are believed to contribute to how we learn a second language, having certain personality traits does not affect learning or speaking a language, they just contribute to the ways in which we learn. Over the years, many studies have been done by researchers concerning personality in learning. Some researchers measured this phenomenon with what called The Big 5 personality traits which is originally developed in 1949, it is the most widely accepted theory of personality today established by D.W Fiske and later developed by Norman (1967), Smith (1967), Goldberg (1981), and McCrae & Costa (1987).

Table1.1The big five personality traits (*Reprinted from Pennstate, by R.Gray, 2017)*

Low score	Traits	High score
Practical, Conventional, Prefers routine	Openness Imagination, feelings, actions, ideas	Curious, wide range of interests, independent
Impulsive, careless, Disorganized	Conscientiousness Competence, self-discipline, thoughtfulness, goal-driven.	Hard working, dependable, organized
Quiet, reserved, withdrawn	Extroversion Sociability, assertiveness, Emotional expression.	Outgoing, warm, seeks adventure.
Critical, uncooperative, suspicious.	Agreeableness Cooperative, trustworthy, good-natured	Helpful, trusting, empathetic
Calm, even-tempered, secure	Neuroticism Tendency toward unstable emotions	Anxious, unhappy, prone to negative emotions.

Mentioned in the table above are the five main domains of the big five model that categorizes learners' different personalities. First, openness refers to new experiences, participating in such intellectual activities and critical thinking, second, conscientiousness that is a complex trait which reflects to high desire in one hand and low desire in the other hand. Third, extroversion reflects to those who are socially confident, assertive and love participating. However, introversion people are more quiet, reserved and prefer to listen more than talking. Fourth model, Agreeableness are often called soft-hearted, can be trusted and compliance, in other hand those of low agreeableness may be uncooperative, manipulative and suspicious. The last one is Neuroticism which covers emotional adjustment and stability at one extreme and maladjustment at the other.

1.6.1.1 Personality and learning:

The question is 'to what extent personality is related to second language learning'? No one would doubt that there is a strong relation between personality variables and language learning; it appears in the influence of personality on learning through attitude which creates different thoughts of learning, learning investment, and different ways to learn. Thus, personality traits may be expressed in learning styles that creates learning strategies and methods.

Several studies have attempted to answer this question and explain how they are related. Within the big 5 personality traits, it is noticeable that openness to experience and conscientiousness are most closely related to learning for the positive results they provided. However, Neuroticism and extroversion have negative relation with learning achievement and success due to introvertion, anxiety and other negative factors that they represent.

Other language studies have been made to show that when learning a second language, students with outgoing personalities are more likely to be successful as second language learners than a less outgoing personality. By contrast, Manfred

Spitzer, a German psychiatrist, points that introverts are able to stimulate themselves to learn while extroverts require external stimulus.

We should shed light on teacher's personalities since it is an important factor, and because the learning process is influenced by teacher's personality and mentality, they have to be positive, patient, passion, cooperative and adaptability. These behaviours will ensure good and successful teaching in addition to the student's satisfaction.

Thus, Personality is an important factor in learning in general and learning a second language in precise because it helps gain confidence, self-esteem and positive impact on the four learning skills especially speaking skill. The learner should develop an outgoing personality in order to succeed a better learning and achievement.

1.5.2 Motivation:

In the language education field, motivation was the concern of many researchers and teachers since it is an important element in learning. Thijis (2011) observed that motivation is dependent on the fulfilment of fundamental, innate psychological needs for competence, relatedness and autonomy. In general, it is an action, a desire to do something, dependent upon the individual and the situation; it is level of effort. There are two broad types of motivation, namely intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation is when motivation comes from 'internal' factors to meet personal needs. We do things because we enjoy them, not because we are obliged to. Intrinsic means internal or inside of yourself; when you are intrinsically motivated, you enjoy something, a course of study or skill development for education and having fun. On the other hand, extrinsic motivation comes from 'external' factors that are whether given or controlled by others; this type of motivation is often used within society. People who are extrinsically motivated learn or do something based on a high desire, rather than for the fun.

Therefore, levels of motivation can explain and show whether students are interested and engaged in learning or not; one reason for some L2 learners doing better than others is undoubtedly because they are better motivated. For instance, when the

students have high motivation, it is indicated in their commitment to the common purpose, social concern, affiliation, competitiveness, energy, interest in task, inclination to effort, staying power when facing problems/difficulties/setbacks, skill; possession of skills indicates purpose and ambition, enjoyment and responsibility-willingness to seek and accept it.

On the other hand, we can say that a 'demotivated' learner was once motivated but has lost his or her interest due to some reasons. There is small evidence and associated theories which confirm the view that teacher's motivation has a direct impact on student motivation and achievement. For instance, Brophy(1985:180) lists eight concrete ways reported from teacher's negative behaviour that can reduce students' motivation:

1. Giving up easily on low-expectation students (e.g. not waiting long enough for their answers.
2. Criticising them more often for failure.
3. Praising them less often following success.
4. Praising inappropriately (e.g. after routine responses)
5. Neglecting to give them any feedback following their responses.
6. Seating them in the back of the room.
7. Generally paying less attention to them or interacting with them less frequently.
8. Expressing less warmth towards them or less interest in them as individuals.

Teachers need to be careful about these behaviours because of the negative results on their students psyche. Demotivation is a negative counterpart of motivation: a motive increases an action tendency, whereas demotivation decreases it. However, it is not necessarily to consider each negative impact as a demotivation. For instance playing a game instead of writing a home work is just a negative factor that would not be related to demotivation.There is a related concept used in motivational psychology instead of demotivation which is 'amotivated'. This term is a constituent of Deci and Ryan's (1985) which refers to a lack of motivation that is not caused by a lack of initial interest but rather by individual's experiencing feelings of inability and inadequacy

when faced with the activity. According to Vallerand's (1997) overview, amotivation can have four sources. Learners can be amotivated because:

1. They think they lack the ability to perform the behaviour(Capacity-ability belief)

2. They do not consider the strategies to be followed effective enough (Strategy beliefs)

3. They think the effort required to reach the outcomes is far too excessive (Capacity-effort belief)

4. They have the general perception that their efforts are inconsequential considering the enormity of the task to be accomplished(helplessness beliefs).

