

People's Democratic Republic of Algeria
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi-Ouzou
Faculty of Letters and Languages



Department of English

Domain: Letters and Foreign Languages

Field: English Language

Specialism: Didactics of Foreign Languages

**Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master in English**

**EFL Teachers' Strategies to Cope with
Pupils' Mixed Abilities: The Case of
Selected Middle Schools in Tizi-Ouzou**

Presented by:

- **Ms. OU OTMANE Zohra**

Board of Examiners :

- **Chair :** Hammou Mohamed, MAA, Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi Ouzou
- **Supervisor :** Chetouane Madjid , MAA, Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi Ouzou
- **Examiner:** Akir Malika, MAB, Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi Ouzou

Supervised by:

Mr. CHETOUANE Madjid

Academic Year : 2021/2022

Dedications

*I dedicate this humble work,
To the two candles who enlighten my life, MOM
and DAD who always support and encourage me.*

Endless love to you.

To the light of my tunnel: my sisters

To my beloved brother Abderahmane

To my Beloved grandmother

To my maternal uncle and his wife

To my best friend Lilia, Celia and Thanina

To all people, who loved me and prayed for my success.

Zohra

Acknowledgements

First of all, all manner sincere gratitude goes to Allah The Almighty for giving me the strength, patience and luck to carry out this research work.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my profound gratitude and deep regard to my supervisor Mr. Madjid Chetouane, for his guidance, advice, support, constant encouragement and valuable feedback. His suggestions were of immense help throughout my investigation. His perceptive criticism kept me working to make this study in a much better way. Working with Mr. Chetouane was an extremely knowledgeable experience for me.

All my greatest appreciations and thanks go to the board of examiners who accepted to evaluate my work through their competences and experiences and mainly for their comments and critics which will enrich the work.

Finally, I would also to thank all the teachers of Aissat Idir and Ait Abdlemoumen middle schools who allowed me to attend sessions for the classroom observation and answered my interview questions. Their cooperation has been very faithful and helpful in my work.

Abstract

The overall aim of the present study is to investigate EFL teachers' strategies to cope with pupils' mixed abilities at Aissat Idir and Ait Abdelmoumen 01 middle schools located in the region of Tizi-Ouzou. The current research is centred on three objectives. First, it aims to consider the notion of mixed-ability classes and individual differences. Second, it aims to identify the different problems that those teachers encounter when teaching mixed-ability classes. Third, it suggests some possible solutions that help the teachers while dealing with multileveled classes. In order to reach the above mentioned objectives, the present work relies on Howard Gardner's (1983) "Frame of Mind", the theory of Multiple Intelligences as a theoretical framework. For collecting data, two research instruments are used in the present study; First, twelve (12) classroom observation sessions were attended with the concerned teachers. To reinforce the data which are obtained from the classroom observation, a semi-structured interview is conducted with six (06) EFL teachers. A mixed-methods approach combining both quantitative and qualitative data is applied. The quantitative data are analyzed using the rule of three, and the qualitative data are interpreted using (QCA). The results show that the EFL teachers employ a variety of strategies and methods that help them to know their learners' level and needs and which enable them to make progress regarding the teaching-learning process and overcome the problems they face in their mixed-ability classes. In addition, the outcomes have revealed that the teachers face many problems while dealing with multileveled classes such as lack of materials, large classes, lack of interest, participation and discipline. Moreover, teaching mixed-ability classes needs a great deal of efforts that is why the teachers suggest suitable and thriving strategies to create a conducive and relaxed teaching and learning environment and to meet all their pupils' needs.

Key words: EFL Teachers, Mixed Ability Classes, Multiple Intelligences, Teachers' Strategies.

