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THE CONTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS' NEEDS AND INTERESTS FOR AN EFFECTIVE EFL TEACHING AND LEARNING PROCESS

Case of 2nd Year EFL Students at the University of Tlemcen

Extended Essay submitted to the Department of English as a Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Master's Degree in Language Studies

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which has been accepted for the qualification of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution. I also certify that the present work contains no plagiarism and is the result of my own investigation, except otherwise stated.

Mr. Fabrice NIRAGIRA

May 12, 2015

DEDICATIONS

I dedicate this work to my family in general, to my father and mother in particular and to all my friends.

Fabrice NIRAGIRA

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Apart from my own efforts, the success of this research paper depends largely on the encouragement and guidelines of many others. I take this opportunity to express my gratitude to all the people who have been instrumental in the successful completion of this dissertation.

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ABSTRACT

The contribution of students' needs and interests is important for an effective EFL teaching. To effectively choose teaching methods and help students learn, teachers must first know something about whom they are teaching as their students come from very different backgrounds and have various learning needs. The purpose of this study is to find out and determine how the students' needs and interests help to enhance and adapt the teaching approaches and methods in the Department of English with special reference to 2nd Year EFL students at the University of Tlemcen. Only 30 students and 17 teachers have contributed to enhance this work as respondents. The research tools consist of two questionnaires, one for the students and another for the teachers. The findings of this study are meant to improve the EFL teaching, taking into account the needs and interests of the students. As a result of the investigation, the time allotted to self-expression was sufficient, but the teaching methods were done without considering the opinions of the students. More than 60% of the students suggested the change of the teaching methodologies that were used by their teachers.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER TWO: THE LINGUISTIC SITUATION IN ALGERIA AND RESEARCH
METHODOLOGIES

CHAPTER THREE: DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS, SIGNS AND ACRONYMS

%   Percentage

/   Out of

>   More than

±   More or less

2nd   Second

3 AS   Troisième Année Secondaire

3rd   Third

BAC   Baccalaureate

CA   Classroom Assessment

CBA   Competency-Based Approach

EFL   English as a Foreign Language

ELL   English Language Learning

ELT   English Language Teaching

Etc   et cetera

ESP   English for Specific Purposes

FA   Formative Assessment

FL   Foreign Language

i.e.   That is to say

IQ   Intelligent Quotient

LMD   Licence-Master-Doctorate

SA   Summative Assessment

TEFL   Teaching English as a Foreign Language

LIST OF GRAPHICS, FIGURES AND TABLES

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

English language is by far the most widely used when compared to languages that exist in the world. This shows that it has an indisputable status as the international language all over the world as it has imposed itself in every domain. So, it can be learned for academic, occupational, humanistic, socio-cultural, business, scientific and technological purposes.

In addition, English is taught through the world in schools, colleges and universities as a foreign language. English as a Foreign Language (EFL) refers to the teaching of English to students whose first language is not English at all. It usually occurs in the students' own country, either in the state school system or in the private sector. Algeria is aware of the importance of English and EFL is mainly present in tertiary education. Then, the reforms brought by the National Charter (1976) expressed explicitly an awareness that English was to be learned as a means to facilitate a constant communication with the world, to have access to modern sciences and technologies, and to encourage creativity in its universal dimensions.

However, even though EFL is taught in many schools and universities, you may sometimes find a group of students who are unaware of the purpose of the lingua franca use. In other words, courses are given to them regardless their needs and interests in the English language. Students' needs and interests should lead to effective EFL teaching because the teacher may ask him/herself why their students are studying English, what they need to learn, and how they will use English in the future. Many scholars ask if it is the students' unawareness on the importance of what they are learning or if the curriculum is imposed to students or not. This problem is posed among several scholars and this research addresses the needs and interests of the students and how this contributes for a better EFL teaching. Meanwhile, it promotes the learning-teaching process. Therefore, the main objective of this research will tend to show the needs assessment and interests of EFL learners (the case of 2nd Year EFL students) and how this helps to enhance and adapt the teaching approaches and methods considering the students' needs and interests. At the end of this research, some recommendations will be suggested.

To achieve this purpose, the researcher posed three research questions:

1. Do teachers proceed to a needs' assessment in their EFL classrooms?

2. Do teachers take into account their students' needs when preparing each lecture?

3. How do teachers adapt and enhance the teaching process so as to meet learners' needs?

The questions guiding this study have been formulated in order to show the complementarity between the students' needs and interests and the effectiveness of EFL teaching. From the above research questions, the researcher has stated the following hypotheses:

1. Teachers need to be sensitive to the dynamic classroom atmosphere because the students' needs and interests vary from one student to another .This is why it is imperative for the teachers to set an environment that influences them to know what needs and interests each student holds. This can be done through the evaluation assessment and analysis of the students' wants, lacks, needs and interests.

2. In Algeria, teachers refer to the known program in relation to the time allotted to the course; but it is important for them to know that English language classroom arts contain students with different experiences, skills and needs that need to be taken into consideration while preparing the lesson.

3. Students need to be assessed for the adaptation and enhancement of the teaching process because the feedback from this assessment is very important for an effective EFL teaching.

To enhance the validity of the hypotheses cited above, the researcher has used a variety of tools, including 30 students from 2nd Year and 25 teachers of English from the University of Tlemcen in the Department of English. On this research field, the researcher has conducted investigations during the academic year 2014-2015, with a representative sample of 2nd Year EFL students, another from the teaching staff. The survey is based on two questionnaires. One is intended to the students and another to the teachers. It is estimated that the testing of these hypotheses can lead the researcher to uncover the circumstances surrounding the EFL learning-teaching process and then suggest convenient remedies in how exactly students' needs may contribute for a better EFL teaching. The questionnaires involve close and open-ended questions as well as multiple choice questions.

The role of these questionnaires is to help the researcher finding out simple responses to the main questions to which this research paper is supposed to bring responses or at least an attempt of response. This will not exclude further verifications any time it will be possible. The study is both quantitative and qualitative due to the presence of statistics and descriptions based on numeral observations, so as to prove the efficiency of EFL teaching.

The handling of the central issues governing the present dissertation will be dealt with in three distinctive chapters.

Chapter one tackles the topic concerning the students' needs and interests, i.e. the related literature on them. This theoretical background attempts to explain how the EFL teaching is done in optimal conditions when the needs and interests of the students are taken into consideration. It deals with the methodologies of the needs assessment and needs analysis as well and finally shows students' differences in the EFL classrooms.

Chapter two describes the status and position held by the English language in Algeria and explains the ELT in Algeria from secondary school to university level. It also explains the conditions in which students at the University of Tlemcen in the Department of English learn that language that is a second foreign language for them. It is similarly targeted towards describing the empirical phase carried out through two questionnaires administered to two poles of the teaching-learning context: the 2nd Year EFL students and the teachers of English.

Chapter three is devoted to the analyses of the results obtained from the two research tools. It is expected then that results of this investigative study would hopefully provide a thorough diagnosis of the problematic under study and would also pave the way to a better testing of research hypotheses so as to propose some recommendations in the general conclusion to the present way of how EFL teaching can be well done taking into account the students' needs.

Although this research has mainly been carried out in favorable conditions, the researcher is still conscious of its limitations. First, the time was not sufficient for the researcher to deal with everything concerning the topic. Second, it was very difficult to find the bibliographical resources for his literature review, and those that were found were not up-to-date, but still trustworthy. Third, the investigation conducted on the side of the teaching staff has faced the barrier of a restricted sample of respondent individuals, i.e. not

all the teachers did give back the questionnaires that were administered to them. However, the sample remained no less representative.

The researcher hopes that this work will contribute in instilling, into the students and the teachers, the volition to achieve more.

CHAPTER ONE

LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1 Introduction

The process of teaching and learning English as a foreign language (EFL hereafter) can be well done when taking into consideration the students' needs and interests. A historical background will give a framework for that process from its origin to present-day trends, in an attempt to depict the major and minor points for an effective EFL teaching.

At this point key issues will be useful to review so as to clarify the nuances between some concepts such as needs, needs analysis, needs assessment , their methodologies; and interests of the students for the enhancement of motivation to learn , based on what the students really need and what they expect from the part of the teacher.

In order words, this chapter will tackle each existing theory concerning the students' needs and different elements related to effective teaching. All this will be analyzed for the sake of motivating students to learn without putting aside their differences in EFL classroom, and helping teachers to know what to give or not to their students for the best learning-teaching process.

1.2 Eclectic Approach to Teaching

Larsen-Freeman (2000) and Mellow (2000) both have used the term *Principled Eclecticism* to describe a desirable, coherent, pluralistic approach to language teaching. Eclecticism involves the use of a variety of language learning activities, each of which may have very different characteristics and may be motivated by different underlying assumptions. The use of eclecticism is due to the fact that there are strengths as well as weaknesses of single-theory- based methods. Reliance upon a single theory of teaching has been criticized because the use of a limited number of techniques can become mechanic. The students, thus, cannot get benefits of learning. Relativism, i.e. to emphasize the context of pedagogical situations is also criticized because it leads towards dissimilarities rather than similarities between teaching contexts. The use of eclecticism does not mean to mix up different approaches randomly. There must have some philosophical backgrounds

and some systematic relation among different activities. Usually it is recommended to mix structural approaches with communicative use of language. (Larsen-Freeman, 1976)

1.3 The Teachers' Role in the Learning Process

For an effective EFL learning, an effective EFL teaching is required. But what is an effective EFL teaching? In *Anita E. Wool folk's Educational Psychology (1995)*, effective EFL teaching is subdivided in four guidelines namely:

-A careful organization of lessons,
-The striving for clear explanations,
-Communicating the teacher's enthusiasm for the subjects and the day's lesson, and
-A constantly broaden knowledge in EFL.

These guidelines are sensitively alike whether the teacher uses a student-centered teaching method or a teacher- centered teaching method or even in case of student-teacher interactions.

In the end, it is clear that with all the new experiences enjoyed by the learners from their teachers, there must be a constant broadening of the teacher's knowledge in EFL teaching from perhaps conventions, journals readings and reunions where new ideas may be suggested.

An impartial criticism would reunite the multiple methods used under three main categories, i.e. student- centered teaching methods, teacher-centered teaching methods and interactive teaching methods.

1.3.1 Teacher-Centeredness

The teacher-centered teaching includes methods, activities, and techniques where the teacher decides what is to be learned, what is to be tested, and how the class is to be run. Often the teacher is in the center of the classroom giving instruction with little input from students. The teacher decides the goals of the class based on some outside criteria.

Although these methods seem to be drastic sometimes they are not devoid of interest. They hold many advantages like:

Expert Knowledge: teachers represent the fulfillment in the domain of their teaching. The base of knowledge that must be present in a classroom is mainly held by the teacher who has then the duty of transmitting it to the learners. It is a simple, traditional and common but not insufficient way of teaching.

Planning and Execution: usually the teacher is the one who make the plans of the classes. This helps to maintain order and calmness in classrooms. A good environment of teaching and learning is much helped by the presence of a teacher with enough authority to plan and to lead the students to a good execution of his plans.

Discipline: The discipline is a necessary virtue in learning. The teacher has the obligation to do his best so as to preserve the discipline. Experience has shown that children who are raised in a disciplined framework in elementary school do indeed learn better throughout their school life as well as having a balanced approach to life in general. In EFL it is the same.

Evaluation and Assessment: At the end of a course of learning, there has to be testing and evaluation of the learning that has occurred. The benefits of a teacher-centered course is that the teacher will know at what stage students are in their learning at all times and will therefore be better able to assess their progress in a course and set tests accordingly. The benefits of teacher-centered learning are manifold, and in spite of the recent student-centered fads, history has shown that many schools are returning to the tried and tested methods.

(Woolfolk, 1980:441-473 and Christopher, et al., 2006: 237-239)

1.3.2 Student-Centeredness

A revolutionary method that appeared not long ago stipulates one of the humanist teacher's principles related to learners' autonomy. The learner-centered instruction is a teaching methodology that emphasizes the importance of understanding and catering to the

students' needs, interests, and abilities. The rationale behind the methodology is that students will be more engaged and enthusiastic about the curriculum if it is adjusted to their preferences.

The student-centered teaching encourages students to reflect on what they are learning and how they are learning. It focusses on the student as a learner, on improving student learning and success rather than on the transmission of the information. The student-centered teaching is based on the constructivist model in which student construct, rather than receive or assimilate knowledge. It includes explicit skill instruction i.e. it teaches students how to think, solve problems, analyze arguments, and evaluate evidences ….etc.   (Woolfolk, 1980: 484-489 and Christopher, et al., 2006: 239-240)

1.3.3 Interactive Teaching Methods

An article from Lesley Barker (2001), one of the biggest contributors of the websites ehow.com, has stated about interactive teaching the following*:*

> **Keep your students interested and engaged in lessons by making them interactive. While the classroom will be a bit noisy and perhaps even seem disorganized, when you know how to manage these teaching techniques, you will notice more participation in the classroom. In addition, the students may discover that learning is more fun than they previously thought.**
>
> **(Barker, 2001:17)**

It is then obvious that these techniques have multiple benefits: the teacher can easily and quickly assess if students have really mastered the material (and plan to dedicate more time to it, if necessary), and the process of measuring student understanding in many cases is also practice for the material—often students do not actually learn the material until asked to make use of it in assessments such as these. Finally, the very nature of these assessments drives interactivity and brings several benefits. Students are revived from their passivity of merely listening to a lecture and instead become attentive and engaged, two prerequisites for effective learning. These techniques are often perceived as "fun", yet they

are frequently more effective than lectures at enabling student learning. Teacher's style and personality influencing which choices may be right for students. (Woolfolk, 1980: 387)

1.4 Assessing Learning

Assessment is a tool that enables faculty to determine how to improve and reshape student learning.

According to Kauchak and Eggen,

> **The relationship between assessment and learning is clear and consistent. Students learn more in classes where assessment is a regular part of classroom routines, particularly when assessments are frequent and provide feedback to learners**.
>
> **(Kauchak and Eggen, 2007:368**)

From this quotation, it is understandable that assessment plays a great role in the learning process because it provides feedback to learners, and this will help for the improvement of student learning.

1.4.1 Difference between Assessment and Evaluation

First and foremost, the evaluation of learning is defined as follows:

> **Evaluation is the process whereby a judgment is made on a pupil' s learning on the basis of information gathered, analyzed and interpreted, for the purpose of making pedagogical and administrative decisions.**
>
> **(Porter, 1991:36)**

Even though the terms "assessment" and "evaluation" are used interchangeably by teachers, there is a distinction between the two. Assessment refers to the process of collecting information from learners (for example, obtaining test scores, and work samples) whereas evaluation means looking at the information and making some decisions in relation to instruction.   (Peter, 2008: 72)

However in Mclnerney' view in 2005, assessment and evaluation are tightly related in the teaching and learning process. He highlights that: *"assessment and evaluation are integral parts of the total teaching and learning process."* **(Mclnemey, 2005:27)**

1.4.2 Functions of Assessment

Assessment is both an important part of the "re-accreditation process" and a tool for improving teaching. It enables the university to concretely demonstrate its effectiveness in meeting its educational goals. The main functions of an assessment are:

➢ To supply information if the student is to be transferred to another school or referred for special education;

➢ To recognize the students who don't master the course content, and thus need additional help;

➢ To enable a teacher to evaluate if the teaching program is effective and then to bring necessary modifications to method, learning activities or resources;

➢ To be accountable to parents by providing them with evidence of their child's learning;

➢ To be accountable to government authorities by providing hard evidence of achievement levels in school.