Although the majority of researches are focusing on teachers and teaching methods, it is not only their responsibility. For instance, students are also obliged to cooperate in order to motivate each other for better learning.

1.5.3 Language Aptitude:

According to many studies, language aptitude has been found to be one of the most important individual difference variables in second language learning.There have been two representative definitions of language aptitude, According to Caroll and Sapon (2002, p23), "language aptitude refers to a set of cognitive abilities that are predictive of how well, relative to other individuals, an individual can learn a foreign language in a given amount of time and under given conditions", i.e., the predictive power of aptitude and its link with ultimate L2 attainment, irrespective of instruction type and learning context. The pedagogical value of Carroll and Sapon' conceptualization of aptitude and the instruments used to measure it lies in its (primary) prognostic function of foretelling a learner's chances of success in meeting a criterion and its (secondary) diagnostic function of detecting learning disabilities. Robinson (2005), who had different view, considers language aptitude as "cognitive abilities information processing draws on during L2 learning and performance in various contexts and at different stages". Robinson's definition is a dynamic view of

language aptitude and reflects a process oriented. Thus, no instruction/treatment is effective for all learners, and there will be achievement only when learner's cognitive profile fits the characteristics of the instructional context.

Despite the different views and definitions about how language aptitude is related to the process of L2 learning, both of them argued that language aptitude consists of a number of cognitive abilities that are (i) relatively immutable, (ii) distinct from intelligence and other individual difference variables eg; motivation, and finally (iii) not a learning achievement.

In other words, mental abilities reflect cognitive processes and skills. When speaking about these aspects, researchers use the terms 'ability', 'aptitude' and 'intelligence'. In language learning studies, these terms are somehow related. For instance, we find 'learning ability', that is the individual's potential for acquiring new knowledge or skill. Thus, language aptitude and language ability are the same, as well as 'intelligence' which is another synonym for 'ability'. Dornyei (2005) explains that in the 1920s, Spearman described intelligence as a combination of a general factor, which is available to an individual to the same degree for all intellectual acts, as well as several specific factors which vary in strength from one act to another. Dornyei adds that ten years later, Thurstone distinguished seven primary mental abilities: Verbal comprehension, word fluency, number facility, spatial visualization, associative memory, perceptual speed, and reasoning.

1.6.3.1 The Interaction of Language Aptitude and L2 Speaking:

For this interest, Wesche (1981) conducted the achievement test with oral expression ability. He reviewed the connection between language learners' aptitude and their L2 speaking ability. Many research studies were done and most of them focused on learners in EFL context (e.g. Smemoe & Haslam,2012;Winke,2013; Saito & Hanzawa, 2016). They reported that there is an association between language aptitude and ESL/EFL learners, although there was not a direct connection because of other variables involved in.

One of the hypotheses that Winke (2013) tested was whether language aptitude had impacts on L2 learning both directly or indirectly. The chosen participants were English native adults studying Chinese as L2, testing them with Modern Language Aptitude test(MLAT), the working memory span test, the motivation questionnaire and Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) test to measure strategy usage. The results of this study show that aptitude, strategy use and motivation have impacts on language learning. That is to say, aptitude does not affect second language learning in comparison to other variables. However, aptitude had a direct impact on speaking skill more than other skills.

To sum up, all the reviewed studies share the same opinion which is the relation between language aptitude and the learner's L2 speaking performance, as well as other factors influencing the L2 speaking performance.

1.6.3.2 Language Aptitude and Age:

It has been known that language aptitude can be the predictor to the success of language learners to reveal the interaction between language aptitude and age many research studies were conducted.Harley and Hart's (1997) studied this issue on English students of L2 French language with associate memory, memory for text, and analytical test to measure the learner's language aptitude, as well as the five types of tests (vocabulary, listening, cloze text, written production, and individual oral test). The result finding show also late learners with high level of analysis ability could perform significantly better than early learners' analysis. In addition to this, it was reported that early learners showed the ability of language.

In short, studies have brought many findings that supported the view that the age factor is related to language aptitude.

1.6.3.3 Language Aptitude and Motivation:

The findings from Gardner and MacIntyre (1992) research show that they believe that language aptitude and motivation were two distinguishable factors. Other different opinions by Winke (2013) pointed out a negative correlation between

language aptitude and motivation, for the reason that learners with low language aptitude would need more motivation.

A number of studies were conducted to report the influence of aptitude and motivation factors on language learning, For example, Saito and Hanzawa (2016) said that in the hypothesized model that motivation and language aptitude are factors influencing speaking performance of Japanese EFL learners. Although the findings of Winke (2013) and Saito and Hanzawa (2016) share different opinions, they all indicate that there exist an interaction between language aptitude and motivation.

Creativity is another learner characteristic which is a psychological trait hard to define. It is certainly a major element of intelligence (zoltan Doryei, p202). Stenberg (2002, p.29)defines creativity as "sources of individual and developmental differences in creative performance include not only process aspects, but aspects on knowledge, thinking styles, personality, motivation, and the environmental context in which the individual operates". Other considerations of creativity from educational perspectives show a lack of interest in this characteristic. However, many several tests have been done to apply creativity in special measures:

Sternberg et al (2002) describing Torrance's famous creativity test argues that the Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking (TTCT), can be scored for the originality of the responses (how unique and unusual they are), and fluency (how many unusual they are), flexibility (how varied they are). Runco (2003) emphasized that none of the three indices are all-important, but should be used in concert to describe the individual's ideational profile: "Some examinees are very fluent with ideas but relatively unoriginal or inflexible. Others are high in originality, flexibility, or both, but only moderately fluent" (p.34)

Even though researchers did not show much interest and importance to this characteristic, it is a relevant aspect to L2 learning. Creative students use the most effective strategies because they have open and active minds, they are buzzing with ideas and get inspired from the world around them. They bring new and interesting ideas and aim to develop their skills in contrast to the other students who do not take risks by expressing themselves, feelings and ideas.