List of Abbreviations

- **EFL:** English as a Foreign Language
- **HP:** Hypothesis
- **L1:** First Language
- **L2:** Second Language
- **MMUTO:** Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi Ouzou
- **Q:** Question
- **QCA:** Qualitative Content Analysis

List of Symbol

X: The Calculated Percentage

Z: The Value of the Answers

Y: The Total Number

List of Figures

Figure01. <i>Types of Learning Style</i>	14
Figure02. <i>Gardner Types of Intelligence</i>	18

List of Tables

Table01: Classroom Management.....	30
Table02: Teachers' Lesson Presentation.....	31
Table03: Suggested Teaching Methods and Materials.....	32

Liste of Diagrams

Diagram01: Teachers' Opinion about Dividing Pupils According to Their Levels.....34

Diagram02: The Problems Teachers Encounter when Dealing with Mixed Ability Classes..35

Table of Contents

Dedications.....	I
Acknowledgements.....	II
Abstract	III
List of Abbreviations.....	IV
List of Symbols.....	V
List of Figures.....	VI
List of Tables	VII
List of Diagrams.....	VIII

General Introduction

• Statement of the Problem.....	1
• Aims and Significance of the Study.....	3
• Research Questions and Hypotheses.....	4
• Research Techniques and Methodology.....	4
• Structure of the Dissertation.....	5

Chapter One: Review of the Literature

Introduction.....	6
1. Definitions of Mixed-Ability Classes.....	6
2. Individual Differences.....	8
2.1 Definition.....	8
2.2 Factors of Individual Differences.....	9
2.2.1 Age.....	9
2.2.2 Aptitude.....	9
2.2.3 Motivation.....	10
2.2.4 Sex.....	11
2.2.5 Learning Strategies.....	11
2.2.5.1 Cognitive Strategies	11
2.2.5.2 Metacognitive Strategies.....	12
2.2.5.3 Social-Affective Strategies.....	12
2.2.6 Learning Styles.....	12
2.2.6.1 Visual Learners.....	13

2.2.6.2 Auditory Learners.....	13
2.2.6.3 Kinesthetic Learners.....	14
2.2.7 Personality.....	14
2.2.7.1 Extroversion and Introversion.....	15
2.2.7.2 Inhibition.....	15
2.2.7.3 Anxiety.....	15
2.2.8 Intelligence.....	16
2.3 Gardner Types of Intelligence.....	16
2.3.1 Logical-Mathematical Intelligence.....	16
2.3.2 Spatial Intelligence.....	17
2.3.3 Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence.....	17
2.3.4 Linguistic Verbal Intelligence.....	17
2.3.5 Musical Intelligence.....	17
2.3.6 Interpersonal Intelligence.....	18
2.3.7 Intrapersonal Intelligence.....	18
2.3.8 Naturalist Intelligence.....	18
4. Problems of Mixed-Ability Classes.....	19
4.1 Lack of Materials.....	19
4.2 Participation.....	19
4.3 Interests.....	20
4.4 Discipline.....	20
4.5 Individual Awareness.....	20
5. Solutions to Cope with the Problems.....	21
5.1 Variety.....	21
5.2 Collaboration.....	21
5.3 Individualization and Personalization.....	22
5.4 Open Endedness.....	22
5.5 Classroom Management.....	23
5.6 Adapting Materials.....	23
5.7 Compulsory and optional tasks.....	23
Conclusion.....	24

Chapter two: Research Design

Introduction.....	25
2.Procedures of Data Collection.....	25
2.1Context of Investigation and Participants.....	25
2.2 Data Collection Tools	25
2.2.1 Description of the Classroom Observation Sessions.....	25
2.2.2 Description of the Teachers’ Interview.....	26
2. 3 Data Analysis Procedures.....	27
2.3.1Quantitative Data Analysis.....	27
2.3.2 Qualitative Content Analysis.....	28
Conclusion.....	28

Chapter Three: Presentation of the Findings

Introduction.....	29
3.1The Presentation of the Results of Classroom Observation.....	29
3.1.1 Section One: Classroom Management.....	29
3.1.2 Section Two: Teachers’ Lesson Presentation.....	30
3.1.3 Section Three: Suggested Teaching Methods and Materials.....	32
3.2 Presentation of the Results of the Teachers’ Interview.....	33
Conclusion.....	37

Chapter four: Discussion of the Findings

Introduction.....	38
4.1 Teachers’ Strategies to Teach EFL Pupils in Mixed-Ability Classes.....	38
4.1.1 Classroom Management.....	39
4.1.2 Teachers’ Lesson Presentation.....	39
4.1.3 Suggested Teaching Methods and Materials.....	40
4.1.4 Implementation of Multiple Intelligences in Mixed -Ability Classes.....	41
4.2 Problems EFL Teachers Encounter in Mixed-Ability Classes.....	43
4.3 Teachers’ Solutions to Overcome These Problems.....	48
Conclusion.....	51

General Conclusion.....	52
Bibliography.....	55
Appendices.	