(Peter, 2008: 73)

Furthermore, assessment will vary across programs and should be designed to be ongoing and sustainable to support continuous improvement of student learning.

1.4.3 Classroom Assessment

In Samantha Alexander's ideas, it is strongly encouraged to teachers to use classroom assessments for formative purposes. This means that they need to use classroom assessments in order to provide the students with the information they really need to learn, self-correct, and also to meet classroom and district academic standards. The purposes and reasons for classroom assessment (CA hereafter) will be deeply explained in the following

subtitles in order to show its importance and influence on the teaching process. (Peter, 2008: 319)

1.4.3.1 Reasons for Classroom Assessment

The CA can be seen as important as it is used:

➢ To supply feedback to students,

➢ To aid student motivation by establishing short-term goals and feedback,

➢ To maintain and establish a supportive classroom learning atmosphere,

➢ To increase retention and transfer of learning by focusing learning,

➢ To control, make judgment about, and document student's academic performance,

➢ To make informed decisions.

(Peter, 2008: 320-321)

In fact, when CA is used appropriately, it has a powerful influence on student achievement. On this point, Paul Black and Dylan William in 1998 argued that effective use of CA could boost student achievement by as much as "15 percentile points" as measured by standardized achievement tests.

However, in an optimal condition, there is no way that the teachers can teach and students learn when the teacher is not able to manage the classroom well. Punitive testing can damage motivation and this leads to the fact that the students begin loosing trust and respect towards their teachers.

1.4.3.2 Purposes of Classroom Assessment

The primarily purpose of assessment is to improve students' learning and teachers' teaching as both respond to the information it provides. CA plays an important role in the teaching process as it should lead to effective teaching. There are four major directions that are needed to be used by a teacher so as to achieve four different purposes. Those four purposes are listed and also explained in the following paragraphs (Peter, 2008:323-330):

Placement: it is a kind of CA which is used by many effective teachers as a pretest in assessing their current knowledge, i.e., they assess students' productive and receptive skills and permit the placement of the students according to the right language.

So, what can be the reasons behind the pretest for placement? To answer this question, three important points have to be considered. These are:

❖ Students who do not have "prior knowledge" to begin new material will be recognized by a teacher through such test, so that the teacher can supply those students with a prerequisite work.

❖ The general level of "prior knowledge" of students is assessed and this has an advantage for teachers to know exactly where to begin instruction and what to "present".

Diagnosis: this purpose of assessment is for the control of specific areas of learning difficulty by using a "diagnostic test". It aims at exposing learners' difficulties, gaps in their knowledge, and skill deficiencies in the process of acquiring a language. Such "diagnostic test" has an objective of identifying the students' strengths and weaknesses, especially what students need to learn in a given subject.

Formative Assessment (FA hereafter): it is considered as an important kind of CA because teachers will know their students growing competence and success in learning. It is defined as an ongoing process that refers to a wide variety of methods teachers use to conduct in-process evaluation of students comprehension, learning needs, and academic progress during a lesson. It provides feedback to students, to have an answer to their needs. The feedback helps to reinforce learning and correct learning errors. It consists of home works, short tests and daily quizzes.

Moreover, FA devoted to the enhancement of students learning and achievement. When teachers start to think of assessment "for learning" rather than "of learning", the power of assessment is released into the classroom. From the FA, students know how they are doing (if they are improving or not).

As a matter of fact, the general goal of FA is to collect detailed information that can be used to improve instruction and students learning while it's happening. What makes an assessment "formative" is not the design of a test, technique, or self-evaluation, per se, but the way it is used, i.e., to inform in-process teaching and learning modifications.

Summative Assessment (SA hereafter): it is seen as an **"overview of previous learning"** (**Black, 1998:28**), by contrast with FA. Summative assessments are used to evaluate student learning progress and achievement at the conclusion of a specific instructional period (usually at the end of a project, unit, course, semester, program, or school year).

The most important purpose of SA is to state that something you are doing is finished (completion statement).

1.4.3.3 Distinction between FA and SA

Both assessments are used to see what the students have achieved, either in a continuous way or at the end of a term. Biggs (1998) says something about FA and SA. He highlights by saying that summative assessments must be aligned with instruction in the same way that formative assessment are aligned. But, the table below shows us more about their distinction:

Formative Assessment	Summative assessment
-FA are for learning	-SA are of learning
-Paul Black clarifies by saying that "When the cook tastes the soup, that is FA"	-He says again that "When the customer tastes the soup, that is SA"
-FA are generally "low stakes" which means that they have low or no point value	-SA are often "high stakes" to mean that they have high point value like a midterm exam, a final project, a paper, …
-The goal of FA is to monitor student learning to provide ongoing feedback that can be used by teachers to improve their teaching process and by students to improve their learning.	-The goal of SA is to evaluate the student learning at the end of an instructional unit.
-Data from FA are more informational in nature	-Data from SA are typically used for making judgments about students achievement

Table 0.1 Distinction between FA and SA (Source: Donald, et al., 2010:331-332)

It should be noted, however, that the distinction is often "fuzzy" in practice, and educators may hold divergent interpretations of and opinions on the subject. The educators may use FA to refocus students on the learning process, to help students become more aware of their needs, strengths and interests, to accelerate the educational achievement of all students, while also reducing learning gaps and achievement gaps.

1.4.4 Formative Assessment and Students' Motivation

A research that shows the relationship between FA and students motivation has been made by Brookhart 1997, 2007; Black and William (1998a) and McMillan (2000). The research shows that an attention will be put on its relation with the motivation of the students. Students' clear feedback about what they have achieved is very important in increasing student motivation to succeed. For this, some points help students to take ownership for their success such as the clarification of the goal or standard and a help to students in developing a representation of this standard for themselves.

Formative assessment is currently a "hot topic" among teachers and administrators and is now recognized as one of the most powerful ways to enhance student motivation and achievement.

Let's consider the following figure:
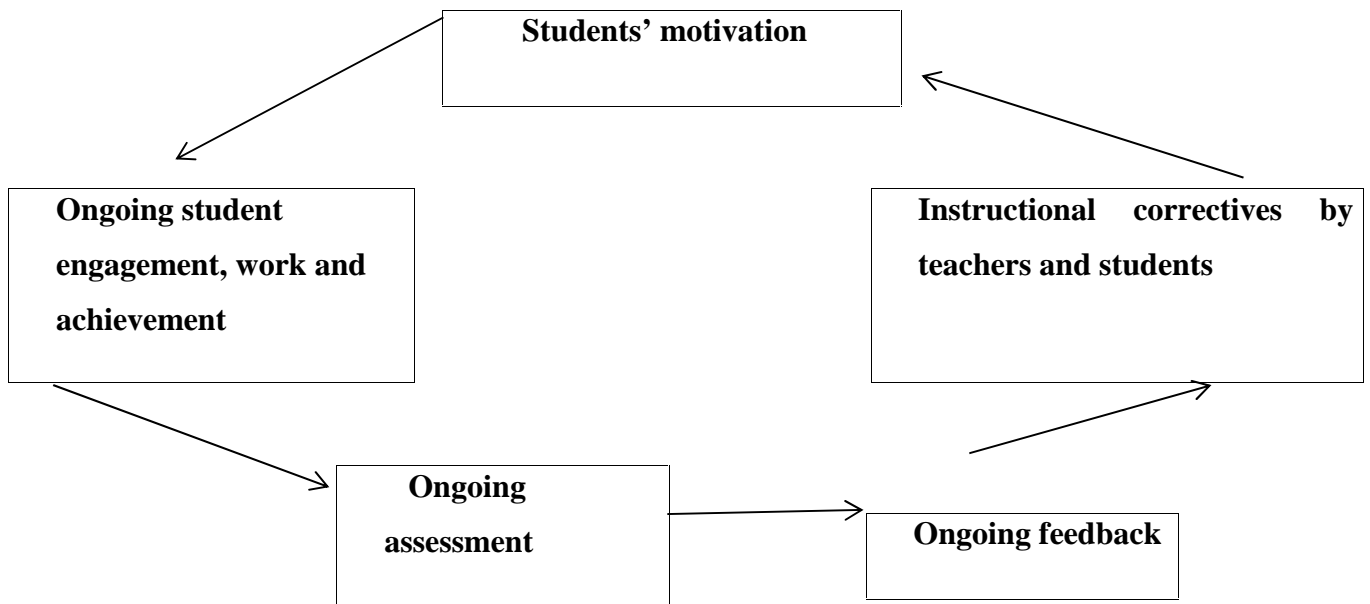
Figure 0-1 Formative Assessment Cycle (Adapted from McMillan)

From this figure, we understand that student motivation will lead to student engagement and achievement. Ongoing assessment is conducted primarily through informal observations and oral questions posed to student while content is being taught or reviewed. If the information from the observations and questions is accurate, the teacher identifies instructional adjustments that can help improve student learning. In this way, FA is integrated with instruction and ideally provides a seamless process of assessment followed by instruction, followed by further assessment and instruction.

In conclusion, FA and, in particular, feedback and instructional correctives can be a powerful technique to support student motivation and achievement. As teachers incorporate more FA techniques into their day-to-day instruction, they will have information which they can use to modify their instruction. Teachers will use this information about student understanding to help student self-assess and improve their own performance. When students focus on improvement and progress, they are more likely to adopt mastery goals and develop high self-efficacy and expectations for success.

(Donald, et al., 2010:331-333)

1.5 Areas explored with EFL Classroom Assessment

Needs assessment in EFL classroom is among numerous areas requiring a periodically regular assessment. The latter are goals and objectives, interests and attitudes, study skills, barriers, application, content or material, as well as background knowledge.

1.5.1 Goals and Objectives

Aims are broad and general statements of educational intent, and should inform students of the overall purpose of a course, programme or module.

1.5.2 Interests and Attitudes

Assessing interests and attitudes aims at answering the question as to what EFL learners think is interesting, so as to provide adapted content or material. Attention to students' interests enhances the relevancy of learning by linking new information to students' experiences and enthusiasm.

1.5.3 Study Skills

The EFL learners do not learn at the same rate. That is why it is imperative to assess the study skills of each one in order to set out a suitable teaching pace for the entire classroom.

1.5.4 Barriers

In the course of EFL instruction, learners may face some debilitative barriers such as anxiety and other affective barriers. The assessment of barriers is basically designed to bring the educators into awareness as to the affective and social issues that might affect the EFL learning.

1.5.5 Application

Assessment of application is concerned with rating the learners' reactions to EFL class activities assignment and materials and how they apply the content into situations of communication.

1.5.6 Content or Material

It is the simplest area of assessment in EFL classroom. It is also the most familiar since it is the evaluation of the level of proficiency attained by the learner.

1.5.7 Background Knowledge

This kind of assessment of the prior knowledge is concerned with verifying if the learner has the basic skills to achieve successful EFL learning.

(Haynes, 2010:14-17 and Christopher, et al., 2006:40-44).

1.6 Needs

In general way, the Wikipedia defines "need" as something that is necessary for organisms to live a healthy life. Needs are distinguished from wants because a deficiency would cause a clear negative outcome, such as dysfunction or death. We deduce that needs define the results we want to accomplish in relation to our current achievements, and we define them either formally or informally on a daily basis.

But as put forward by Brindley (1984), the term "needs" is sometimes used to refer to wants, desires, demands, expectation, motivations, lacks, constraints, and requirements. It is in terms of linguistic deficiency that needs are often described, that is, as describing the difference between what a learner can do in a language in present and what s/he should be able to do. (Richards, 2001:54) .We understand from this that needs have objective reality and are simply there waiting to be identified and analyzed.

In contrast, Porcher (1977, In Brindley, 1984:29) gives us a different perspective:

Need is not a thing that exists and might be encountered ready-made on the street. It is a thing that is constructed, the center of conceptual networks and the product of a number of epistemological choices (which are not innocent, of course).

(Porcher, 1911:57)

Porcher offers a definition which is really contradictory in the sense that, need does not exist, saying that it is something which is constructed. His view is totally different from the one of Brindley.

In short, need refers to the gap or discrepancy between a present state (what is), and a desired state (what should be). The need is neither the present nor the future state; it is the gap between them.

1.6.1 Needs Assessment

From what has been said about need, needs assessment is done in the pursuit of improving performance (or closing in results) in a variety of contexts.

Therefore, a needs assessment is a systematic set of procedures that are used to determine needs, examine their nature and causes, and set priorities for future action. In the real world, it is hardly difficult to meet all needs. Needs assessments are conducted to help those in charge of planning program identify and select "the right job" before doing the "job right". Needs assessment focuses on the ends (i.e., outcomes) to be reached, rather than the means (i.e., process).As an example, reading achievement is an outcome whereas reading instruction is a means toward that end. As it has been explained, needs assessment sets priorities and determine criteria for solutions so that planners can make sound decision. So, needs assessments lead to action that will improve programs. (Altschuld, et al., 1995:73)

In addition, an article by Paul F. McCawley published in 2009 gives us the ways needs assessments are used. These ways are:

❖ To identify strategic priorities;
❖ To define results to be accomplished;
❖ To guide decisions related to appropriate actions to be taken;

❖ To establish evaluation criteria for making judgments of success;

❖ To inform the continual improvement of activities within organizations.

Needs assessments are focused on particular target groups in a system. In our case, the common target group in education settings include students, teachers, administrators, parents, and even the community at large-scale.

1.6.2 Needs Analysis

Needs analysis was introduced in language teaching through the ESP movement. From the 1960's, the demand for specialized language programs grew and applied linguists increasingly began to employ needs analysis procedures in language teaching.

The curriculum development'*s* basic assumption is that an educational program should be based on an analysis of learners' needs. The procedures which are used in order to collect information about learners' needs are known as *needs analysis.* Needs analysis is a noticeable and necessary phase in planning educational programs.

(Richards 2001:51)

Furthermore, in the simplest terms, a needs analysis includes all the activities used to collect information about the students' learning needs, wishes, desires, etc… The process also sometimes involves looking at the expectations and requirements of other interested parties such as the teacher/teacher's aid/tutor … A needs analysis can be very formal, time consuming and extensive, or it can be informal, narrowly focused and quick.

The gleaned information from a needs analysis can be used to help teachers define program goals. These goals can then be stated as specific teaching objectives, which in turn will function as the foundation on which to help lesson plans materials, tests, assignments and activities. Basically, a needs analysis will help to clarify the purpose of language program. As teachers continue to implement needs analysis through informal assessment over the semester to change slightly their lesson planning, they will become more flexible and better at figuring out their students' needs and how best to meet them.