1.6   Language Teaching Methods and Approaches

Language is about communication, after all, and that's why techniques and approaches of learning and teaching a language are changing and developing over the time in order to master the best methodologies in teaching and to reach students needs for a better learning process. Methods of teaching are: classic methods and new methods; each of them depends on different approaches.

The literature generally acknowledges the classic method termed the *Grammar-Translation Method* (GTM) as one of the first methods learners might confront in studying the language. According to Corder (1973), "what to teach or learn can be described in linguistic terms as grammar.. or in psychological terms as language skills" (p.137). In this method, the English courses (as an instance of foreign language) often focus on translating written literary pieces from English to the learner's mother-tongue. Teachers used it to teach learners who speak a language with different grammar, for example, Greek and Latin languages and learning vocabulary (memorization). This method focused more on reading and writing skills, where the teacher is the guider in classroom (teacher-centred).

After this, the *Direct Method* came as a reaction to the GTM associated with Francois Gouin and Charles Berlitz. It is directly establishing an immediate and audiovisual association between experience and expression, words and phrases, idioms and meanings, rules and performances, through the teacher's body and mental skills, without using the learner's mother tongue. Its function doesn't require translation.

 The aim of the direct method is that second language learning should be more like first language learning, no translation into the student's native language. The teacher can use everything around him in the school environment as teaching tool in order to facilitate the student understanding. According to Larsen-Freeman (2000), the principles of the direct method that can be drawn are as follows:

- Students should learn to think in the target language as soon as possible (vocabulary is acquired);
- the purpose of language learning is communication (therefore students should know how to ask questions as well as answer them).

- Lessons should contain some conversational activity some opportunity for students to use language in real contexts.

- the syllabus is based on situations or topic, not usually on linguistic structures. (p.50)

Larsen-freeman has also proposed some techniques of the direct method that can be used in the teaching/learning process:

- Reading aloud: students read passages, play or dialogues in turns, when finishing the teacher uses gesture, pictures to make the meaning clear.

- Question and answer exercise: The exercise must be conducted in the target language. Student are asked question and answer in full sentences in order to use new words and grammatical structure.

- Dictation: The passage should be read at normal speed, and students listen and the second time the teacher reads phrase by phrase and makes pauses to allow students to copy the passage.

- Conversation practise: The teacher asks question his students individually about themselves in the target language, and then students are required to exchange the questions among them using the same grammatical structure.

The above mentioned propositions have proven to be affective in many studies, being accredited by foreign teachers. (P.54)

Another approach to foreign language teaching/learning was established and termed the *Competency-Based Approach* (CBA). Educators have begun to use it believing that students can learn best when they are involved in activities that challenge them and provide mastery of skills, focusing on speaking and listening (learner-centred). This approach was found to be more effective than the classic method in term of students' achievement. This is why it is becoming more popular in schools, being a combination of skills, knowledge, experiences, understanding and the ability to accomplish in the real life. The competency term means capability to apply and use knowledge required to successfully perform a work function or task.

The objectives of this approach are:Performance and task, that is to say; it gives the students the ability to establish competency in a variety of ways. However, the general

target of this approach is to prepare the students for future challenges and provide them with knowledge and skills in a flexible program.

The characteristics of CBA are:

- The learner is the core of the process of learning, according to this process; the learner acquires the language autonomously and collaboratively.
- Learning basic tasks.
- Performance: what can learners do with their language?

Thus, for educators, this approach is comparatively a new way of thinking about how to teach from psychological field. They suppose that students should be able to explain knowledge and skills more than being taught everything at once. Students are learning in small communities. They get together based on similar learning needs and abilities. They have to cooperate in order to learn, they should be more responsible for their learning, to create effective skills and strategies.

The role of teachers according to CBA:

1- The teacher should create the conditions that are conductive to the development of communication competency.
2- To manage the classroom events
3- To provide feedbacks to the students
4- To monitor language output competency development.

To sum up, this approach is adapted to second language research. its aim is to master one language and move to another. It provides techniques for teachers to teach and for learners that helps them to learn and acquire new skills like communication and critical thinking. Although this approach gave positive results on students learning, it is still incomplete. This is a strong reason which led educators to establish the so called *Eclectic Method*(also called mixed methods) which is a language teaching

method that combines various approaches and methods depending on the objectives of the course and the abilities of the learner in order to gain complete awareness into a subject. For example, a teacher will use the Grammar-Translation Method when teaching grammar and uses the Competency-Based Approach in order to teach the speaking skill via data show, photos, etc. Learners always like something new and exciting and this approach is broad and includes every kind of learning activities.In fact, the Eclectic Approach kept the main elements of all methods and combined them in a successful way, so that the advantages of these foundations can be noticed in the effectiveness that has been recorded from students.

1.7   Conclusion

This chapter discussed the main literature on second language acquisition. This included Krashen's hypothesis, learners' strategies in learning a second/foreign language, learning styles. The chapter also considered some important concepts that are tightly related to this research, including personality traits, motivation and language aptitude and their influence on language learning. The chapter ended with methods   and   approaches   to   second/foreign   language.

Chapter two

Data analysis and discussion

2.1   Introduction

This chapter is the practical part of the research study. The chapter is divided into two parts. The first part presents the methodology procedures that were followed during the investigation, including data analysis procedures, the site of research, data collection instruments, sample population, etc. The second part is a space for data analysis and discussion.