General Introduction

- **Statement of the Problem**

“Human society was born in a mixed-ability world and that there are differences among people” (Fisher,2001). This means everyone might have different ability level in everything. It necessarily affects the field of education . Since every student is special, they have a variety of capacities in absorbing the lesson during the teaching process in the class.

One of the biggest challenges that teachers face is the mixed-ability classes, where students have different abilities, backgrounds and interests. All classes can be defined as ‘mixed’ since no students are the same as the other and this makes it difficult for teachers to meet each student’s needs.

Teaching mixed -ability classes is not an easy task as it seems to require much effort and attention. Richard (1988) believes that *“every class we ever meet is mixed-ability”*(p.1). That is to say, mixed ability teaching deals with working with students who have different skills, personalities, abilities, learning needs, styles and so on. This situation requires from the teachers to vary their ways of teaching and bring extra materials in order to reach all the students. Teaching strategies, therefore, are seen as a secret recipe not every teacher knows it. In general , such variety of students in the classroom can create some challenges, like how to deal with large classes, participation and task difficulty.

When dealing with mixed ability classes, it is crucially important to shed light on students with different capacities ,levels, personalities, learning styles, intelligences and so forth. Though most classes are multileveled , teachers may find it very difficult to teach such classes. They should be aware of their needs , interests, strengths and weaknesses so that they can success in guaranteeing decent learning for them all, education should be equivalent for all which means that the job of the teacher is to reach all the students. In order for a teacher to do this he /she must apply differentiation strategies. Teaching mixed-ability classes is a very challenging task indeed since the teacher is likely to encounter different

students, each one has a specific way of learning and specific needs, for this reason the teacher's job in here is to tackle problems and try to overcome them through suggesting helpful solutions and strategies to cope with these problems.

In fact, several studies were concerned with this field of multilevel class teaching and learning. For instance, Al-Shammakhi and Al-Humaidi in 2015 was conducted a research to investigate the strategies and challenges in mixed ability teaching and learning process. It was done through spreading two sets of questionnaires to 170 fifth grade English teachers in Oman to identify the challenges that teachers face in class and strategies to cope with those students' different abilities. The findings of the study showed that EFL teachers in Oman face different challenges in mixed-ability classes and they apply limited strategies to overcome them.

Another work was conducted by Huang (2014) in Taiwan, entitled "*Investigating Mixed-Ability Teaching in Taiwanese Primary Schools*". It aimed to explore Taiwanese English teachers' attitudes towards MAT (Mixed Ability Teaching) and MAC (Mixed Ability Classes) in primary schools. This study was done through distributing questionnaires to 80 English teachers in Taiwanese primary schools. The result of this study showed that class size, learning hours, equipment and other additional factors cause difficulties for teaching mixed ability classes.

In addition to these investigations, another study was conducted by Xanthou and Pavlou in 2010 in Cyprus, entitled "*Teachers' Perceptions of Students' Attitudes in Mixed Ability EFL State Primary School Classes*". The objective was to uncover EFL teachers perceptions of students' attitudes in multilevel classes. The main results of this study revealed that students with prior knowledge of English seem to have different attitudes towards the lesson who tended to feel reluctant to express their thoughts and avoid class participation. Similarly, false beginners of prior knowledge of English may often or very often have a negative influence on the lesson as they may not find interest in the lesson.