(Richards, 2001:53-55)

1.6.2.1 Purposes of Needs Analysis

Learners' language needs can be easily determined, particularly, if learners are in need of a language for very specific purposes. In some cases, the needs also include the rights of the students. To support this idea, Linse comments by saying that:

> **It is the school's responsibility to take into account the cultural, political, and personal characteristics of students as the curriculum is developed in order to plan activities and objectives that are realistic and purposeful. It is not the responsibility of the school to act on political matters, but it is the school's responsibility to provide equal access to school opportunities and to validate the experiences of all students, regardless of their political and/or cultural backgrounds**.

(Linse, in Hudelson, 1993: 46)

In conducting a needs analysis, the first step is to decide exactly what its purpose or purposes are. There are number of different purposes for which needs analysis may be used in language teaching. Some of them are:

✓ To discover how students use language on a daily basis;
✓ To find out what language skills a learner needs in order to perform a particular role;
✓ To identify what a learner needs to achieve;
✓ To highlight skills/knowledge/competencies that needs developing;
✓ To identify a gap between what students are able to do and what they need to be able to do;
✓ To help determine if an existing course adequately addresses the needs of potential students;
✓ To collect information about a particular problem learners are experiencing;
✓ To help establish when is the most suitable time to deliver the programme and over what time frame;
✓ To help identify the content that best suits students' needs;
✓ To increase the sense of ownership and involvement of the students;
✓ To identify any obstacles or difficulties which may arise.

These are some of the different purposes for which needs analysis is used in language teaching. It does not mean that all the points are mentioned. Those which are given are going to help the researcher in this research paper.

1.6.3 Methods of Needs Assessment and Needs Analysis

1.6.3.1 Methods of Needs Assessment

In an EFL classroom, learner's needs assessment can be conducted in 3 fashions, as it is shown in <u>Bow Valley College</u>, 2011):

1. Focus group: This method has advantages as well as shortcomings. It allows eliciting detailed answers through interactions and exchange of information. In addition, thanks to the opportunity of making up large groups this method favors the creation of closer relation in the members.

However, it poses problems when it comes to scheduling and finding the right time for all the participants. Moreover, the educator might face problems of classroom management as groups reunite large numbers of participants. This also brings about problems of communication in case the EFL learners are not advanced English speakers.

2. Electronic or written survey: This method is interesting since it offers multiple benefits to both learners and teachers. It doesn't require scheduling or limitations in the number of stakeholders. It can also be held electronically. Nevertheless, this method is on detriment of the following: the time teachers devote to the formulation of the questionnaires may be extended also the number of answers can be unsufficient in details. It can also reveal to be an unsuited way of contacting the assessed learners.

3. Interview: Face-to-Face: Interview favors gathering details and thorough answer to the questions of the assessment. This method also helps the teachers to deeply evaluate the learner's needs in spite of the language barriers as there is a possibility to use additional communication hints. On the disservices of this method are the scheduling issues as well as the possibility of relying on the teachers skills. It is also time consumer.

1.6.3.2 Methodology of Needs Analysis

Steps of Needs Analysis:

- The primordial task is to identify the audience and purposes for the needs analysis. For instance, learners in an EFL classroom might have concerns about a language learning skill acquisition. The teacher might start a needs analysis to investigate the issue and try to find solutions.
- The full description of the target population and its environment and background constitute the second step. It is necessary at this stage to target the learners and their respective needs. The teachers emphasize on details provided during the needs assessment.
- This step concerns the needs identification and describing the problems. This is where you illustrate the difference between ideal and actual English language learning. It includes also the expected outcomes in case the various solutions proposed were taken into account.
- At this stage, the actual needs analysis is taking place. At this time the evaluation and identification of needs is over, the teacher verifies if there is any needs conflict with other needs, and the relevance and importance of needs.
- Finally, the teacher communicates the results of the needs analysis to the learners who are the audience identified in the first step.

(MacKillip 1998 and Altschuld, et al., 2000, quoted in ICYF Evaluation concept Sheet Spring 2000, The University of Arizona)

1.7 Individual Students Differences in EFL Classroom

In a classroom, teachers should bear in mind that students are diverse and have different knowledge and different way of learning. So, teachers are teaching many students, each with distinctive needs and talents, and different levels of motivation, attention, knowledge, differences in intelligence, maturity, and so on. The only reason why the teaching is both interesting and challenging is the variability among any group of students. (Snowman, 2012, 2009)

In fact, Richard Snow has written extensively about individual differences in education. His challenge has been summarized as follows:

At the outset of instruction in any topic, students of any age and in any culture will differ from one another in various intellectual and psychomotor abilities and skills , in both general and specialized prior knowledge, in interests and motives, and in personal styles of thought and work during learning. These differences, in turn, appear directly related to differences in the students' learning process.

(Richard, 1986:1029)

This means that students cannot have similar knowledge, interests, or learning styles. Their differences in intellectual skills will affect the learning process. So, it will be essential for teachers to plan lessons, assignments, and teaching techniques by taking into account some students' characteristics. And teachers will have to expect and make allowances for differences among students. Here are some factors that differentiate the learners in EFL classroom: learning styles, motivation and attitude, personality, intelligence, anxiety, and aptitudes.

1.7.1 Learning Styles

According to Kirby (1979) the term "learning styles" came into use when researchers began looking for ways to combine course presentation and materials to match the needs of each learner. From this perspective, learning style is considered as a broader term that even includes the construct of cognitive style. A classroom contains students with several styles. For this reason, the flexibility is a must for a teacher and he also must learn to use different teaching methods and assessment so as to meet every student's style. In other words, it should be better for teachers to use many different methods of instruction to interest all learning styles at one time or another. This use of awareness of learning style will help to guide instruction, and at the end every student will be satisfied.

(Snowman, et al., 2012:123-126)

1.7.2 Motivation and Attitude

These factors are important in foreign language learning situations. A mixture of 'integrative' and 'instrumental' types of motivation is involved in foreign language learning situations as they are related to success in learning another language. Even the intrinsic motivation is strongly favored, especially for long-term retention. Moreover, the identity and attitudes towards the foreign language community is positive if learning FL is enrichment, and negative if learning FL is resentment. (Snowman, et al., 2012)

1.7.3 Personality

It is also an important characteristic that differentiates students in EFL classrooms. Among those personality characteristics, we may have:

***Extroversion vs Introversion** (Extroversion such as assertiveness and adventurousness is important to learner's success in language learning).
***Inhibition vs risk-taking** (for foreign language pronunciation performance, inhibition is considered as a negative force).
***Self-esteem** (self-confidence).
***Anxiety** (the uncomfortable feeling of nervousness or worry).
***Empathy** (the ability for the students to share someone else's experiences or feelings by imagining what it would be like in their situation).

1.7.4 Intelligence

Intelligence is traditionally referred to the mental abilities measured by an IQ (Intelligence Quotient) test. It usually measures verbal/linguistic and logical/mathematical intelligence. Furthermore, intelligence may be a strong factor when it comes to learning that involves language analysis and rule learning. However, intelligence may have a less important role in language learning that focuses more on communication and interaction. (Snowman, et al., 2012:112-123)

1.7.5. Anxiety

Teachers have to know that student's anxiety in EFL classroom differ from one student to another as the uncomfortable feeling of worry is too different.

1.7.6 Aptitude

It refers to potential achievement. An aptitude test helps to make prediction about an individual's future achievement. In addition, aptitude for language learning is made of four types of abilities:

✓ The ability to identify and memorize new sounds,
✓ The ability to understand the function of particular words in sentences,
✓ The ability to figure out grammatical rules from language samples,
✓ The ability to memorize new words.

(Snowman, et al., 2012:135-140)

1.8 Effective Teaching and Learning Environments

1.8.1 Effective Teaching

When speaking about teacher effectiveness, it does not mean that it is concerned with only particular teaching method. Rather, it is concerned in a more general sense with the way in which teachers operate in their classrooms, for example, the decisions they make, the actions they take, their interactions with students, their presentation skills, and the way they manage the group. In fact, highly effective teachers seem to have something extra that sets them apart from less effective teachers, that something appears to be a positive rapport with, and genuine respect for, the students they teach. (Agne et al., 1994)

Therefore, effective teaching combines knowledge of pedagogy and knowledge of subject matter with human relationship skills, judgment, and intuition. This quality of effective teachers will be helpful because their students will be satisfied and there will be the enhancement of learning-teaching process.

(Peter, 2008:57)

According to Sotto (In Westwood 2008), the reliance of teacher's clarity when explaining and instructing should be based on:

- ✓ Knowing the subject matter extremely well
- ✓ Explaining things in simple terms
- ✓ Identifying key ideas to emphasize in what is being taught
- ✓ Appreciating subject matter

In *"What Teachers Need to Know about Teaching Methods"* page 59, it is shown that effective teachers have tended to reveal that they:

- ➢ Involve all students in lesson
- ➢ Present a new material in a step-by-step manner
- ➢ Show enthusiasm
- ➢ Have well-managed classrooms
- ➢ Use clear instructions and explanations
- ➢ Provide frequent feedback to students
- ➢ Adjust instruction to individual needs, and re-teach content where necessary
- ➢ Differentiate their questions according to student's ability; and so on.

Moreover, the teacher's instructional goals, the assessments and the instruction are tightly coordinated for the effective teaching. It is through assessment that teachers are gathering the information and evidence which should feedback into teachers' day-to-day plans. Teachers assess students learning through different methods, not only in formal tests and quizzes but also through short quizzes, students' assignment, listening to the students carefully in group work and when they are in class discussion; and so on. These assessment activities guide teachers as they form their ideas about how to teach each day.

(Clark, 2011:5-7)

1.8.2 Effective Learning Environments

Everything that is part of a situation in which students are learning is what learning environments are referring to. We may cite **physical setting** (e.g. a history of classroom), the **instructional purposes** (e.g. to help students understand the significance of the civil rights movement), the **instructional materials** that are used (e.g. a table full of books,

audio, and video materials on the civil rights movement), any **technological tools** (e.g. computers), **instructional methods** (lectures, individual reading, group collaborations, etc… (Clark, 2011:6)

Effective learning environments are intended to encourage engagement, understanding, self -regulated learning, transfer, and collaboration.

- **Engagement:** It is said that effective learning environments support engagement among students. This means that students are actively becoming involved in learning tasks and are interested very much in mastering the concepts and strategies needed to succeed at these tasks.

- **Understanding:** Effective learning environments have the aims of understanding important ideas, rather than rote learning or memorize a list of facts.

- **Self-regulated learning:** This means that effective learning environments students learn to learn on their own; i.e., students develop the ability to control their own learning, with no teacher to help them constantly along the way. So, self-regulated learners condition their own learning goals, and then they select on their own the learning strategies that can help them achieve these goals. It enhances the self-reliance in learning.

- **Transfer:** effective learning environments have also the goal of encouraging transfer. Transfer refers to using what one has learned in new situations. And this is the ultimate goal of most learning: teachers want their students to be able to use what they have learned outside their classes (ultimately in the real world).

- **Collaboration:** Effective learning environments include collaboration. This means that students are working together. If the collaboration is well-designed among students, it can promote all of the goals listed above (engagement, understanding, self-regulated learning, and transfer).

(Clark, 2011:7-23)

In short, all those five goals listed above are central to effective teaching and are core goals for learning environments.

1.9 Conclusion

In order to have a well-managed classroom and to respond to the needs and interests of the students, the teachers need to be flexible and play their role correctly. In fact, students express what they want to learn in classroom via the feedback from different kind of assessments and group work and gleaned information helps teachers to define lesson goals. The learning process takes place in the environment where the students have no stress, where they can express what they feel normally and where they can say what they think about a given subject at ease. All these lead to motivation on the part of the students.

Teachers' eclecticism and role are very important in the learning-teaching process and an interactive teaching method is promoted for the fact that the teacher can easily and quickly assess if students have really understood the material. Teachers need to be sensitive since the students are different and have differences in EFL classroom.

The following chapter is focused to the reality of the English language situation in Algeria. It will show how the teaching of that language is done from the global rank to specific area of research.

CHAPTER TWO

THE LINGUISTIC SITUATION IN ALGERIA AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES

2.1 Introduction

The present chapter deals with the Algerian educational system in its general description, how EFL teaching is done in Algeria in general, since this research takes place in that area. In fact, it attempts to provide a systematic description of the educational content in which EFL teaching-learning takes place. The outsets of this chapter will be concerned with the status of English from global rank to specific area (Algeria), the EFL teaching at university. It is also targeted towards uncovering the reasons of teaching-learning English at the level of University , namely the teachers' employed method, his/her students' attitudes to such teaching and how the process of teaching and learning is organized so as to meet students' needs and interests which contribute to effective EFL teaching.

To enhance score validity of the research questions and hypotheses set forward in the first chapter about how students' needs may contribute to teach EFL effectively, the researcher employed considerable tools to achieve effectiveness in the teaching-learning process. To reflect effectiveness of EFL in classroom, the present chapter also seeks to analyze how students are taught through data collected from both teachers and students' questionnaires. The research methodologies used have been first discussed before the analysis of the data collected.

To reach the main objective of this research, teachers and students' questionnaires have been analyzed. Both of them have completed the two questionnaires intended to investigate how students' needs and interests may contribute to the effectiveness of EFL teaching.

2.2 English as the International Language

The fact that English language is now almost a necessary requirement for both development and international communication in many countries, learning it is a useful tool among ordinary people, scientists, institutions and governments. While searching for the reasons behind such growth of interests towards learning English, one may find different answers, as well as different motives. In this sense, Kennedy et al. write:

> **The growth of business and increased occupational mobility is resulting in a need for English as a common medium of communication; and access to much scientific and technical literature is difficult for those with no knowledge in English.**
>
> **(Kennedy et al., 1984:1)**

Consequently, today most scientific publications, business knowledge and exchange of ideas, global institutions, media and communication are in English.

Kachru (1992) has given three concentric circles of Englishes:

✓ **The Inner Circle** that symbolizes the countries where English is the primary language. These countries are 'traditional, cultural and linguistic bases of English'. In other words, these countries such as the United States of America and England are recognized as models for Standard English.

✓ **The Outer Circle** comprises countries where English is a second language and has spread as a result of British colonialization. These newly independent countries such as India and Kenya have adopted their own English norms.

✓ **The Expanding Circle** embodies countries where English dominates foreign language learning and is spreading as a result of foreign language teaching.

Algeria, where the English language is neither the first nor the second language, is no exception to this type as many Algerians in various fields of work use English to communicate with other nationalities. Algeria tries to survive in this fast-moving globalized world in which we live today. It is struggling to be on an equal standard with the leading countries of the world and in order to be much effective in this way communication has to be efficient. Crystal (1997:106) writes **"organizations wishing to develop international markets are under considerable pressure to work with English."**

2.3 The Algerian Educational System

A general consideration of the Algerian Education System will help clarify the circumstances that have 'moulded' the EFL student's educational background, skill development and language proficiency. The different parts below opens with a general description of different levels of instructions, the status of English language in Algeria and how it has been introduced in the curriculum.

2.3.1 General Description

The Algerian school system was in a very difficult situation after the independence, since the majority of the school administration and teaching staff were French who left Algeria at independence. The education, as one of the major concern of national development, has later on been given more attention and focused on.