2.2   Research Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of the current study is first to identify learners' strategies, and individual differences and their effects on learning a second language second. The third objective guiding this study is to circle the teachers' methods and approaches used while teaching and if these methods match the learners' differences.

2.3   Research Methodology

Research methodology is an essential part of research. Its aim is to identify and analyze a given phenomenon. It is a structure that the researcher uses during the investigation in order to find answers and evidence to the research problems. The present study is an exploratory research in order to carry out this topic to be understood in depth. The goal of such a research is to explore the individual characteristics and how to deal with them as foreign language teachers.

As for data collection, it was opted for two instruments: questionnaire and classroom observation. This allowed eliciting both qualitative and quantitative data as it will be discussed below.

2.3.1 Research Instruments and Procedures

The study considered two schools, the researcher asked permission from the headmasters of the secondary school (Brothers Attar) and Private school (Ized Professional Education) both located in Chetouane, Tlemcen in order to collect data from students and teachers. This research work represents a case study which helps the researcher to link between the collected data and the conclusions for a cohesive and

coherent investigation. In this vein, Dornyei (2007, p151) claimed that "In fact, almost anything can serve as a case as long as it constitutes a single entity with clearly defined boundaries". Therefore, this research depended on a mixed methods approach to data collection, including the questionnaire and classroom observation. The questionnaire is a research instrument that involves a set of questions used for gathering information from informants. It can be oral or written, open-ended, closed-ended, mixed, etc. On the other hand, observation is a way to collect data by watching people (students in this case). It can be overt (with peoples' knowledge) orcovert (without their knowledge). The aim for selecting the questionnaire is that it allows gathering large amounts of data, economical (less time/less money), rapidity and privacy and anonymity. However, observation furnishes other advantages, such as watching facial expressions, behaviour, etc.

2.3.1.1   Student's Questionnaire

The questionnaire covered students enrolling ina private and a public school. It was opted for a mixed questionnaire, comprising questions of different types: closed-ended, open-ended and multiple choices. It consists of five questions. The first question was asked to know the students' purpose for learning a second language; the second question enquires about the favourite learning style, while question third aims to know whether these factors (creativity, motivation, personality) affect learning a second language or not. The fourth question is addressed to know about students' opinions on teaching methods used by their teachers. The last question gauges whether students use the French language outside the classroom or not. One more question was purposefully added to learners enrolled in foreign language teaching institution in order to know if there is a difference in learning a second language in both places.

2.3.1.2   Teacher's Questionnaire

The researcher's purpose for doing this questionnaire is to know if individual differences affect the teaching/learning process and what methods are used to teach a second language. The questionnaire consists of six questions: the first one asks

teachers about strategies and methods adopted in teaching a second language.The second question is about the kind of difficulties they face during the lesson. The third question is asked in order to know id individuals differ. In the fourth and fifth questions, the aim is to know the reasons why some learners are more (less) successful than others and if they agree that these factors (language aptitude, motivation, personality) affect learning or not. The last question measures teachers' opinion on what skill should be improved.

2.3.1.3   Classroom Observation

The researcher usedan overt observation where the participants are all aware of the researcher's presence and their role as an observer in order to obtain more reliable data qualitatively by observing the teacher's role, his/her methodology, technique and about the learners' differences and interactions during the lesson in foreign language classroom. Classroom observation can be beneficial to the research. For instance, it helps to find fact resulting from events happening during the session, also the researcher can prepare questions and take notes from his/her observation or only get enough with the remarks.

2.3.2 Sample Population

Mouton defines a sample as" elements selected with the intention of findings out something about the total population from which they are taken". (1996, p. 132).

That is to say, a sample is a number of specific items or objects for the purpose of knowing something about the total population from which they are taken for measurement.

2.3.2.1   Students' Profile

Adult students were selected to participate in this study from non-probability sample in purposive sampling that is most useful to the purposes of the research. Twenty students (fifteen girls and five boys) were selected from Brothers Attar Secondary school, branch of foreign languages. Their equivalent students enrolled in a foreign language teaching institution were also twenty (ten girls and ten

boys)registered in Ized professional education. The age of learners is homogenous to a large extent, varying between 16 and 18. The participants are chosen based on a purposive sampling in order to gain detailed knowledge about this phenomenon.

2.3.2.2   Teachers' Profile

The number of teachers taking part in the present study was Six (one man and three woman) working in secondary schools Maliha Hamidou and Brothers Attarand two teachers from Ized Professional Education.Four of them teach English and the two others teach French, they have been selected purposefully in order to have different opinions about teaching a second and third language. Their teaching experience ranges between one to fifteen years. It should be noticed that the informants have been selected purposefully since they teach English/French as foreign languages.

2.3.3 Data Analysis

This part explains the use of both qualitative and quantitative methods in order to analyze the research data.

2.3.3.1   Quantitative Analysis

The quantitative data collected from participants can be in numerical form and analysed statistically. Dornyei (2007:32) argues that "the single most important feature of quantitative research is, naturally, that is centred around numbers". This research strategy helps in evaluating performance, behaviours it depends on measuring and presenting facts in terms of numbers.

2.3.3.2   Qualitative Analysis

The qualitative data relies on description and the use of coding which means summarizing the information collected from respondents and classifying them according to their content (non-numerical data). According to Cohen et al (2007:461), "qualitative data analysis involves organising, accounting for and explaining the data;

in short, making sense of data in terms of the participants". That is to say, the qualitative data can confirm or reject the given hypothesis.

2.3.4 Results

This part represents the results and discussions of the main findings collected from the respondents answers.

2.3.4.1 Analysis of Students' Questionnaire

The analysis of the students' questionnaire gives an idea about students' characteristics and differences in learning a second language. It will allow verifying the previous put hypotheses.

Question One: What is your purpose behind learning French?