At the level of the Algerian higher education, few studies have been conducted on the teaching of mixed ability classes. One of them was conducted by Belhadj Djamila during the academic year 2017/2018 at the University of Mostaghanam, entitled “*The Impact of Cooperative Learning on Teaching Mixed Abilities Classes*”. The aim was to identify the relationship between mixed ability teaching and to investigate the impact of cooperative learning on teaching EFL mixed ability classes. The result demonstrated that teachers attempt to use cooperative learning in the light of helping students exchange, share knowledge and communicate for positive learning outcomes. However, the topic about teachers’ strategies to cope with pupils’ mixed abilities at the level of the middle school has never been done at MMUTO. Therefore, this under-investigated topic is going to be the area of our study.

- **Aims and Significance of the Study**

The present dissertation aims at investigating the strategies used by teachers to cope with pupils’ mixed abilities at “Aissat Idir” and “Ait Abdelmoumene” middle schools in the region of Tizi Ouzou. To be more specific, the aim of this work is to consider the notion of mixed ability classes and individual differences, and to identify the different problems that middle school EFL teachers in Tizi Ouzou encounter when teaching mixed-ability classes and to suggest some possible solutions that help the teachers dealing with multileveled classes.

Furthermore, the significance of this investigation lies in the fact that it is the first research that investigates mixed-ability classes at the level of the middle schools in Tizi Ouzou. Therefore, it is hoped that this work will suggest the most appropriate strategies that should be implemented by teachers. The research can be useful not only for teachers or students, but also to anyone who desires to undertake similar or further studies on the same issue.

- **Research Questions and Hypotheses**

To investigate the issue, the following research questions are raised :

Q1:What kind of strategies middle school EFL teachers in the region of Tizi Ouzou use to teach EFL pupils in mixed-ability classes?

Q2: What are the main problems that those teachers encounter while teaching mixed ability classes?

Q3: What are the possible solutions suggested by the concerned teachers to overcome these problems?

In an attempt to answer the research questions , the following hypotheses are set :

Hp1-EFL Teachers use well- adapted strategies that help them dealing with mixed-ability classes and ensure all their pupils in their learning process.

Hp2- EFL teachers encounter many problems when teaching mixed ability classes such as lack of materials, large classes, lack of interest, participation and discipline.

Hp3- EFL Teachers can vary task and strategies making the lesson more interesting and improve their pupils' level.

- **Research Techniques and Methodology**

This study adopts a mixed-methods approach combining both qualitative and quantitative methods for the collection and the analysis of the data, given that it sets to examine strategies used by teachers to cope with pupils mixed abilities. The research data are collected from the teachers of “Aissat Idir” and “Ait Abdelmoumen01” middle schools in the region of Tizi Ouzou .The research data are gathered using an interview and classroom observation. As for the teachers' interview, it is used to obtain their views about mixed- ability classes. Therefore, the use of classroom observation aims at extracting and analyzing how teachers cope with pupils' mixed abilities , it also helps to collect data in the field and find out the difficulties that teachers face in multileveled classes.

This work adopts the theoretical framework based on Howard Gardner "Frames of Mind" the theory of Multiple Intelligences (1983). This theory suggests that the traditional psychometric views of intelligences are too limited. He proposes eight different intelligences to account for a broader range of human potential in children and adults. It provides a great opportunity for learners in acquiring foreign language. In addition, it offers teachers easy way to use and examine the best teaching approaches and strategies in language learning.

- **The Structure of the Dissertation**

This dissertation is designed following the traditional simple model, which is divided into a General Introduction, four chapters and a General Conclusion. The General Introduction provides the statement of the problem, aims and significance of the study, research questions and hypotheses, research techniques and methodology and the structure of the dissertation. The first chapter called "the literature review" consists in contextualizing the research by reviewing the major studies related to the topic, and demonstrating the relationship between the project and what has been done before in that particular area. It also includes a critical comment that shows the strengths and the weaknesses of the studies. The second chapter entitled "Research Design and Methodology" explains how the research is conducted, how the data are collected and the methods used. In short, it is a detailed description of the research processes and procedures and the explanation of the reasons of doing so. The third chapter named "the Presentation of the Findings" presents the data collected. The fourth and the last chapter called "Discussion of the Findings" is devoted to discuss and analyze the results obtained from the investigation. The General Conclusion provides a summary of the whole work. It includes introductory statement of aims, research questions and hypotheses, the findings, the methodology and participants, as well as suggestions for further studies.