In the 1970s, the government launched the Fundamental School which ensured a compulsory schooling of nine years for all Algerian children starting school at the age of six. This Fundamental School had a purpose to develop within the child the material and spiritual elements of socialism by teaching him/her economics and social sciences based on Arab-Islamic sources and values.

However, this system is more likely to hinder the child's normal educational progress. The reason is that the huge amount of knowledge given at this stage as well as the study of empirical sciences which require a certain maturity and reasoning go beyond the child's ability who rather needs at this stage to acquire the basic skills of a language. After the fundamental school, pupils who pass the final exam (BEF, Brevet d'Enseignement Fondamental) are oriented to secondary schools leading them to University, the final stage of Algerian education accessible only to "Baccalaureate" holders.

Many reforms were brought in the Algerian school which first affected the language used for instruction. After the independence, French was still used as the language of instruction in schools before a huge process of "Arabisation" brought by the Algerian government as early as the seventies. So, Standard Arabic gradually replaced French (the coloniser's language).

In addition, the predominance of instruction through Standard Arabic and the low subject matter coefficient as well as limited teaching time and resources allocated to French and English (respectively first and second foreign languages) led the young generations (those born in the late seventies) to encounter real learning problems in both foreign languages. This is clearly felt at University level, where the majority of new entrants display serious deficiencies in both speaking and writing.

Accordingly, Miliani (2001) says that the language problems that the learners face are namely due to the neglect of the Algerian socio-linguistic reality in language planning. He states that:

> **Language (foreign and national planning), as well as teaching have always responded to considerations or policies imbued with partisanship far from the sociolinguistic reality of the country.**
>
> **(In Hamzaoui-Elachachi, 2001:14)**

2.3.2 Status of English in Algeria

The term of multilingualism is currently used to refer to pupils who live in two languages or need to use two or more languages at home and at school. It does not mean that they are competent and literate in both languages (Hall, 2001). Thus, the linguistic landscape of Algeria is multilingual because there are four spoken languages: literary Arabic, Algerian Arabic, Tamazight and French.

Classical Arabic is the official language in Algeria and English is taught as a foreign language. According to Benmoussat (2003:118) **"it (English) has no established functions in the country; officially it is considered to have equal status with the other foreign languages, namely Spanish and German."**

English is not involved in societal functions, although it is being used as an international language in diplomacy, international trade and tourism. In a foreign language setting the learner can rarely have the opportunity to practice the language outside the classroom. Richards, for instance, is in favour of this context because:

"In a foreign language setting there is always an effort to acquire an overseas standard form of English and not some local form of English" (**Richards, 1972:87**).

Concerning the choice of a foreign language for the children, their parents expressed their disagreement or rather refusal for English in primary education as a choice with French for their children. According to Baiche (2008), those parents **"claim that although English is an international language, it has no social function in Algeria, and therefore did not want to compromise their children's future"** (**Baiche, 2008:75**). In contrast, French language is used outside classroom, and it has also a social function in Algeria though not officially recognized.

Almost all subjects in Algeria are taught in Classical Arabic at the university, except in the faculties of medicine, biology and engineering where French is the medium of instruction, while English is included in the school curriculum as a compulsory subject. To understand more the importance of English language according to the failure of French in some domains, Miliani (2000) says:

> **In a situation where the French language has lost much of its ground in the sociocultural and educational environments of the country; the introduction of English is being heralded as the magic solution to all possible ills-including economics, technological and educational ones.**

(Miliani, 2000:13)

However, with the adoption of English as the global language for communication and its wide use all over the world, more and more universities would place emphasis on running different kinds of English courses for their students to enable them to become competitive and competent enough in their future careers.

2.3.3 English Language Teaching at 3ʳᵈ Stage in Algeria

The role of English in the world has become paramount in almost all domains, so as to mention the positive aspects of a common international language. Speaking English is technically apprehended as a second foreign language in Algeria. Miliani (2000) highlights, however, that in Universities, 95% of undergraduate and post-graduate courses in sciences or in medicine are taught in French language.

Algeria, as the rest of the globe, endeavors to implement and therefore, develops the use of English to insure better communication, as well as better access to knowledge for students, workers, researchers and so forth.

In short, the desire to promote English in Algeria is due to a high cooperation with the United States of America and Canada, who are committed to freely support this educational reform policy in Algeria. This aid concerns the making of textbooks, the training of teachers of English and the introduction of new technologies.

The teaching of English in Algeria begins in the first year of middle school, after an educational background that comprises five years of Arabic and three years of French language in primary school. Then, it is carried out till the end of secondary school. In higher education English is taught either as a major in English departments or as an additional and compulsory subject in other departments such as: Political or Economic Sciences, Technology, Biology and so forth.

Much importance has been given to the teaching of EFL, and thus English has become a compulsory subject-matter in the curriculum in all schools all over the country. It is clearly stated in the National Charter (1976) that English is "a means to facilitate a constant communication with the world, to have access to modern sciences, modern technologies and to encourage creativity in its universal dimension."

Despite the fact that the language of instruction in Algeria is largely either Arabic or French to a lesser extent, Algerian decision-makers who are aware of the vital role played and held by the English language, try to implement the use of English at all levels of education. Zughoul (2003) highlights by saying that:

In Arab North Africa, and despite the fact that French has had a strong foothold in Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco, it has been retreating and losing a lot of ground to English. In fact the tendency of what can be termed a shift from French to English in these countries cannot be cancelled.

(Zughoul, 2003:122)

At the third stage, English is introduced in different curricula at different departments nationwide, either as a main subject at the English department and by which students are required to attend the following modules: Literature, Civilization, Linguistics, Phonetics, Oral Expression, Written Expression, TEFL and so forth; or simply as an additional but 'compulsory' module.

At this department, the majority of teachers who are in charge of these courses are full time teachers and hold either a Magister or a Doctorate Degree. Part time teachers can also teach at the English department and they often hold the License in English and are most of the time second year Master students.

As mentioned above, apart from the English department, English is also introduced in other departments and it holds a status of an additional module but 'compulsory'. Students who belong to one of the following specialties: Mathematics, Physics, Sciences, Economics and so forth are required to follow ESP courses, depending on their area of research and their needs, as well.

2.3.4 English in the Curriculum

English has been de facto the dominant foreign language in the curricula of many educational systems all over the world. On the view of such paramount role, much importance has been given to the teaching of EFL in the Algerian schools and universities , and thus English has become a compulsory subject –matter in the curriculum in all schools and universities all over the country.

With the new educational reforms that Algeria has mandated during the last few years, the English language was perceived on a larger scale on the view of the reform targets. Thus, syllabus designers view that:

> **The study of English must imperatively be conceived with the objective of helping our society to get harmoniously integrated in modernity. This means a fully complete participation in a rising linguistic community of people who use English in all types of transaction. This participation must be based on sharing and exchanging ideas as well as expectations in the fields of culture, science and civilization. This will make it possible to know oneself and the other.**

(<u>Programme of English as a Second Foreign Language</u>, 2003:2)

In this sense, a good command of English is recommended to organize the needs of our community and to fully participate in different fields such as science, civilization, culture and so forth.

2.3.5 Competency-Based Approach in Algeria

The Algerian Ministry of Education has recently began a series of educational reforms by introducing the Competency-Based Approach (CBA for short), which paved its way to the secondary education, as a result of the educational reforms of the year (2005-2006).

Thus, a transition from teacher to learner-centred instruction for all subjects including English was highly recommended. Such shift was targeted towards developing in learners to some extends a communicative ability in English to meet the needs of globalization. This change implies that the teacher should centre the teaching process on his learners.

In addition, the CBA induces teachers to make the learner the true centre of the teaching and learning. In such approach, pupils learn by doing and construct their own knowledge base. Thus, they are supposed to be responsible for their own learning. On the other hand, the teacher is required to become: **"a mediator between the pupil and knowledge…His task is to guide, help, simulate, accompany and encourage the pupil throughout this training" (<u>Programme of English as a Second Foreign Language, 2003:6</u>)**.

2.3.6 EFL in Secondary Education

English is studied for four years in the middle school and three years for secondary school. Secondary Education lasts three years and constitutes a formal preparation for the Baccalaureate examination (BAC), held at the end of 3AS, which is at once a statistical index of the educational achievements in secondary schools and a key to higher education.

As far as EFL is concerned, **"It is part of the curriculum regardless of the learners' stream (literary, scientific or technological) and represents an additional facet to the general learning and instruction of pupils" (Ourghi,2002:24)**. English is introduced in their learning respectively during the third year of primary school and first year of their middle school.

According to Senoussi (2012), it is at the level of 3AS that the teacher introduces learners to a systematic study of discourse patterns and language functions that give learners the opportunity **"…to process content relating to their lives and backgrounds and to develop both fluency and accuracy". (Teacher's Guide, 2007:59)**. These pupils are also exposed to different types and styles of discourse and are supposed to have an acceptable command of the main functions to have the capacity to express themselves.

By the end of Secondary Education, learners are thus, expected to acquire a functional knowledge of English that may enable them to gain an ability to express themselves orally and in writing in a fluent, accurate and meaningful English, inside and outside the classroom setting.

2.4 Description of the Teaching/learning Situation

2.4.1 The LMD System at the University of Tlemcen

The LMD system is used at this University in all departments. It is used to meet the global reform of higher education, and to be in concordance with the new guidelines and global trends. The LMD system is made of **License** with six semesters**, Master** degree with two years of study (four semesters) and **Doctorate** with three years of research (six semesters). Moreover, a new element which is the system of "credit" is presented in the LMD system i.e. if the students do not get the needed credits, they may pass to the

following semester with the credit got before. Moreover, they will remain indebted, and need to gather the needed credits by the end of their study.

2.4.2 ELT Situation in the Department of English

The Department of English prepares students for a Licence degree in English language, Master and Doctorate degrees.

The English Department of University of Tlemcen was first opened in 1988. In 1994, the Institute of Foreign Languages, consisting of French and English sections, became autonomous and by the end of 1999, the Institute of Foreign Languages lost its autonomous and then became part of the Faculty of Arts, Human and Social Sciences. But nowadays, it has become the Faculty of Letters and Languages.

The Department of English comprises 384 students in First Year, 311 students in Third Year which is divided in Language Studies (157) and Civilizations (154). At the level of Master degree, we have students divided in those two specialties from First to Second Year Master.

In addition, there are 44 teachers divided into two parts: on one hand, there are 34 full time teachers and on the other hand there are 10 part time teachers. Some teachers explain the lesson using data show or audio-visual aids so as to hinder the teaching –learning process. Others bring the handouts and explain via them, and by the end those handouts are distributed to students.

In 2nd Year EFL students in English section, the number of student is 332 divided in 6 groups for the facilitation of the best learning. The time table comprises ten modules studied from Sunday to Thursday. All modules are given in English language, except for one module of French language. This means that students past most of the time using English language at university, since almost all modules are dispensed in that language. It will enhance the students' proficiency and then they will be accustomed to English language because it is the language used while they are having courses.

2.4.3 Teaching Conditions in 2nd Year EFL Students

The conditions in which the teacher fulfils her/ his task have always played a crucial role both in the teaching process and in motivating students. These include the size of the class which, if large, can present the teacher with problems of management and organization. In fact, as put forward by Dubin and Olshtain, "**The actual physical environment of the classroom (light, shape of the room, etc.) is also significant and may affect the learning process positively or negatively" (Dubin and Olshtain, 1988:32)**.

As a result of number of students, modules that are given in Amphitheatre are not well-understood by all the students. So, when the teacher is explaining the lesson, it is very hard for the students sitting in the back to hear what the teacher is saying. In such conditions, it is also difficult for the teacher to manage and organize well the class.

However, modules that are given in different groups in classrooms are well understood because the number of students is limited, and that's why the Second Year is divided in six groups. This subdivision will facilitate the teaching-learning process. So, the students may feel at ease to ask questions for the subjects they don't understand or for the teacher to manage the classroom. There will be also enhancement of students' participation, motivation and group work.

In addition, the teacher may even assess formatively which is very important for future lesson plan. In the teaching of English as a foreign language, the percentage of teachers questioned proves that 41.17% of teachers are trained to do so while others (57.94%) haven't had any specific training in EFL teaching. So, English language is taught at a high rate with teachers who don't have any specific training in EFL teaching.

2.5 Research Methodologies

The methodology refers to the rationale that underlies a particular research work. The detailed explanations concerning the research design, research instruments, population, ethical considerations, and so forth must be included.

This study is based on the statement of the problem, research questions, research hypotheses, research objective, the study of the participants (or respondents), data

collection procedures and data analysis procedures. The researcher was extremely systematic and detailed. All these are clearly explained in the paragraphs below.

2.5.1 Re-statement of the Problem

Nowadays, English language has an indisputable status as the international language all over the world as it has imposed itself in every domain. So, it can be learned for different purposes: academic, occupational, touristic, medical, scientific, technological or business purposes.

EFL teaching refers to teaching English to students whose first language is not English at all. It usually occurs in the student' s own country, either within the state school system or the private sector, for example, in an after-hours language school or with a tutor.

In fact, EFL is taught in many schools and universities in Algeria. You may sometimes find a group of students who are unaware of the purpose of lingua franca use. In other words, courses are given to them regardless their needs and interests in the English language.

Students' needs and interests should lead to effective EFL teaching because the teacher may ask himself/herself why their students are studying English, what they need to learn, and how they will use English in the future. Many scholars may ask if it is the students' unawareness on the importance of what they are learning or if the curriculum is imposed to students or not. The problem is posed among several colleges and this research addresses the needs and interests of the students. Meanwhile, it promotes the learning-teaching process.

2.5.2 Research Questions

A research question is very important in any research work. A good research question helps to:

- guide the research process
- construct a logical argument
- write a literature review

- plan thesis chapters
- devise efficient search strategies.

For this challenging situation, the researcher posed three research questions:

1 Do teachers proceed to a needs assessment in their EFL classrooms?

2. Do teachers take into account their students' needs when preparing each lecture?

3. How do teachers adapt and enhance the teaching process so as to meet learners' needs?

2.5.3 Research Hypotheses

The questions guiding this study have been formulated in order to show the complementarity between the students' needs and interests and the effectiveness of EFL teaching. From the above research questions, the researcher hypothesizes that:

1. Teachers need to be sensitive to the dynamic classroom atmosphere because the students' needs and interests vary from one student to another .This is why it is imperative for the teachers to set an environment susceptible to let them know what needs and interests each student holds. This can be done through the evaluation assessment and analysis of the students' wants, lacks, needs and interests.

2. In Algeria, teachers refer to the known program in relation to the time allotted to the course; but it is important for them to know that English language classroom arts contain students with different experiences, skills and needs that need to be taken into consideration while preparing the lesson.

3. Students need to be assessed for the adaptation and enhancement of the teaching process because the feedback from this assessment is very important for an effective EFL teaching.

2.5.4 Research Objective

The need for this study arises from a desire to better help the teachers to plan lessons according to the students' preferences. So, the main objective of this study is to show the needs assessment and interests of EFL learners (case of LMD2 students at the University of Tlemcen) and how this helps to enhance and adapt the teaching approaches and methods

considering the students' needs. At the end of this study, some recommendations will be suggested.