- For communication purpose 60%
- because it is in the curriculum 21%
- to develop your skills 10%
- other purposes 9%
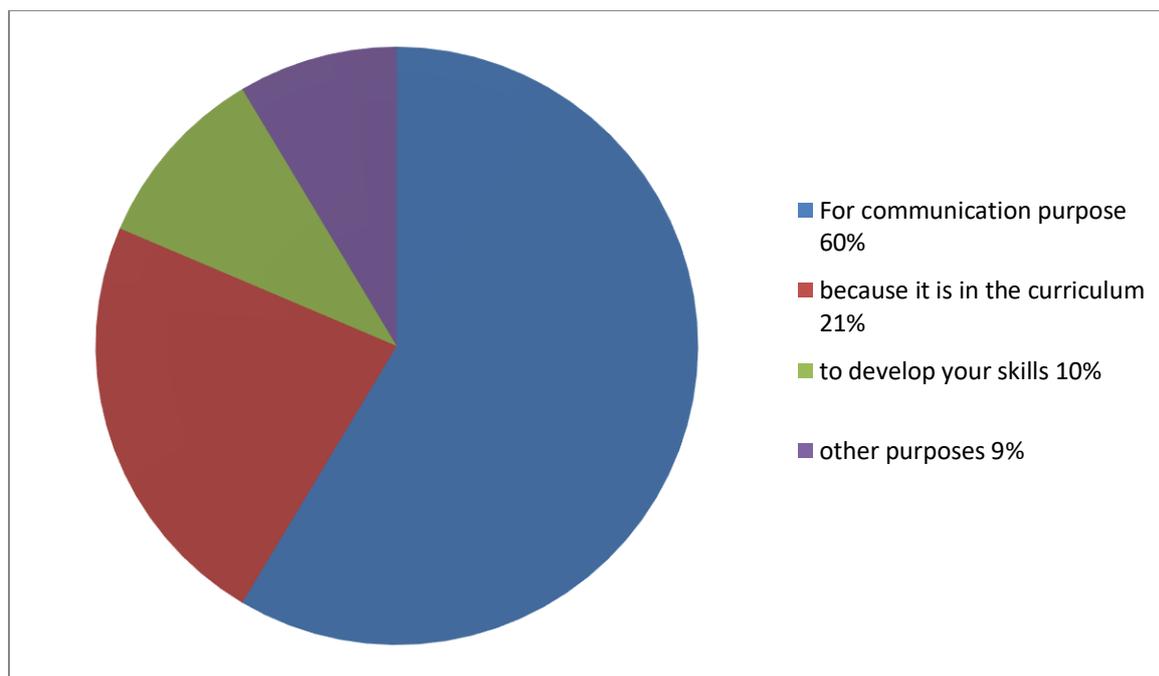
Fig2.1: The Purpose of Learning French.

In question two, the students should select one appropriate answer about their purpose behind learning French. The results revealed that 60% of students learn French for communication; 20% of them learn it just because it is a compulsory

subject in the curriculum. Only 10% of them reported that their aim is to develop their communication skills, while 9% of the informants chose the option 'other purposes'.

Question Two: What is your favourite learning style?
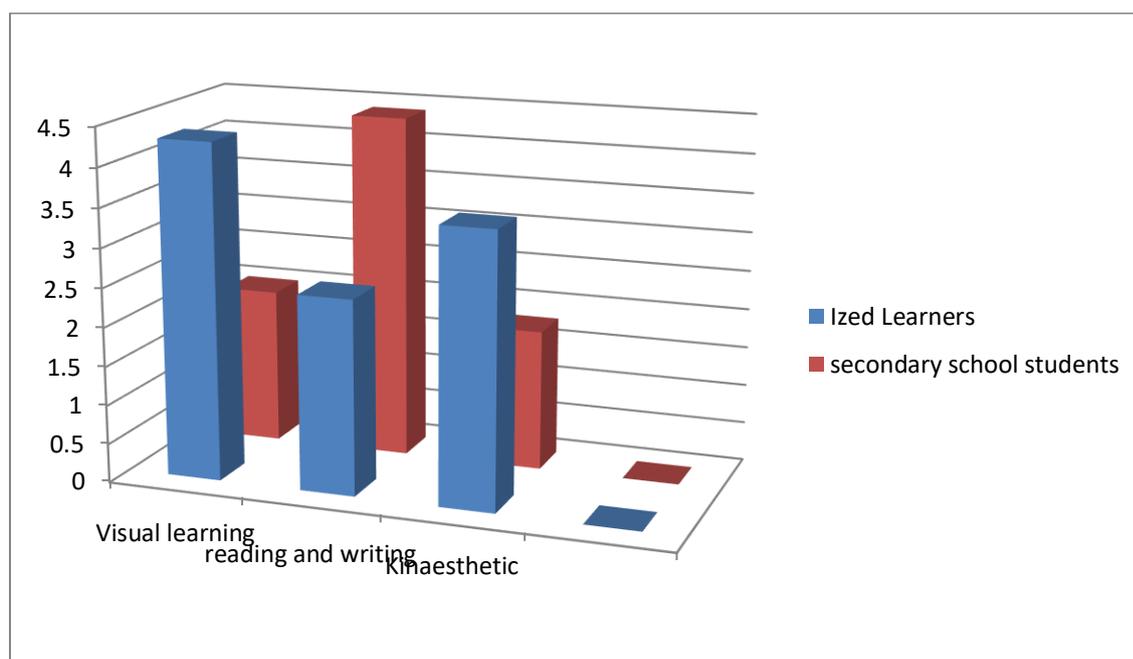
Figure 2.2: Students favourite learning styles

According to the respondents, most of Ized learners prefer visual learning than kinaesthetic and last reading and writing. However, secondary school students show different opinions with a majority of them preferring reading and writing then visual and kinaesthetic learning.

Question Three: Do you think that these factors affect learning?

Table 2.1 The effective factors in learning a second language

FACTORS	Yes	No
Personality	20	20
Motivation	40	0
Creativity	40	0
Total	40	

Building on the results sketched on table 2.1, students think that creativity and motivation are the most affective factors in learning a second language.