Chapter One :
Review of the Literature

Introduction

This chapter is designed to review the literature that revolves around the topic of the present research: EFL Teachers' strategies to cope with pupils' mixed abilities. It is divided into four parts. The first part provides the definitions of mixed-ability classes. The second gives a definition of individual differences, its factors. After that, it explains Gardner types of intelligence that serve as a theoretical framework for the present study. The third part presents the different problems of mixed-ability classes. Finally, the last part suggests solutions to overcome multileveled classes.

1. Definitions of Mixed-Ability Classes

The issue of mixed-ability classes has been the focus of debate and investigation in a number of countries, since they are very common in schools and universities throughout the world. Hedge (2000, p.189) notes that, “ *teaching mixed ability students is a vital and genuine issue that instructors experienced daily*”. This means that teachers face students at a time who are all at different levels of ability, have varying motivation for working and have their own special interests and experiences; therefore, the teacher meet these mixed-ability classes each day.

In addition to this, Ainslie (1994) gives a more comprehensive definition to mixed ability classes according to him, are classes where students differ greatly in ability, motivation for learning English, needs, interests, anxiety, experiences and so on. In other words, mixed ability can also refer to students of different physical or mental abilities that are taught together in a single classroom. In fact, these classes consists of groups of students that differ greatly in strengths and weaknesses and have different approaches to learning. For instance, in mixed-ability classes we may find students with high ability of understanding, they always participate in the classroom, whereas, low level students may not speak for the whole session.

As for English Cobuild Collins Dictionary-English Definition :

A mixed Ability class or teaching system is one which pupils are taught together in the same class, even though their abilities are different. Mixed ability teaching is a fact of not only language classes but all of courses. Since no two students can be the same in terms of language background, learning speed, learning ability and motivation.

Also Bell argues that, *“every teacher to some extent must face the challenges of designing a program that addresses the concerns and interests of students of different abilities”* (Richards & Burns ,2012, p.87). That is, the teacher should keep in mind that teaching a mixed ability class is not an easy task as it might seem at first perception; rather, it seems to require much efforts and attention. Similarly, Ansari (2013) for instance identifies a mixed-ability class as comprising of not only learners with various capacities but also that have a broad range of preferences and learning styles. Ireson and Hallam (2001, p.183) propose that, *“instructors need to recognize that a class is of mixed-ability because learners have different strengths and weaknesses and improve at different rates”*. Indeed, mixed-ability classes consist mainly of two types of students which are high-ability learners who are autonomous and self-directing; they like to learn new things, are willing to examine the unusual, and are highly inquisitive unlike low learners who depend on the instructor to guide them, tries to make them further explanations and so on.

Scholars and educators give different explanations and definitions for mixed-ability classes. Some define them as synonymous with multi-level or heterogenous classes where students differ clearly in the level and achievement. As Bremner (2008) pointed *“mixed-ability classes do not just contain students with different abilities, but also students with a range of learning styles and preferences”*. That is to say, depending on the topic being examined and studied and learning styles dealt with, all learners expose strength at varied times. As long as students are dealing with their preferred and favored learning styles they will not get a good result. The whole classroom even those who have been prepared and organized are of mixed abilities to certain level. Moreover, Gordon (2010, p.15) defined

mixed ability classes by asserting that “ *It is clear that this descriptor is widely used by international educators and researchers . This descriptor tends to look at students who have similar backgrounds, who are in the same grade, but divided by their ability in subject areas*”. That means, mixed ability classes are seen as a tool or method which is used to identify and select students qualities and properties who have the same degree, level, and background whereas their varied abilities are displayed in the content. In addition, Matthews-Aydinli& Home (2006) defined mixed ability or multilevel classes where students with wide range of levels are placed together. They vary in their levels of competence in listening, reading, speaking and writing.