2.5.5 Research Design/Methods/Procedures

To enhance the validity of the hypotheses cited above, the researcher will use a variety of tools. On this research field, the researcher has conducted investigations during the academic year 2014-2015. The participants included 30 students from 2nd Year LMD in the Department of English at the University of Tlemcen. In addition, the participants included also 25 other respondents from the teaching staff.

The researcher opted to choose the above participants because it is in the 2nd Year that the students begin to be aware of what they are studying according to what they will need and their preferences for the future. The survey will be based on two questionnaires. One will be administered to the LMD teachers of English and another intended to their students. All the data were collected from questionnaires only because the respondents will feel free while answering to the questions rather than with interview or observation.

The questionnaires involve open-ended and close-ended questions and the multiple choices. So, both quantitative and qualitative analyses were used to prove the efficiency of the best EFL teaching. The close-ended questions will require answers with "Yes" or "No". The multiple choices questions involve the set of responses or alternatives and the respondents will have to select one answer or more. Close-ended and multiple choice questions will provide quantitative data, and the advantage is that they are answered quickly and are analyzed easily. On the other hand, the open-ended questions will provide a long answer and the respondents will have to give their opinions to the given questions. Thus, it provides qualitative data and it is not analyzed easily as in close-ended and multiple choice questions.

2.5.5.1 Sampling

After the choice of the population (2ⁿᵈ Year EFL students), the researcher has chosen the sample that is representative for the study. For the purpose of this study, Cohen (2000) clarifies that "a valid sample is very important as it represents the whole population in question". For that reason, the study includes a sample of 30 students of 2ⁿᵈ Year who contributed greatly in highlighting how the students' needs may lead to effective EFL teaching.

In addition, those students were from the age of seventeen (17) to twenty-one (21). Among those 30 students, 20 students of them were female while 10 others were male with all different educational background.

To ensure the presence of the population, the researcher prepared on one hand a questionnaire intended to students about their preferences and also needs assessment in the English language learning and how students would like to be taught. On the other hand, the sample involves also English EFL teachers, so as to put together the results from the two parts.

The students' questionnaire aims at finding or locating the students' interests and needs in the teaching-learning process, as well as in which methods they would like to be taught. The teachers' questionnaire asks the teachers what methods they use in teaching and if they take into consideration the students' needs and interests while planning courses. The participants were chosen randomly, i.e. men and women of different ages in 2ⁿᵈ Year EFL constitute the sample of the students, and even English LMD teachers were chosen accidentally.

2.5.5.2 Data Collection Methods

Data consist with a collection of information, facts, or evidence from which the researcher can draw conclusions. In this part of methodology, a systematic explanation of data and the methods by which they were obtained should occur.

As far as this research is concerned, the researcher tries to be aware of the instrument's capabilities so as to provide usable and useful data. In order to find answer to the three research questions, the researcher collected data from the students and the

teaching staff. The questionnaires were administered to EFL teachers and also to 2nd Year EFL students at the University of Tlemcen, respectively where the study was conducted during the academic year 2014-2015. The importance of the use of a questionnaire is to adopt a more remote stance from the problematic under investigation.

2.5.5.3 Data Analysis Procedures

According to Seliger and Shohamy, the usefulness of data analysis is to **"sift, summarize and synthesize the data for the purpose of arriving at the results and conclusion of the research", (Seliger and Shohamy, 1989:201)**.

The researcher administered questionnaires to students and teachers. The students' questionnaire aims at finding the students' interests and needs in the teaching-learning process. The teachers' questionnaire asks the teachers what methods they use in teaching and if they take into consideration the students' needs and interests while planning courses. All these two different questionnaires were used so as to investigate if there is collaboration between teachers and students for the best teaching-learning process.

2.5.5.3.1 The Questionnaires' Description

The instrument of research to be applied in this work is the questionnaires which **"…are useful for collecting data from large groups of subjects" (Seliger and Shohamy, 2000:124)**. They are also useful as they help to:

> **collect data on phenomena which are not easily observed, such as attitudes, motivations and self-concepts. They are also used to collect data on the processes involved in using language and to obtain background information about the research subjects, such as age, previous background in language learning … and years of studying the language.**
>
> **(Seliger and Shohamy, 2000:172)**

Results of the questionnaires have been chosen as a research tool, because they can constitute a great source of information and can be both time and effort saving, especially if the questions are usually set out in a very systematic way. In this respect, Wallace (1988)

asserts that the questionnaire permits the analysis of a large sample of information in a relatively short period of time.

As far as the use of the questionnaires in our investigation is concerned, they were administered to 2nd Year EFL students and EFL teachers of the University of Tlemcen in order to obtain a clear account on how students are taught and which methods teachers use so as to meet students' needs and interests for an effective EFL teaching.

2.5.5.3.1.1 The Students' Questionnaire

The students' questionnaire (see Appendix B) consists of eleven (11) questions, put forward to help a researcher a lot in collecting relevant information about students.

The importance of using a questionnaire is stressed by Wilson and McLean who state that

> **The questionnaire is a widely used and useful instrument for collecting information, providing structured, often numerical data, being able to be administered without the presence of the researcher and often being comparatively straightforward to analyze.**
>
> **(Wilson and McLean, 1994:245)**

Thus, the 2nd Year EFL students' questionnaire is organized under three (03) types of questions: open and close-ended questions as well as multiple choice questions. The designed questionnaire is intended to investigate if the students are assessed regularly and if their needs and interests are considered or taken into consideration while preparing lessons or courses.

2.5.5.3.1.2 The Teachers' Questionnaire

Polio highlights that **"the obvious benefit of using a survey is that a large number of participants can be studied", (Polio, 2003:55)**. To find out how much the teachers know about teaching EFL and the problems they have confronted when assessing students' knowledge, needs and interests, the researcher has conducted a questionnaire for EFL teachers. The teachers' questionnaire consists of ten (10) questions. Those questions are organized under three types of questions: open-ended questions requiring "a Yes/No response", a close-ended question where students will give their own opinions to the question and multiple choice questions where the students will be free to choose one or more from the answers that are given to them.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter was in general devoted to describe how English as a foreign language is considered in Algeria, its status, and how it is taught from secondary schools to universities. The conditions in which students are taught and how they learn that language, that is foreign for them, were also stressed.

The other target leading the central concern of the present chapter was the presentation of the research design and the employed instruments. The entry to the research was provided by the use of questionnaires addressed on one hand to 2nd Year EFL students at the University of Tlemcen in the Department of English. On the other hand, the questionnaires were administered to EFL teachers of the same university. Those two questionnaires were considered as the main instrument of data collection. It is hoped that interpretation of the main results of the questionnaire would provide a better understanding of the research procedure and a better clarification of the research main concern. The researcher has mainly focused on the use of one research instrument which is the questionnaire, but with three (03) types of questions in each: open and close-ended questions as well as multiple choice questions.

The following chapter is focused on the reality on terrain. The researcher hopes that data obtained will provide thorough analyses of the problematic leading the present dissertation

CHAPTER THREE

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

3.1 Introduction

During the terrain research, two questionnaires were respectively administered to students and teachers in the purpose of collecting experimental data which should back up this study. The students' questionnaire was administered to a representative sample of thirty (30) students chosen randomly in order to avoid bias. Twenty five (25) teachers also were administered a questionnaire designed to assess all the issues treated in this study.

The choice of the population sample observed two main reasons: the students and teachers were first chosen with respect of their maturity and ability to respond honestly to the questions entailed in the questionnaires they were handed over. The second reason of their selection was the representativeness due to a random sampling. These reasons are the basis of a good administration of this survey and serve a better data collection.

At the end of the data gathering process, some facts came out as follow: as to the students' questionnaire, the respondents participated to an excellent rate of 100% which is in part due to the availability of this population visibly higher than the one of teachers. The latter responded, to the questions they were asked, to a rate of 68%. The appreciation of the participation rate on both sides was positive except for a slight reserve concerning the teacher's population.

3.2 Analysis of the Questionnaires

The questionnaires administered to both teachers and students were designed to provide an actual state of art concerning the students' needs and interests of the EFL class in the Department of English at the University of Tlemcen. They were also meant to gather information sustaining the questions stated in the research problem of this study.

In the following section, the questions are going to be analyzed one by one and the answers are going to be classified in a manner which will allow to establish a correlation

resulting into a proposal of a better learning-teaching process taking into account the students' needs and interests.

3.2.1 Students' Questionnaire

The students' questionnaire was aimed at finding information concerning the actual state of learning process: whether or not their needs and interests were taken into account while elaborating the syllabus and applying classroom teaching techniques. Eleven questions of three types constitute the students' questionnaire. There are open-ended question, close-ended questions and multiple choice questions.

The questionnaire was divided into three main rubrics with one additional question aimed to determine the ability of the students to answer the other questions.

➢ **Rubric One:** This rubric encompasses questions 2, 3, 4 and 5 related to the first part of the problematic which is concerned with finding out whether or not the needs and interests of students are assessed as due.

➢ **Rubric Two:** This group of questions entails three consecutive questions from the 6th to the 8th in the questionnaire. These are closely related to the second question of the problematic of this study namely: whether or not students' needs and interests are taken into consideration after being assessed.

➢ **Rubric Three:** The questions 9, 10 and 11 are designed to list ways of enhancing the learning-teaching process with help of students' needs assessment. This is also the concern of the third question of the problematic.

The following questions provide the view points of the students as to the present state of the process of English language learning needs and interests and their role for its improvement. The following analysis of each question will broaden the scope of this questionnaire treating each question apart.

Question One: The students' English level self-evaluation

This multiple choice question was intended to find out how English language students appreciate their own level. The provided answers were aimed at determining if or not the students were able to objectively take the whole questionnaire. The importance of this question is evident in the sense that the most negative self-appreciation would affect the whole questionnaire and would bring about the elimination of a respondent.

Students were given four choices ranging from **Excellent, Good, Average** until **Bad** evaluation. Out of a total of 30 students, only **3.33%** of the respondents consider to have an excellent command of the English language. **36.66%** evaluated their English level as good. The strongest percentage, i.e. **60%** among the respondents appreciates their English level as average. There is no English language student in all the population who evaluated his/her level as bad.

This means that all the respondents were susceptible to give objective answers to the questions coming after this first one. This can be better explained by the following graph:
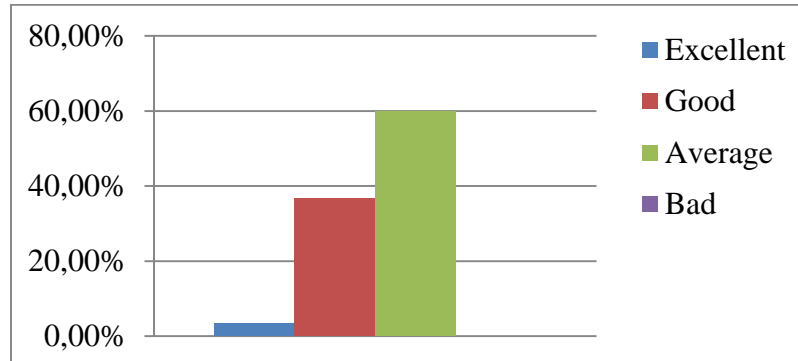
Graphic 0.1 Students' English Language self- evaluation.

Rubric one

Question Two: The sufficiency of the time allotted to self-expression in EFL class

Oral expression of students in an EFL classroom can be an easy way to express ones' needs and interests in language learning in a free way. For large classes, interviews, focus groups and questionnaires can be time consuming. The self-expression is one way to compensate for the lack of other means of needs assessments. In this study, through the

students' questionnaire, a question was asked as to the time allotted to students' expression during an English class. This close-ended question whose possible answers were **Yes**, **No** or **Somehow**; **23.33%** of the respondents answered "**Yes**". For seven students out of a sample of thirty (30), the answer to the question of sufficiency of self-expression time in the classroom is positive.

13.33% of the respondents, however, answer negatively to this question. The rate of students who balance or are uncertain as to the answer to the question of whether or not the time allotted to self-expression is enough is elevated, i.e. **63.33%**. This means that for 19 students out of 30, the time allotted to self-expression in the classroom is somehow enough.

The answers can be displayed as follow:
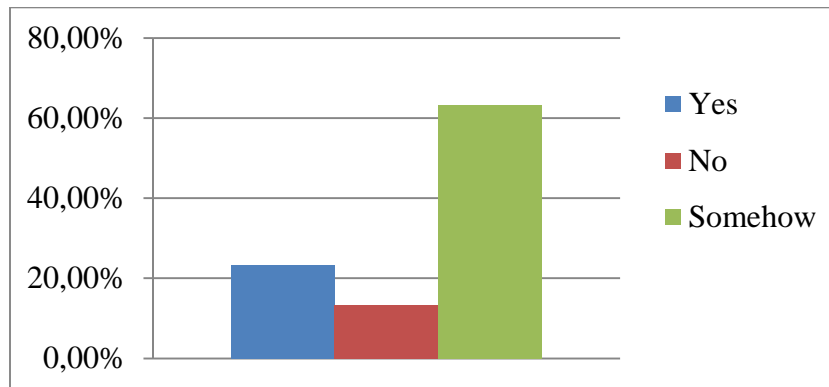
Graphic 0.2 The sufficiency of the time allotted to self-expression in EFL class

Question Three: Students' preferences in methods and approaches of ELL

When asked for their preferences as to the methods and approaches of the ELL, students communicate to their teachers what they need and what interest them as a way of learning. It is a direct question helping to determine the differences in students and the learning approach of their predilection. It is certainly an easy way to assess students' needs in the classroom. This simple method of needs assessment is unfortunately not used enough.

This is shown by the numbers resulting from the survey. In fact, only **26.66%** of the respondents affirm to be asked for the way they prefer to learn in by their teachers. The

major part of the respondents: **73.33%** answer negatively when asked if in the classroom teachers take the time to determine their preferences in methods and approaches of learning English. This suggests that the majority of students consider not having a say as to the way they would like to be taught in. This tendency shown by the numbers proves once more that the student- centred method is still an ideal not attained. These numbers are illustrated in the following graphic:
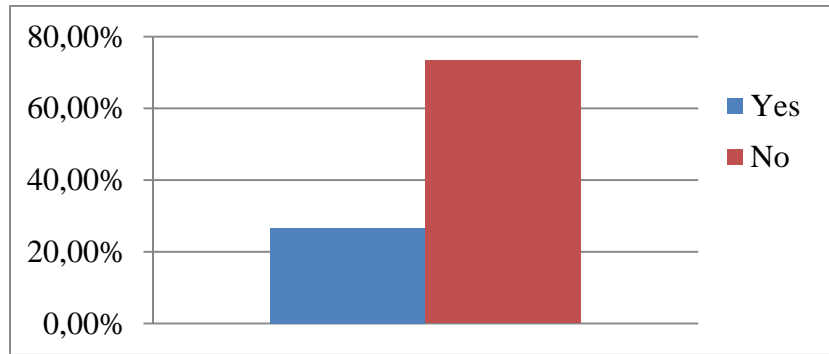

Graphic 0.3 Students preferences in methods and approaches of ELL

Question Four: Students' appreciation of the current EFL teaching method

The appreciation of the teaching methods by students is one of the key factors showing that students have got enough time to communicate with their teachers. It shows also that the students are being listened to by their educators. Their needs are being assessed and teachers are taking them into consideration. When a student has the impression that his needs and interests are focused on, he will be more likely to be satisfied with the teaching methods and approaches used.