Question Four: What do you think about the teachers' methods used in classroom?

In this question we received two completely different answers:

✓ The majority of students from secondary school show their dissatisfactions about the methods used by their teachers that are expressed as boring, only reading and writing activities, only few of them expressed their satisfaction.

✓ By contrast, according to the learners from foreign language teaching institutions, they were satisfied about the teachers' methods. For instance, they said that teachers involve them in a variety of activities where they can play, talk, sing and other activities such as puzzles etc..

Question Five: Do you speak French outside the school?

In Algerian community, you can notice the code switching of French and Arabic in people's speaking from oldest to young person. When asking the students of public school 27 of them said yes, they use French in their speaking and 13 replied with no, while all other learners speak French outside the school.

Question Six: What is the difference between learning in foreign language institution and public school?

This question was addressed in order to know their opinion about the different aspects in learning in both schools. The results revealed that the differences are in terms of the methods used by teachers. They said that public schools are using old methods including teaching in blackboard, written activities and teacher talks all the time, there is no chance for students to express their ideas and in terms of the classroom atmosphere there is always noises during the lesson, comparable to the learning in the institution which is much more enjoyable and motivating that is due to the variety of activities, the teacher uses modern methods for instance, the learner has

the ability to use Smartphone in addition to videos and pictures on data show in the classroom , the teacher pushes the learners to speak and listen more than writing and reading .

2.3.4.2Discussion:

From the previous findings collected via the questionnaire, it is worth mentioning that individuals differ in learning a second language in terms of purposes, learning styles and characteristics that affect directly and indirectly the learning process. Moreover, the difference is also in public and institution learning. The respondents' answers revealed that learning in foreign language teaching institution is much more successful and motivating in contrast to the public school due to the methods used by teachers, i.e., teachers play an important role in the students learning.

2.3.5 Analysis of Teachers' Questionnaire

Analysis of the teachers' questionnaire shed light on the teacher-learner relationship during the class. This revealed the students' differences and how these differences reflect to learning and teaching.

Question One: What are the strategies and methods that you adopt in teaching a second language?

According to the respondents' answers, the teachers of secondary schools listed few methods that are teacher-centred, grammar-translation, reading approach and communicative approach. As for the teachers from Ized, they use different methods, focusing on the audiolingual method and the communicative approach as more accurate methods for teaching and learning a second language.

Question Two: What kind of challenges you face during the lecture?

Teachers of both languages (French/English) from public school agree that the challenges they face are fear, learning methods, lack of interest and motivation, lack of teaching aids, limited hours and crowded classes.

As for Ized teachers, they said that the difficulties are in students' different learning styles, and the mistakes in structure and pronunciation done by students due to the confusion between languages.

Question Three: Do you believe that individuals differ in learning a second language?

Table 2.2: Individuals differ in learning a second language

The individuals differ in learning a second language	Private School teachers	Public school teachers
Yes	2	4
No	0	0
Total	2	4

From the findings presented in the table above, the results show that all teachers agree on individual differences in learning a second language.

Question Four: What skill has to be improved in your opinion?
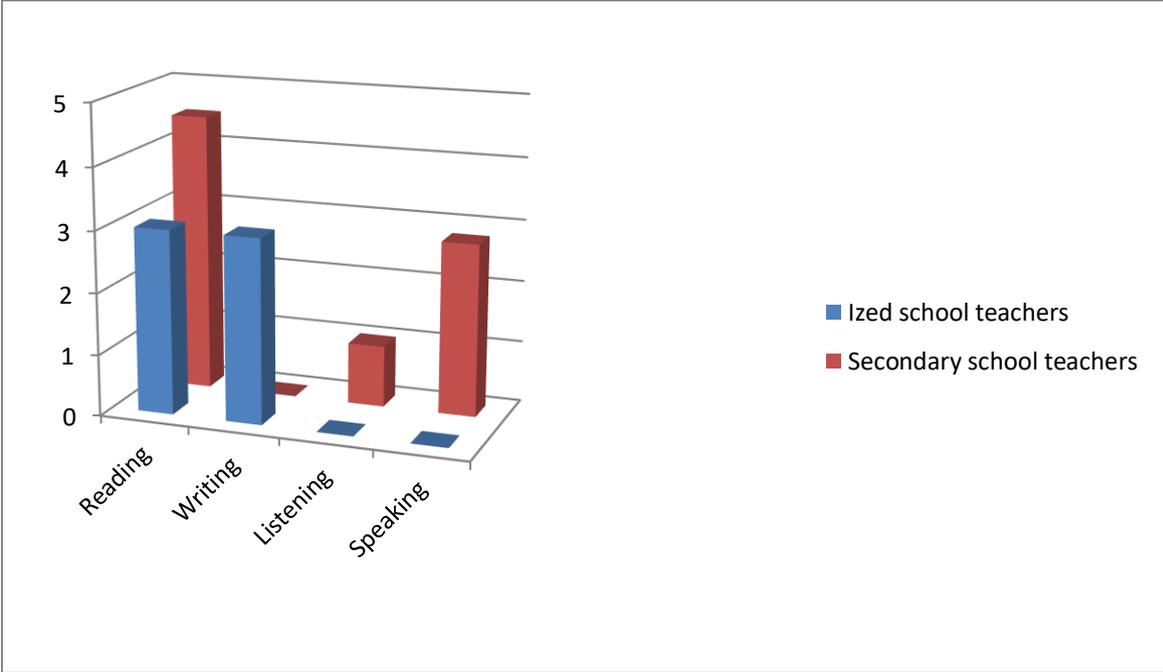
Figure 2.3: Skills to be improved

From this figure, we can notice the teachers' opinions about what skill should be developed. The teachers from Ized institution said that students have to develop the reading and writing skills. By contrast, secondary school teachers emphasised on improving the listening and speaking skills