To sum up, mixed –ability classes ,then, refer to classes in which learners differ predominately in their language levels. Indeed, Valentic (2005,p.74) claims “ *There are differences in the level of their abilities in the receptive and productive skills, fluency and accuracy work, grammatical knowledge, size of vocabulary, command of pronunciation and so on*”. That is to say, learners vary in their learning capacities encouragements for learning English language levels, demands, experiences, desires, and interests and also learners are different in the four communicative skills that are: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Finally, mixed ability classes – are considered as a global phenomenon since every class is multileveled.

2. Individual Differences

2.1 Definition

Human beings differ from each other in many aspects . This could be due to many biological or conditional factors (affected by nature) or unconscious forces(affected by past experiences) . These individual differences, according to Dornyei , (2005), are “ *enduring personal characteristics that are assumed to apply to everybody and on which people differ by degree*”. Age, aptitude, motivation, sex, learning strategies, learning style, personality, and intelligence they are the main differences that one can explore.

The previous aforementioned points are factors of individual differences. They are interlinked with each other and are correlated together and totally play an important role in learning. We try to spell out shortly what this evokes in more tangible ways.

2.2 Factors of Individual Differences

2.2.1 Age

As Harmer (2007, p.37) indicates that “*Age is one of the major factors which influence the way how and what we teach. People of different ages have different needs, competences, and cognitive skills*”. That means that, age is considered as an important factor in mixed ability classes as it impacts on the learners learning styles, at their varied ages, demands, and skills. Ellis (1985, p.110) concludes that, “*if innate abilities account for the acquisition of primarily levels no differences in route between children and adults will be observed*”. Similarly, older children learn more rapidly than younger ones’ with regards to phonology, morphology, and syntax.

2.2.2 Aptitude

According to Ellis (1986, p.293) aptitude refers “*to specific ability a learner has for learning a second language*”. That is to say, aptitude is the individual ability to learn another language. Richards (1985, p.154) explains that aptitude is natural ability to learn a language. Further he adds that language aptitude is thought to be a combination of various abilities, such as the ability to identify sound pattern in a new language, the ability to recognize the different of grammatical functions of words in sentences, etc. In fact, students need aptitude-some specific abilities, which are responsible for learning languages.

Moreover, Carroll and Sapon (1959) as cited by Ellis suggest that there are: “*Three major components of aptitude: phonetic coding ability, which consists of ability to perceive and memorize new sounds; grammatical sensitivity, which is the individual’s ability to demonstrate awareness of the syntactical patterning of sentences of a language; and inductive ability which consists of the ability to notice and identify similarities and differences in both*

grammatical form and meaning.”(p. 112). Accordingly, language aptitude refers to the capacity and quality of learning besides the way to learn rapidly or quickly in which a student with high and good aptitude is supposed to be able or capable to gather and catch up knowledge with greater speed. So that, language aptitude is a cognitive procedure which accounts as a necessary factor to mull over in mixed ability classes.

2.2.3 Motivation

Harmer (1991, p.3) defined motivation as “ *An internal drive that encourages somebody to pursue a course of action*”. This means that motivation is considered as an innate or an inside feeling that guides and supports someone to be in the right or appropriate way. Another definition is provided by Ellis (1985,p.118) “ *the most successful learners will be those who have both a talent and a high level of motivation for learning*”. That is, learner motivation is often defined as being intrinsic, where students are interested in the course content and have desire to participate in the learning process. Moreover, Dornyei (2001, p.1) defines motivation as an , “ *abstract, hypothetical concept that we use to explain why people think and behave as they do*” which means motivation is the direction of behavior.

Among linguists several types of motivation are distinguished : Brown (1981) identifies three types of motivation which they are “ *global Motivation, which consists of a general orientation to the goal of learning a foreign language ;situational Motivation, which varies according to the situation in which learning takes place ;task Motivation, which is the motivation for performing particular learning tasks*”.