When asked whether or not they were satisfied by the teaching methods used by their teachers, the population of this study answered "**yes**" at a rate of **60%** and "**no**" at **40%**. It is then obvious that the majority of students consider to be listened to when it comes to their needs and interests. The graphic below shows this phenomenon clearer:
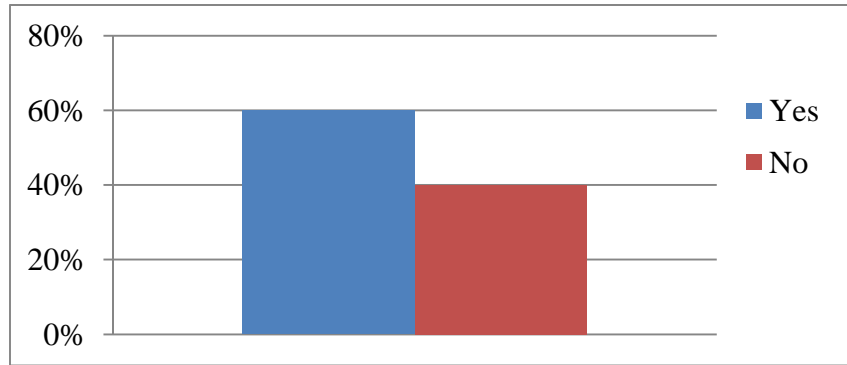
Graphic 0.4 Students' appreciation of the current EFL teaching method

Question Five: Assessment of English Language students' assets and weakness

Assessing the weaknesses and strength of the students by educator is another way to determine what they need for a better learning. When teachers are aware of the real capacities of their students they know their needs. Conducting an inquiry to know the students lacking and assets is akin making a needs assessment. For this question students' answers seem to be equitably distributed to a rate of **50% positively** as well as **negatively**. There is an apparent effort on teachers' side to determine the needs of students though it is far from being sufficient. See the graphic below:
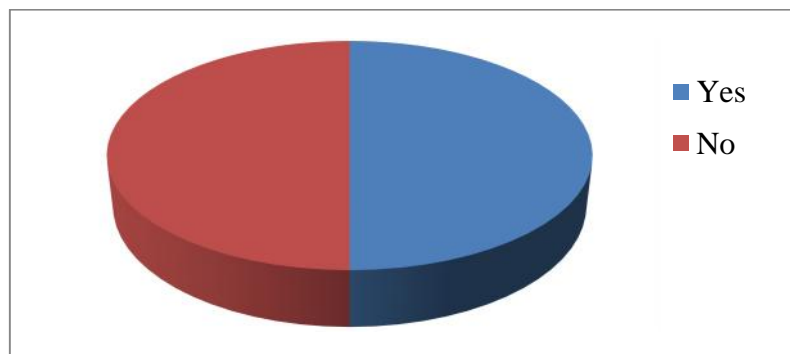

Graphic 0.5 Assessment of English Language students' assets and weakness

Rubric Two

Question Six: Teaching methods' variation

In order to see that students' needs have been taken into consideration, it is better to refer to changes that occur in the teaching methods. Teaching methods' variation can be a clear sign of a new syllabus or teaching approaches made on the basis of the needs and interests taken into consideration. According to **56.66%** of the students asked, the teaching methods vary. However, for **43.33%** there is no visible change in the teaching methods.

Let's consider the following graphic:
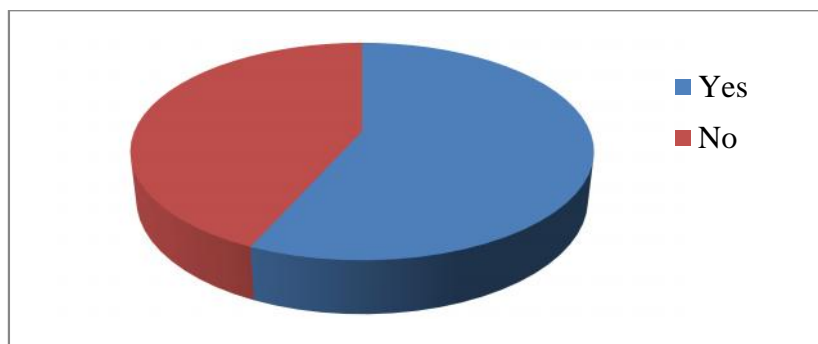
**Graphic 0.6 Teaching methods' variation**

Question Seven: What students dislike in the way they are currently taught in

Some elements of lectures are less preferred by students than other elements. The frequency of less preferred elements of a lecture is a key factor to realizing how more or less students' needs are taken into consideration. When many elements of a lecture are less preferred by students, it is a clue suggesting that interests and needs of students are not being taken into account. For a better learning process it is important to keep the rate of less preferred elements low when elaborating a syllabus.

The population of this study was asked to choose among various elements of lectures such as: the presentation of the lectures, the assignments, the exercises, the size of the syllabus (long, short), the explanations of the content.

The results can be seen in the following diagram:
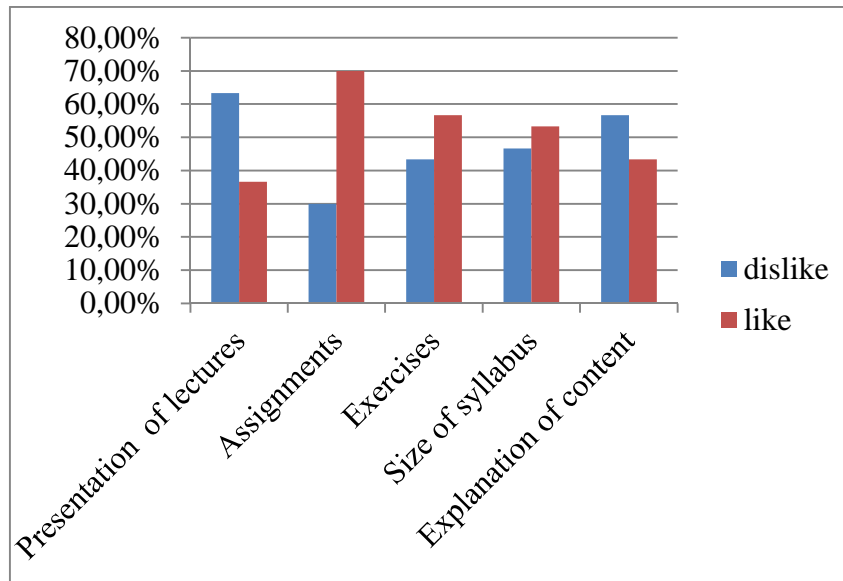
Graphic 0.7 What students dislike in the way they are currently taught in.

Question Eight: Satisfaction of students' English level progress

When the proficiency level becomes noticeable and brings satisfaction to students, it is then an evidence sign of students' needs being taken into consideration. Otherwise, it is the opposite and this is disadvantageous for the EFL learning-teaching process. The respondents answered to this question **positively** at a percentage of **53.33%** and **negatively** at **6.66%.** The rest i.e. **40%** are doubtful and answered **somehow**.

The graphic below shows clearly the English level progress of the students in the EFL learning-teaching process.
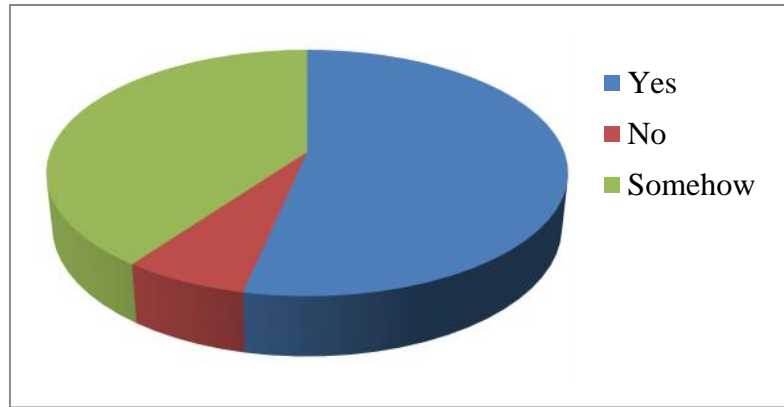
Graphic 0.8 Satisfaction of students' English level progress

<u>**Rubric 3**</u>

Question Nine: Students' propositions to their teachers

This question in the survey had the role to measure which elements were still needing an enhancement in order to better the EFL learning teaching process. Elements such as the methods in the opinion of **66.66%** of students are to be enhanced. As for the contents, only **33.33%** proposed a change. Concerning the time allotted to the course **43.33%** pronounced themselves for a change. This is better illustrated in the following graphic:
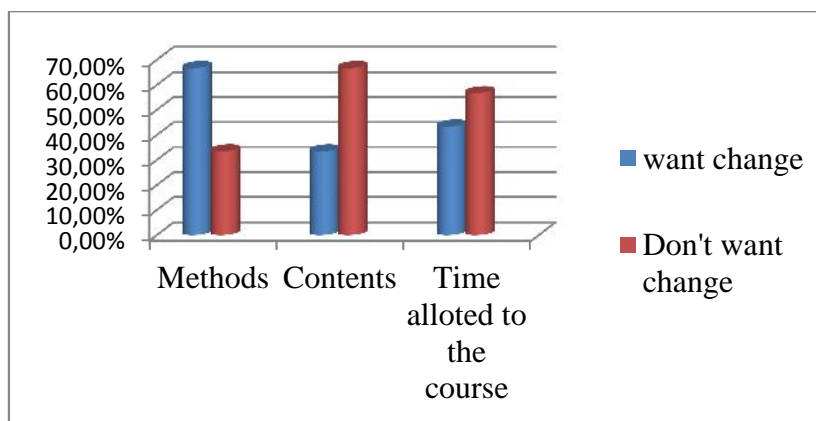
Graphic 0.9 Students' propositions to their teachers

Question Ten: Teachers' awareness of their students English learning skills differences

One means of taking into consideration students' needs and interests or even assessing them is first of all realizing how different students can be regarding their learning skills. Being conscious of this is being receptive to the difference in needs of students. Thus, being more efficient in helping them. The students approached during the administration of our survey answered "**yes''** to this question at the rate of **23.33%** and **70%** of them answered "**no''**. Two students did not pronounce themselves on this issue. In the graphic bellow, the numbers are exposed:
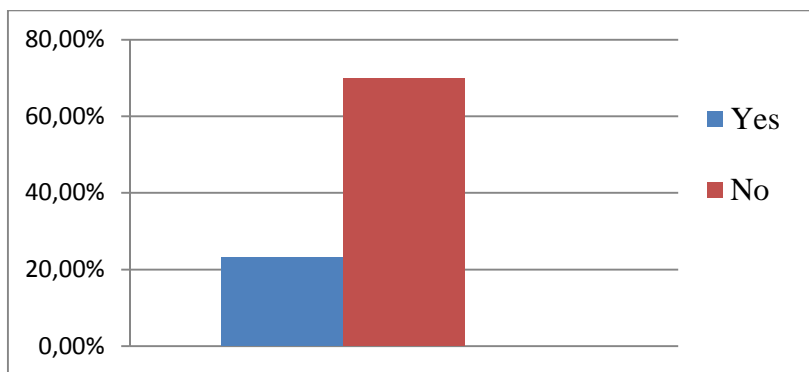
Graphic 0.10 Teachers' awareness of their students English learning skills differences

Question Eleven:

This open-ended question gathered views from 26 out of 30 students. The rate of participation to this question was then **86.66%.** The answers given should be grouped into the following categories:

- **The language skills (2/30):** such as listening, speaking, writing and reading.
- **Self-expression (6/30)**: Students demanding an opportunity to express their ideas during the lectures.
- **Methodology (4/30)**: Students thinking the methods should be changed.
- **Objectivity (2/30)**: Students emphasizing on the objective way for teachers to manage the EFL classroom.

- **Techniques and procedures (6/30)**: Students giving importance to elements of lectures and learning tools such as games, classroom activities, handouts, data show, content sources like handbooks, oral productions, etc…

- **The pace of the lectures (1/30)**: Students concerned with the speed and the pace of the lectures.

- **The content (5/30)**: Students interested in what should be enhanced or changed in the content.

The population of students concerned by the survey of this study had multiple and diverse views upon what teachers had to change in their way of dispensing the lectures. Given the number of point of views many elements of the teaching process were touched by the students asked. It was then a sort of proposal giving out the students concerns regarding the way they are taught in and how they would like to be taught. This following graphic is a visual representation of which proportion of students is for a change in a given element of their ELL.
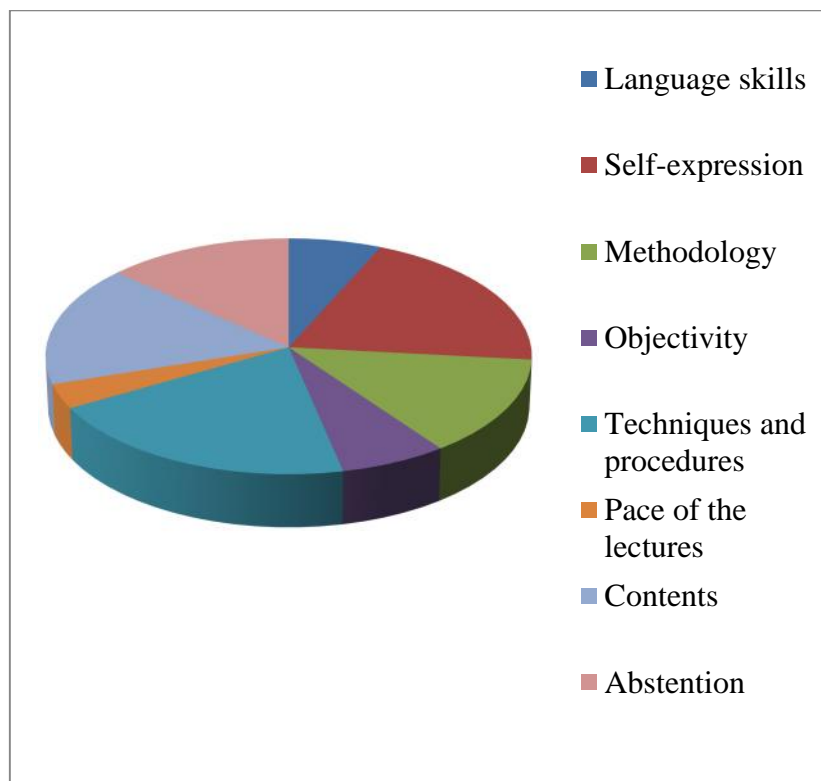
Graphic 0.11 The students' needs in ELL change and improvement

3.2.2 Teachers' Questionnaire

This questionnaire was designed to gather the data from the teachers for the purpose of partly supplying an answer to the problematic of this study. Three questions dealing each with a part the problematic correspond to the three rubrics under which the questions of this research tool are grouped. The first rubric comprises questions 2, 4 and 5. The second one entails questions 3, 6 and 7. Questions 8 and 9 belong to the third rubric.