QuestionFive: What is the most effective characteristic in learning French?
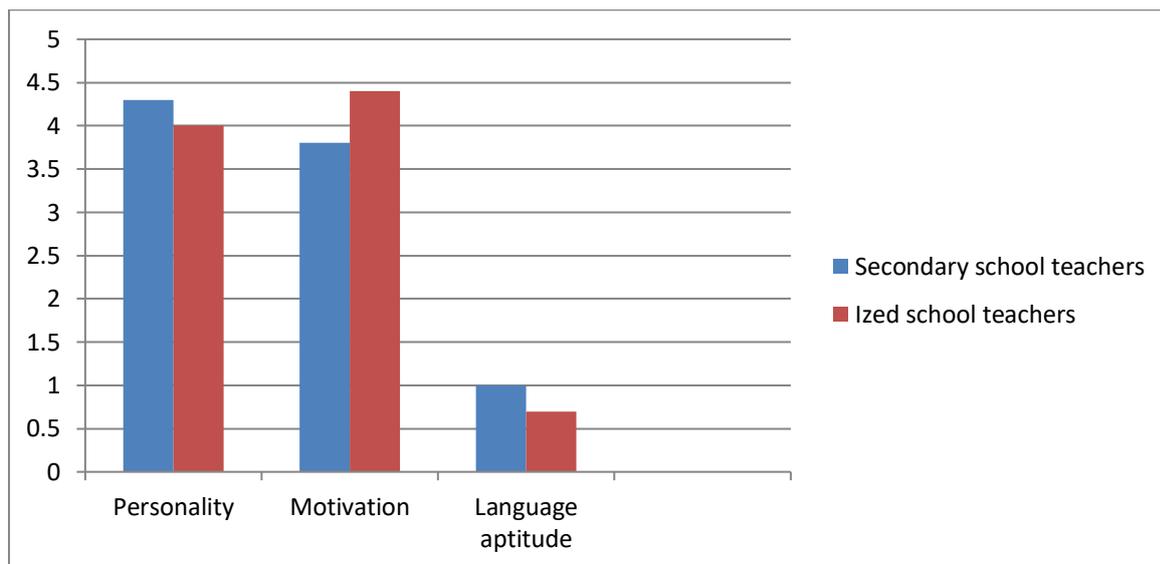
Figure2.4: The effective characteristic in learning French.

Teachers in both schools alike agree that motivation and personality are the most effective characteristics in learning English and French, and then comes language aptitude.

Question Six: Why are some learners more (less) successful than others?

Teachers' responses reveal that the differences in characteristics have a relation with the students' results. In addition to this, they mentioned the variation in levels, for instance the level of intelligence and motivation, anxiety and learning efficiency affect the process of learning and therefore the success and achievement.

2.3.5.2Discussion

To sum up, the obtained results from teachers of both secondary and foreign languages institution showed the different methods and approaches used in order to

teach a second language. The findings revealed that the individual differences and characteristics affect the learning/teaching of French and English and finally, the differences between the two schools are at the level of curriculum, course design and acquired skills.

2.4   Analysis of Classroom Observation

The researcher used the observation tool in order to see how students interact and participate with teachers in classrooms. It is important to mention that students in public schools learn French because it is a mandatory subject in the curriculum; learners have no option to choose whether to learn it or not. However, the learners from foreign languages institution are free to choose the language(s) they want to study. Two different schools have been observed which were completely different. On the one hand, in Brothers Attar Secondary school the classroom was full of students (around 40); the teacher explains and writes on the blackboard with no other teaching aid. The teacher also uses the mother-tongue (Arabic) in order to explain the lesson. Only a few students were participating, and the others did not seem interested.

On the other hand, Ized Professional Education was better equipped with small-sized classes with a maximum number of students reaching 15 per classroom. They were highly motivated and good interaction between them and the teacher was noticed. For instance, the teacher used different activities for example working in groups to share ideas and express themselves freely, he also used puzzle and other visual aids, all this in French no native language was used.

2.5   Discussion of the Main Findings

The main findings from the students and teachers questionnaires and classroom observation show that the common learners' strategies are memorization and practise. In this point, it can be assumed that the first hypothesis is partly confirmed. Also, the respondents' answers show that the individual differences and characteristics exist and affect learning/teaching a second language. This helps confirming the second hypothesis.

Teaching methods are many and each one has different components that distinguish it from the other. In general, most teachers in Algerian private and public schools use most CBA and GTM to teach different lectures and different contexts. However, it is quite important to apply other methods as the eclectic method in teaching process in order to deal with all teaching situations and the most important to involve all students into the class. This means that the third hypothesis is nullified.

2.6   Suggestions and recommendations

Applying the appropriate teaching methods and materials are major concerns of language teaching. While many teachers struggle to find the 'best' or most effective method of teaching, there are no exact answer for this. However, there are some suggestions for better teaching and learning based on hypotheses and personal experiences.

2.6.4 Suggestions for teachers

As it is believed teachers play an important role in motivating students to learn and concentrate using his/her sense of humour sometimes and being strict other times, the thing that changes the classroom atmosphere, in addition to this the responsibility of transmitting the lesson correctly and clearing the ideas. All teachers have their own physical characteristics and habits, and they will take these into the classroom with them. Todd Whitaker (2004) said: "Great teachers have high expectations for their students, but higher expectations for themselves". He also suggested some notes for better teaching process:

- Effective teachers know that in order to have a great lesson, they need to PLAN a great lesson. They should have: The lesson's purpose, activities to involve students in the lessons, materials needed to teach the lesson and a way to remediate for any student who does not understand the skill.
- Remind your students about the importance of having written goals, ask them to share any progress they have made to toward their goals, remind them to aim

high when goal setting. Remind them not to be put off by failures as they work toward achieving their goals.

2.6.5 Suggestions for Students

The 'Student' is the core element of the academic environment who has to be prepared to achieve the highest possible accomplishments and personal confidence through an inspiring, enriching and challenging curriculum for his future career.