To conclude, mixed ability classes made up by one of the most necessary factor Which is motivation; that has a great influence on students learning since the teachers are the basic contributors in motivating learners then they take a big responsibility when designing a course which must have suitable content, activities in order to be well perceived by learners.

2.2.4 Sex

Several studies have shown that there are gender differences in a variety of abilities, in some of which males have higher average ability than females and in other females have higher average ability than males (Feinglod,1992). Zhuanglin (1989) highlighted that *“it was generally believed that male and female are born with different linguistic advantages, such as, female learn to speak earlier than male and female learn a foreign language faster and better than male”*. That is, females are able to learn languages at a quicker pace than males. Therefore, sex is the sum of the biological characteristics by which males and females and other organisms are distinguished.

2.2.5 Learning Strategies

The learning strategies are the strategies and tools that the learners use to make language learning successful and enjoyable. Gass and Slinker (2008, p. 440) claim that, *“learning strategies clearly involve internal mental actions, but they may also involve physical actions as well”*. Learning strategies, in other words, are particular actions or activities employed by learners to make their learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more directed more effective and more transferable to new situation. It is an extremely powerful learning tool. Brown (2000) argues that *“the choice of learning strategies is strongly influenced by the nature of their motivation, cognitive style, and personality, as well as by specific contexts of use and opportunities for learning”*. In short, language learning strategies are the processes which learners deploy to learn. O’Malley and Chamot (1985) distinguished three major types of strategies:

- **Cognitive Strategies**

Cognitive strategies are type of learning strategy that is proven to enhance the learning skills of humans. These include repetition, organizing new language, summarizing meaning, guessing meaning from context, using imagery for memorization. All of these strategies may be utilized to keep students attracted and upbeat with learning while helping them grasp information faster and retain it with high accuracy. O’malley and Chamot (1990)

identified cognitive strategies as “*operate directly on incoming information, manipulating it in ways that enhance learning*”. That is, learning is a cognitive activity involving the mental processing of information and thoughts.

- **Metacognitive Strategies**

O'Malley and Chamot's (2001,p.8) define metacognitive strategies as “*involve thinking about the learning process, planning for learning, and self-evaluation after the learning activity has been completed*”. That is, metacognitive strategies refer to the attempt of regulating language learning by means of planning, monitoring, and evaluating. Purpura (1999,p.61)) found that metacognitive strategies had, “*a significant, positive, direct effect on cognitive strategy use, providing clear evidence that the metacognitive strategy use has an executive function over cognitive strategy use in task completion*”. In other words, metacognitive strategies are skills used for planning, monitoring, and evaluating the learning activity.

- **Social – affective Strategies**

It is the combination of social and affective strategies. “*social-affective strategies cover both interaction with another person and exercising control over emotional and affective responses to learning*” (Bremner,2008). So, social affective strategies are the ways in which learners interact with others as Brown (1987)(cited in Hardan, 2013, p.1718) indicates, “*cooperation and question for clarification are the main social-affective strategies*”. In this view social affective strategies are the techniques that learners use to learn by interaction with their classmates and lower their anxiety.

2.2.6 Learning styles

According to Bremner (2008) “*Mixed- ability classes do not just consist of a range of abilities but also a range of learning style and preferences*”. This means, that everyone has a specific learning style and learns better through different means. Gass and Slinker (2008,p.432) identify the term learning style as, “*the preferences that individual has of obtaining, processing, and retaining information*”. In other words ,an individual's

learning style is the individual's mode of gaining knowledge. When the teacher is conscious about his/her student's learning styles, he/she can adopt the perfect method to teach them. Reid (1987) states, "*there are three learning styles. Some students learn primarily with their eyes as visual learners or with their ears as auditory learners and some students prefer to learn by experience or practice as kinesthetic learners*". Thus, types of learning style are visual, auditory and kinesthetic styles.