Moreover, two questions were added. One of them (**Question 1**) is aimed to determining the ability of teachers to deal with the students' needs and interests in their diversity regarding teachers' previous experiences. The other (**Question 10**) is asked in the purpose of finding out the opinion of teachers on the question as to the proposal of a tentative solution approaching the ideal target situation of the teaching process.

This questionnaire concerns 25 respondents among whom only 17 answered. The rate of participation is then 68%. In the section below, each question is going to be studied in breadth so as to extract the entire element susceptible to help in establishing a correlation of facts.

Question One: Previous teaching experience

Assessing the previous teaching experience of the teachers was a sine qua non condition to the consideration of the answers provided by each teacher for the whole questionnaire. Needs and interests assessment is a process emphasized on during the training of the new teachers. Having had a previous training is very helpful in teachers dealing with the students' needs and interests. To this question, **41.17%** of teachers asked answered **positively** while **52.94%** answered "**No**" as illustrated in the following graphic.
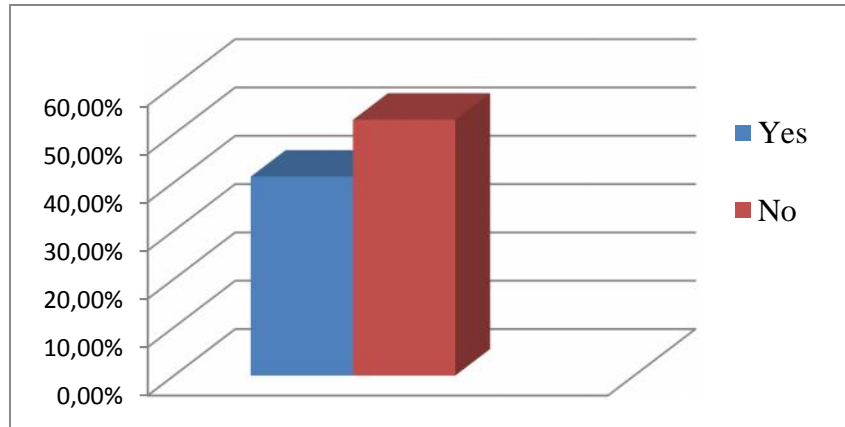
Graphic 0.12 Previous teaching experience

*Although the only choice given for this question was **"Yes"** and **"No"**, one of the respondents answered **"Somehow".** Another considers having only had a theoretical training which in his opinion doesn't count as a real training. Hence, he answered **"No"**.

Rubric One

Question Two: Assessing the students' teaching preferences

Finding out if the needs and interests assessments are taking place, this survey designed for teachers used its second question. It is a direct question to which **47.05%** of the respondents answered positively whereas **41.17%** answered negatively. **11.76%** of the respondents have chosen a third option: "Sometimes". Note that this option was not provided in the questionnaire.

See the graphic below:
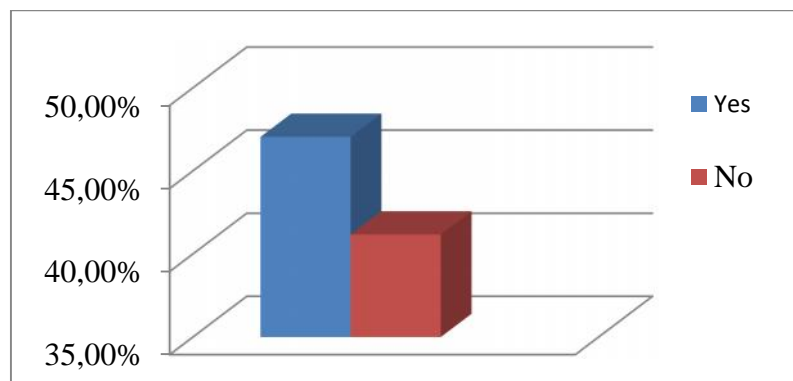
Graphic 0.13 Assessing the students' teaching preferences

Question Four: Assessing weaknesses and strengths of students

After determining which weaknesses and strengths students have, it is the time to take them into consideration. This question inquires one part of the process of needs assessments supposed to be conducted by the teachers. This question was answered to, **positively** by **88.23%** of the respondents. Only **11.76%** answered **negatively**.

Note that among the percentage of teachers who answered positively, one of the teachers said that he is aware of the weaknesses and strengths, but not all the students. This graphic below displays those numbers.
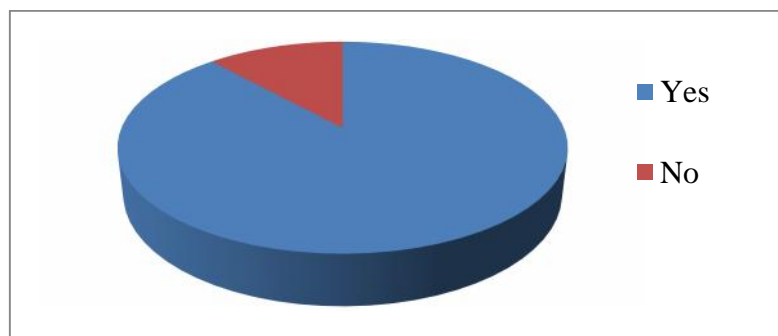
Graphic 0.14 Assessing weaknesses and strengths of students

Question 5: Students' English level evaluation

In the beginning of the English language learning, it is better to evaluate the students' previous knowledge in the purpose of being aware of what they need for a better teaching. This survey determined that **76.47%** of teachers asked, proceed this way. **23.52%** of teachers do not assess their students' previous knowledge. This phenomenon can be schematized as in the following graphic:
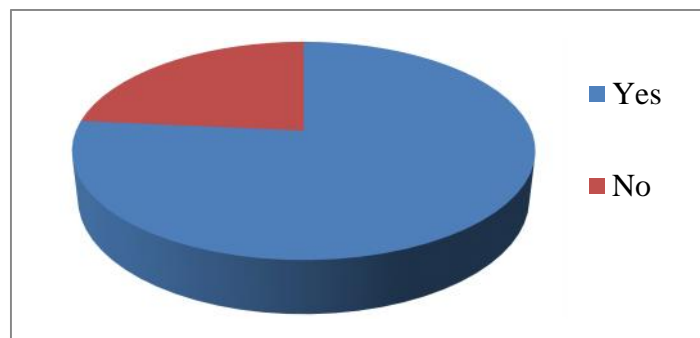
Graphic 0.15 Students' English level evaluation

Rubric Two

Question 3: EFL syllabus imposed to the teaching practitioners

There is generally a standardized handbook imposed to EFL teachers. However, they can choose to adapt it to the needs of their students. To the question of knowing whether or not there is a syllabus imposed to them by education authorities, **52.94%** of the respondents answered **"Yes"** whereas **47.05%** answered **"No"**.

The table below illustrates more on these statistics.

	Number of teachers (17)	Percentage
Yes	9	52.94%
No	8	47.05%

Table 0-1 EFL syllabus imposed to the teaching practitioners

Among the respondents who answered **"yes"**, all of them admit to add complementary content to the program they are given as illustrated in the following table.

	Number of teachers (17)	Percentage
Yes	9	52.94%
No	0	0%

Table 0-2   Syllabus modified by EFL teaching practitioners

The latter respondents affirm also at a rate of **11.76%** that the additional content is suggested to them by the students**. 41.17%** of them say that the content is modified according to other factors. This phenomenon is shown in the table below:

	Number of teachers (17)	Percentage
Yes	2	11.76%
No	7	41.17%

Table 0-3 Syllabus modified according to students needs

*One of the respondents added that in some modules, he designed himself the program or he is given the program by his colleagues in others.

Question Six: Observation of the progress of the English language proficiency during the English learning process

100% of the respondents are positive when asked whether they realize any progress in the English language proficiency in the course of the ELL. This is a sign of improvement that may be due to the incorporation of the students' needs in their programs. See the table below:

	Number of teachers (17)	Percentage
Yes	17	100%
No	0	0%

Table 0-4 Observation of the progress of the English language proficiency during the English learning process

Question Seven: Variation of teaching methods in the course of learning process

Taking into consideration the needs and interests of the students may lead to a variation of teaching methods in the course of learning process. When asked this question, **58.82%** of the teachers answered **"Yes"** when only **41.17%** answered **"Somehow"**. No one responded negatively. The following graphic illustrates those statistics:
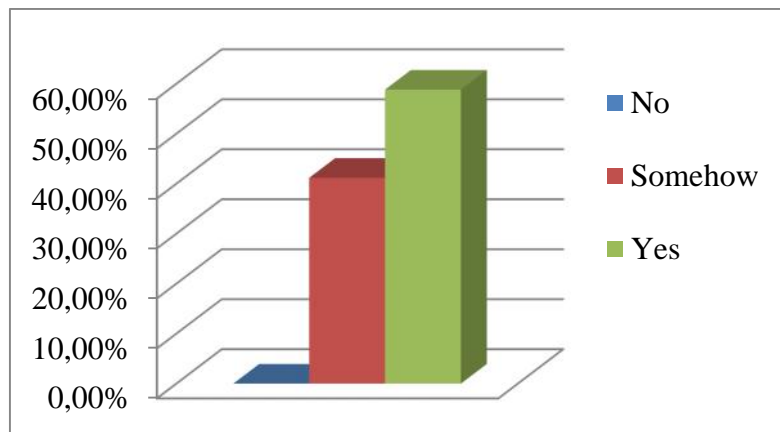
Graphic 0.16 : Variation of teaching methods in the course of learning process

**<u>Rubric Three</u>**

Question Eight: Enhancing students' class participation

One of the ways of taking the needs and interests of the students into account is to promote the class participation. This survey finds out that many activities designed to enhance the classroom participation such as the oral assignment, hands-on activities, questions-and-answers sessions and interactional activities are the most practiced. See the numbers in the following graphic:
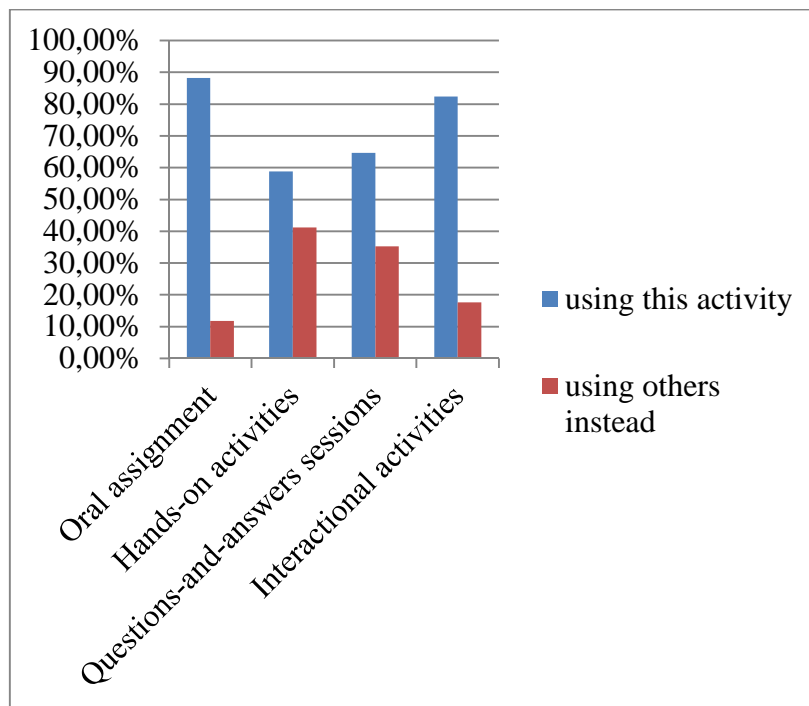
Graphic 0.17 : Enhancing students' class participation

Question Nine: Promoting students' autonomy

The students' autonomy is one of the important needs to be taken into account. It is then important to enhance it. This question was addressed to respondents who were given activities among which they were to choose. These are research assignment, students' portfolios and homeworks.

The activity which is mostly used to promote students' autonomy is the research assignment with 94.11% and the homeworks on the rate of 82.35%. 47.05% of the teachers

use the students' portfolios. One of the teachers says to encourage students to have portfolios in vain.

The rate of the preferences of the teachers as to these activities is illustrated in the graphic below:
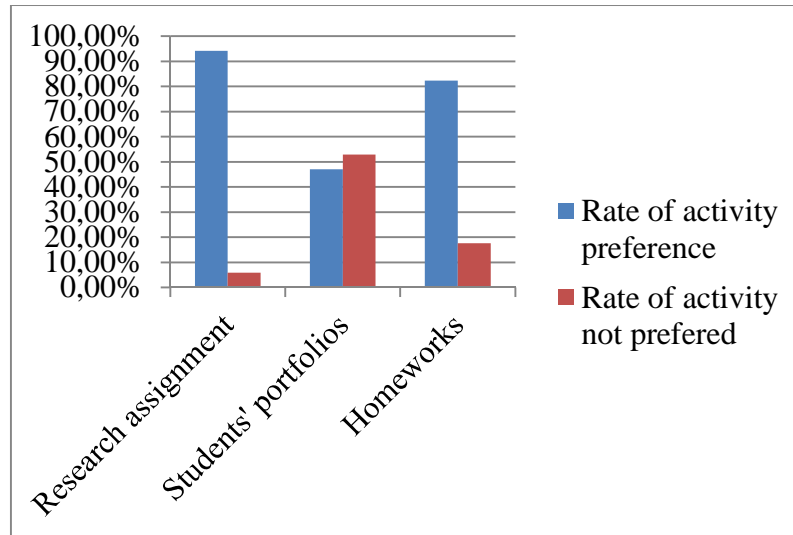
Graphic 0.18 Promoting students' autonomy

Question Ten: Teachers' view upon the role of students' needs in the elaboration of the material

This question has the peculiarity of not being included in the rubrics of questions aimed to provide part of the answer to the researcher's problematic. This question has as the purpose of bringing out the views of teachers as to the importance of students' needs assessments. The answers to this question show how readily teachers are to assess and take into account the students' needs and interests.

Among the 17 respondents who participated to this survey, only 12 of them answered to this question. The rate of participation to this question is then 70.58%. The teachers who responded to this question gave answers that can be grouped into five categories. These categories group teachers who share the same views and provided the same elements. The elements provided were the following:

✓ **Material/content elaboration**
✓ **Motivation**

✓ **Instructional procedures**

✓ **Students' centredness**

✓ **Students' participation**.