In order to achieve better qualities of foreign language student, learners should follow some stages:

- Preparing lessons at home will help the learner to share and participate in the classroom which facilitates the teaching process.

- Using technology aids like; educational videos, documents and academic sites in order to ameliorate your level and skills.

- Exchanging ideas and thoughts by forming group of students is a good strategy to maximize the capacities of each one of them.

- Students should have the spirit of challenge and self-confidence for the purpose of creating a strong personality far from fear and shyness.

2.7   Conclusion

This chapter focused chiefly on the practical part of this research work. It provided a clear picture of the research methodology adopted in this study, dealing with the research purpose and objectives, research tools, the sample population and the data collection methods. In addition to this, discussion of research findings in this chapter has been taken up each answer individual, so that it can discuss several points related to the individual differences and their effect on learning a second language also the different teaching methods in Algerian public schools and institutions.

And finally, some recommendations and suggestions were proposed by the researcher from the classroom observation for better learning and teaching English and French.

General Conclusion

GeneralConclusion

Algeria is a diglossic and a multilingual speech community. This linguistic situation is the result of a number of reasons associated with politics, history,, education, technology, etc. French is considered as the first foreign language in the Algerian school introduced to learners since the early years of primary education. English is the second foreign language which is introduced since the middle school. Both French and English are compulsory subjects.

In fact, this research study was conducted to confirm or nullify the hypothesis of the students strategies used, whether the individual differences and characteristics affect learning a second language and what are the methods and approaches approved by foreign language teachers.

This work was divided into two chapters. The first one constituted the theoretical background of the study. It started by defining some concepts related to language. Then, it mentioned Krashen's five hypothesesof second language acquisition. This provides the reader with a clear view of how the second language is acquired. The chapter also identified the individual characteristics and different methods used by teachers in teaching a second language.The second chapter, on the other hand, is practical. Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected through two research instruments: a questionnaire andclassroom observation. The collected data confirmed the first hypothesis that individuals differ in learning a second language. These characteristics involve motivation, personality and language aptitude as broad differences that are easily recognized. The findings also revealed that the different methods used by teachers in private schools are more effective and successful than those used by teachers in the public school under investigation. Therefore, the students' results confirm the second hypothesis. Private school learners showed their satisfaction with the methods used by their teachers unlike their counterparts in public schools. Public school teachers face difficulties in teaching a second language in terms of class conditions and limited hours that makethe classroom atmosphere boring

leading to the lack of interest in learning. Based on the results, we suggest providing schools with developed materials so that teachers can improve their strategies. Also, teachers need to find the appropriate teaching strategies for all learners since they differ in characteristics in order to control the classroom and attain successful learning.

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Appendices

Appendices

Students' questionnaire from Secondary and Ized school

Dear students,

You are kindly asked to answer the following questions by choosing the appropriate answer according to you. I appreciate your help.

-Sex: male   Female

- 1) What is your purpose in learning a second language?

To develop your skills   To communicate with foreign people

Because it is in the curriculum

- 2) What are your favourite learning styles?

1- Kinaesthetic (act, play,..)
2- Visual (Videos, Films, music..)
3- Reading and writing

- 3) Do you think that these factors affect learning ? Justify.
    1- Personality
    ....
    ....
    2- Motivation

    ....
    ....

    3- Creativity...
        ....
        ....

- 4) What do you think about the teachers methods used in classroom?

....

....

- 5) Do you speak French outside the school?

....

Thank you

Teachers' questionnaire from Brothers Attar and Ized schools

Good morning Sir/Miss, you are kindly invited to take part in a research study measuring "Individual differences in second language learning", Below are questions to be answered. I will be grateful if you help.

_Sex   male   female

_Age

_Experience in teaching

Q1- What are the strategies and methods that you adopt in teaching a second language?
....
....
Q2- What kind of difficulties you face during the lesson?
....
....
.
Q3- Do you believe that individuals differ in learning a SL?
....
....

Q4- What skill has to be improved in your opinion?

....
Q5-What is the most effective characteristic in learning a second language?

Language aptitude
Personality
Motivation

Q6- Why are some learners more (less) successful than others?
....
....

Thank you for your collaboration.

Summary:

The objective of this research paper is to identify the individual differences in learning a second language and how they affect learning. As well as mentioning the teaching methods in teaching a foreign language. The case study of this research consists of two research instruments for teachers and students from public school and foreign language teaching institution. The results collected from the gathered and analysed data have shown that students differ and these differences affect learning a second language, in addition to this; teachers of both schools use different methods when teaching a foreign language.

Résumé:

L'objectif de cette recherche est d'identifier les différences individuelles lors de l'apprentissage d'une deuxième langue et comment ils affectent l'apprentissage, aussi de mentionner les méthodes d'enseignement d'une deuxième langue. L'étude de ce cas consiste en deux instruments de recherche, pour les enseignants et les élèves. Les résultats collectés pour le rassemblement et l'analyse des données ont montré que la différence entre les élèves existe et qu'elle affecte l'apprentissage d'une deuxième langue, aussi que les enseignants des deux écoles utilisent différent méthodes quand ils enseignent une langue étrangère.

التلخيص

يتمثل الهدف من هذه الدراسة في تمييز الاختلافات الفردية عند تعلم لغة ثانية و كيف تؤثر هذه الاختلافات على التعلم مع ذكر اساليب و طرق تعليم هده الاخيرة. دراسة هده الحالة يتضمن اداتين للبحث استبيان للاساتذة و التلاميذ و ايضا ملاحظة صفية . ان النتائج المتحصل عليها من خلال البيانات و تحليلها يوحي انه يوجد اختلافات فردية و هي ما تؤثر على التعلم. كما يستعمل الاساتذة من كلتا المؤسستين مختلف الاساليب في تعليم لغة اجنبية.