Out of the 70.58% of the respondents who answered to this question by providing the elements above, the percentage of the teachers sharing the same views on this issue is shown in the graphic below.
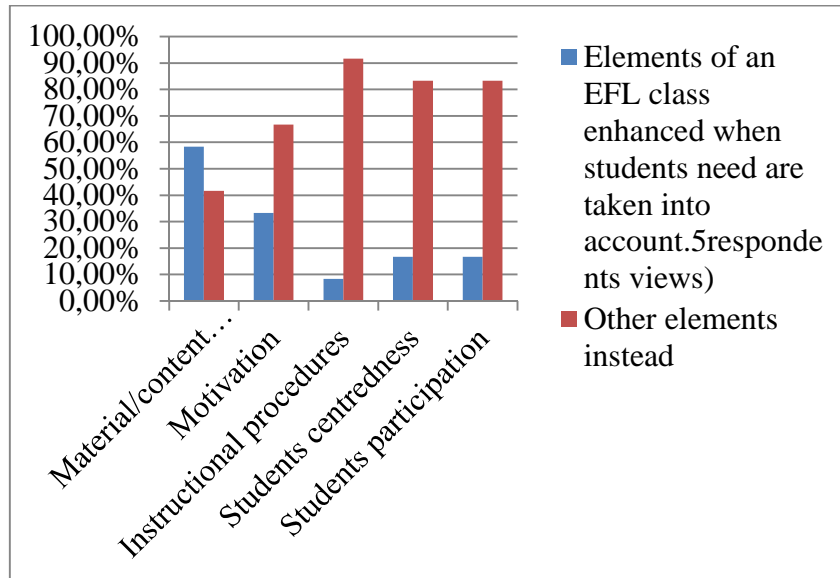
Graphic 0.19 Teachers' view upon the role of students' needs in the elaboration of the material

3.3 Summaries of the findings

The data above provided were analyzed into two steps:

✓ Firstly, the researcher gave out a little comment analyzing and describing the data and its implications without relating them.

✓ Secondly, the researcher provided a visual support of the gathered data in the shape of graphics and tables.

3.4 Correlations

3.4.1 Needs Assessment in 2nd Year EFL Students

The state of art of needs assessment at the University of Tlemcen in the EFL classroom does not follow the standards methodology namely the usage of tools such as questionnaires, interviews and focus groups.

However, this process exists under a form which is adapted to the terrain situation. This study focuses on the actual ways related to needs assessment like **the assessment of weaknesses and strengths** of the students, the inquiries concerning **the teaching methods choices or preferences** and **the time allotted to the students' self-expression**.

On the basis of these means of needs assessment applied at the University in the 2nd Year EFL students (in the Department of English) as well as the numbers resulting from the survey made for the sake of this study, the state of art of needs assessment in the Department of English in the EFL class is as follow:

The time allotted to self-expression, which allows the students to express among other issues, their needs and interests, is sufficient according to **>60%** of the students.

>70% of students as well as **>50%** of teachers agree upon the fact that the choice of the teaching methods is done without considering the opinions of the students. Although the students' centredness of the teaching methodology is one of the key elements showing the existence of needs analysis, it represents only one factor.

±50% of students alongside with **>80%** of teachers affirm that the EFL teachers are generally aware of students' individual strengths and weaknesses. Moreover**, >70%** of teachers affirm to evaluate the previous EFL knowledge in the beginning of the EFL learning-teaching process.

After observing these statistics, the researcher is able to affirm that although the teaching methodology is chosen without the consensus of the students, the needs assessment is a reality in the EFL class at the University of Tlemcen at the Department of English for 2nd Year EFL students. Nevertheless, the students' centredness which is a factor facilitating the needs assessment is still lacking as the teacher is considered as the **knowe**r not as a **facilitator**.

3.4.2 Considering students' needs while elaborating the content

One of the basic question of this research was to find out whether or not, and to which extent the needs and interests of students were taken into account when building the content. The statistics provided by the analysis of results from both teachers and students sides give an answer. This study bases itself on three factors related to this issue. Those are:

✓ **The variation of the teaching methods in the course of the EFL teaching process**: The change in teaching methods suggests that students' needs and interests may have been incorporated in the content and observed while choosing the teaching methods. It has been noticeable to **>50%** of students and **>50%** of teachers, in accordance with the results of the survey, that the teaching methods have changed in the course of the EFL teaching-learning process.

✓ **The appreciation of the changes by the students**: When the methods vary, the students may appreciate the change positively or negatively according to whether or not their needs and interests are taken into consideration. However, the students appreciate negatively some of the elements of the EFL teaching-learning process such as the presentation of the lectures **(>60%)** and the explanation of the content **(>50%)**. On the teachers' side, **>50%** of the respondents affirm to be imposed a syllabus by educational authorities. They add that they adapt and adjust that syllabus. This adaptation of the syllabus is not done considering the students' needs and interests (See Tables 1, 2 and 3) in **>80%** of the cases.

✓ **The teachers and students' feedback**: The progress in the students' EFL level suggests that taking into consideration their needs and interests have been helpful for the process of EFL learning. The statistics coming out of the analysis of the results of the survey show that **100%** of teachers are satisfied with the students' EFL level progress. However, only **>50%** of the students are satisfied with the accomplished progress in EFL.

3.4.3 Ways of meeting students' needs at the University of Tlemcen

Both sides of the respondents in this survey suggested at different rates what should be done in order to meet the students' needs at the University of Tlemcen.

>60% of the students suggested that the **teaching methodology** should be changed. This was in addition to **the time allotted to the courses (>40%)** as well as **the content (>30%)**.

In addition, students emphasize on teachers focusing on the EFL learning skills at a rate of **70%**. They also suggested enhancing some elements of the EFL teaching-learning process such as the language skills, the methodology, the techniques and procedures, the pace of the lectures and the content.

According to the teachers, the students' participation should be enhanced. **>80%** suggests to privilege oral assignments and interactional activities, **>60%** advice to focus on questions-and-answers sessions when **>50%** propose hands-on activities in order to increase students' participation in the classroom. When asked how they should promote their students' autonomy, teachers propose **research assignments** at a rate of **>90%**, **homeworks** at **>80%** and **students' portfolios** at the percentage of **>40%**.

All the features mentioned above represent the effort made by both students and teachers in promoting the taking into consideration of the needs and interests of students.

3.5 Conclusion

The main concern of this chapter was the analysis of the collected data and the establishment of the correlation of the results with the problematic of this study. The tools used to collect data were arranged and subdivided into three rubrics as a way of answering to the problem of this research as the latter is divided into three questions. The means of the research that led to the analyzed results was divided into two questionnaires designed to gather data respectively from teachers and students. The analysis of the findings was done step by step each question apart before linking them in the correlation section.

The students' questionnaire gathered a large amount of data from a population of chosen students grouped into a random sample. Some facts among the findings were quite unexpected. However, the major part of the results confirmed the speculations of the hypotheses of this research.

The teachers' questionnaire in its multiple parts revealed to be parallel to the students one although these populations do not share the same appreciation of the state of the needs assessment at the University of Tlemcen due to difference of perspectives.

All in all, the analysis of the data worked out in this chapter allowed the researcher to reach some conclusions. The latter could be useful when disserting and discussing a proposal of tentative solutions in the recommendations.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

Given the position and the importance of EFL in curricula all over the world, it is unconceivable for EFL teaching practitioners not to proceed to EFL students' needs analysis and using the latter in the elaboration of the syllabuses. The needs and interests of students have always played a tremendous role in the teaching-learning process especially those tending to be learner centred. Many studies in the field of applied linguistics throughout the time have been dedicated to the process of needs analysis. Recently, the revolution in the sector of education has led to the elaboration of approaches and methodologies defining the role of both participant parties in the teaching-learning process. The teachers are now attributed the role of facilitators in their profession. This means that the teachers are no longer prisoners of textbooks. From now on, teachers are appealed to allotting much of the time in classrooms to the students' expression of their point of views on how they should be taught. As for students, their role in the classroom is no longer a passive one. They dynamically participate to the organization of their cursus. This is done by communicating to teachers, their needs and interests.

Furthermore, the leaners' centredness emphasizing on the learners' needs obey to standard rules of assessing and analyzing the latter. However, in many cases local means are used in achieving this task as they are the most adapted. It is then vital to precise that the process needs analysis in some countries like Algeria has to adapt the field situation to the leitmotiv of the needs analysis.

The situation of EFL in Algeria is peculiar in the sense that English is one of many foreign languages taught in all the stages of the curriculum. Nevertheless, given the expansion of the globalization, TEFL is in a constant growth. Students are introduced to EFL at early age in first year middle school. Stating from this stage throughout secondary education, students acquire the bases of this language. Due to the position of middle school teachers in the classroom, we can affirm that the students' needs are not given too much consideration. This results in a situation in which students finish their secondary school education with a relatively medium level allowing them a basic command of English language. However, some learners succeed to acquire a relatively excellent command of this language which permits them to later access to the university EFL cursus.

In the Algerian universities, EFL is present as one of the most frequent subject taught. At this stage, many TEFL approaches are experimented. The LMD system, highlighting

the role of the students, allows the introduction of needs analysis and promotes taking into consideration the interests of the students.

Notwithstanding, the English language though not too much practiced is also present outside of the classroom. In Algeria, the access to global media, using in their majority the English language, is a reality. Many students in EFL are likely to practice their language skills such as listening, reading and writing thanks to the easy access to internet, television, and so forth. This allows the EFL learners to improve their level out of the classroom. It also creates a gap among the learners as to their proficiency. The difference into students thus created, due to the inequality of access to worldwide media, brings about the difference into students' needs and interests in the EFL classroom. This is one among many reasons EFL teachers in Algeria have the duty of assessing, analyzing and taking into account their students' needs.

At the University of Tlemcen, similarly to many other universities in Algeria, TEFL is a part of the educational program. English language is taught in the Department of English. The section of English language, in this department, recruits yearly new students. In the first year and second year, students master the usage of English for general purposes. By means of many modules, students learn the English language and attain a level which allows them to face the specialties they choose in their third year.

This study has focused on the second year EFL students as their level is sufficiently elevated and allowing the researcher to conduct this study in optimal conditions. This research questioned the role of needs and interests held by the EFL students at the University of Tlemcen. After observing the situation of EFL on the field, the researcher deduced that some students had a certain awareness of the purpose of their learning whereas others had not. It was then fit to ask oneself whether or not the imposed syllabus was responsible of this situation. Furthermore, knowing that all the students, aware or not, have needs and interests specific to each. This study gave itself the purpose to find out whether or not teachers were taking time to assess and analyze the needs and interests of their students. Also the researcher wanted to know the impact of these needs and interests on the dispensing of the imposed syllabus. In the end, this study assesses the ways the needs and interests of the students should be incorporated in the teaching-learning process in the EFL class at the University of Tlemcen.

By means of questionnaires administered to teachers and students, data were gathered in the purpose of backing up the hypotheses of this study as a part of the answer to the problematic. The findings, on both sides of students and teachers, were surprisingly aligned to the hypotheses formulated in the beginning of this research.

The researcher found out that the needs assessment and analysis was a reality on the field. This was deduced after analyzing the data provided by the population of the study. Moreover, the question as to whether or not the needs and interests of the students had an impact on the EFL syllabus was verified too. Regarding the ways in which teachers should enhance the incorporation and the adaptation of needs and interests of students in the EFL syllabus, both sides of participants proposed many solutions to this question.

Globally speaking, the assumptions on which this research was based on were confirmed. However, many exceptions were mentioned. This was due to the diversity of the sample representing the population. The researcher had then the duty of sorting out some answers and the others were put into special mentions.

The observation of the target population and the EFL situation, especially at the level of the role of needs and interests of students in TEFL, at the University of Tlemcen in the Department of English for 2nd Year EFL students led the researcher to propose some recommendations:

-To Students:

- Students should get more involved in the EFL classes by participating more and asking questions not waiting for teachers to decide in which manner lessons are conducted.
- Students should define goals to attain at the beginning of the instruction process. This would allow them to monitor their progress and be aware of their needs and interests they will submit to their teachers.
- At last, students are advised to use all the means at their disposition to take an active part to the classroom management. This could be materialized by the students' propositions of the activities related to their interests and needs.

-To teachers:

- Teachers are recommended to conduct the students' needs analysis in a standard way. It would allow the teachers to schedule and organize the assessment of the students' needs. This will result in students feeling more involved in the teaching-learning process as there would be a specific time allotted to gathering the proposals from students.

- While modifying or adapting EFL syllabus, teachers are strongly urged to take the students' needs and interests into account above all things.

- Teachers should monitor the progress of their students. There is a need of an on-going evaluation in the purpose of determining the needs and interests of the students over time all along the duration of the teaching-learning process.

The research perspectives in this domain in this specific field are still unexplored. The researchers willing to conduct further research should be aware of the problem of accessing data from the population at the University of Tlemcen. The author of this study recommends strongly using field observation as a research tool. Using questionnaire is a means to access to easily quantifiable data however the observation is still the most reliable tool in this research situation.

All in all, this research succeeded to reach the true situation of the role of needs and interests of students in the EFL class at the University of Tlemcen for 2nd year EFL students as an illustration of a portion of the state of art of the TEFL situation. The researcher expects this study to lay the basis for further research with extended means.

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Appendix A

Teachers' Questionnaire

I am writing my dissertation on how students' needs and interests may contribute to an effective EFL teaching. Would you please help me and take some minutes to answer the following questions? Thank you!

1. Have you had any specific training in the teaching of English as a foreign language?

- YES
- NO

2. Do you ask the students how they would like to be taught?

- YES
- NO

3. Are you given any program that you use to implement your courses?

- YES
- NO

-If yes, do you add complementary content to the program you are given?

- YES
- NO

-If yes, is the additional content suggested by the students?

- YES
- NO

4. Are you aware of individual weak and strong points of your learners?

- YES
- NO

5. Do you evaluate the English level at the beginning of their English language learning process? (Background knowledge of the students)

- YES
- NO

6. Do you realize any progress in the English language proficiency as the English learning goes on?

- YES
- NO

7. In the course of learning process, have you ever changed your teaching methods?

- YES
- NO
- SOMEHOW

8. How do you increase the learners' class participation? (You may select more than one answer)

- Oral assignment
- Hands-on activities
- Question-and-answer session
- Interactional activities

9. How do you teach students to learn by themselves? (Students autonomy) (You may select more than one answer)

- Research assignment
- Students' portfolio
- Homeworks

10. What is the importance of the students' needs in the elaboration of the material?

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Appendix B

Students' Questionnaire

I am writing my dissertation on how students' needs and interests may contribute to an effective EFL teaching. Would you please help me and take some minutes to answer the following questions? Thank you!

Age:

Sex:

1. How do you evaluate your English level?

- Excellent
- Good
- Average
- Bad

2. Are you given enough time to express yourself in class?

- YES
- NO
- SOMEHOW

3. Are you asked for your preferences as to methods and approaches in learning English?

- YES
- NO

4. Are you satisfied with the methods used currently by the teachers?

- YES
- NO

5. Are you asked as to your assets and weaknesses in English language?

- YES
- NO

6. Does the teacher vary his/her teaching method?

- YES

- NO

7. What don't you like in the way you are currently taught in? (You may select more than one answer)

- The presentation of the lectures
- The assignments
- The exercises
- The size of the syllabus (long, short)
- The way the teacher explains the content

8. Are you satisfied with your English level progress compared to the beginning of your learning?

- YES
- NO
- SOMEHOW

9. What would you propose to your teachers to change? (You may select more than one answer)

- The methods
- The contents
- The time allotted to the course

10. Does the teacher know in which English learning skills you are not proficient?

- YES
- NO

11. In your opinion, what should the teacher do to help you improve your English language learning?

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