- **Visual Learners**

Visual learners are related to sight or seeing. Pritchard (2008,p.44) argues that "*visual learners have good visual recall and prefer information be presented visually, in the form of diagrams, graphs, maps, posters and displays, for example. They often use hand movements when describing or recalling events or objects and have a tendency to look upwards when thinking or recalling information*". Thus, it means that visual learners will get best comprehension in subject learning by using some object media that they can see deeply by their eyes, like picture, power point displays, maps, etc. Meanwhile, Reid (1987) states, "*visual learners will be good at visualizing events and information and use the imagination to some advantage. They can use visual strategies for remembering information*".

- **Auditory Learners**

According to Pritchard (2008, p.44), "*auditory learners have good auditory memory and benefit from discussions, lectures, interviewing, hearing stories and audiotapes, for example. They like sequence, repetition and summary, and when recalling memories tend to tilt their head and use level eye movements*". Thus, it can be concluded that auditory learners will focus on their hearing and more pay attention to voice of speakers when they hear the explanations. They prefer to listen the voice than read the paper.

- **Kinesthetic Learners**

It refers to those who achieve learning through using experience and practice; kinesthetic learners should go from experience to learn something new (Murphy Et al. 2004). Drago and Wagner (2004) say that kinesthetic learners are those who prefer to apply movements, touch, and interaction with their environment. Namely, tactile learners remember better what they do as they are learning, like the scientific ones as they learn by doing.

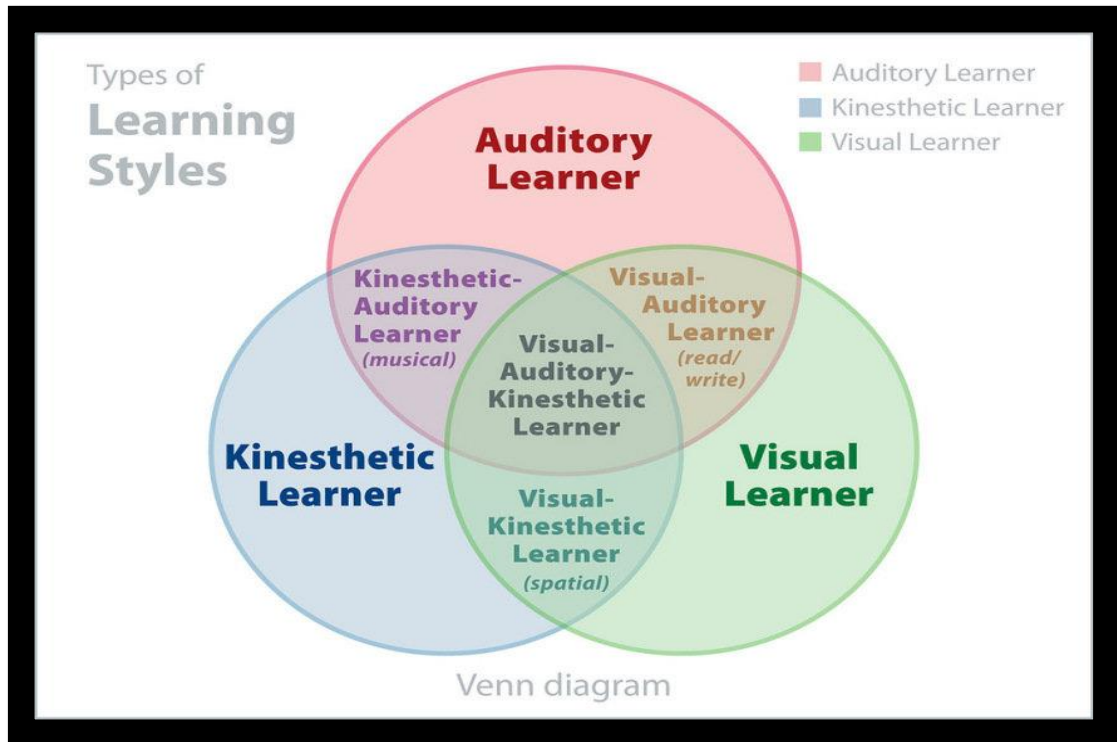


Figure01. Types of learning styles (image copyright from education corner).

2.2.7 Personality

For decades, human personality has been the core of the study of human psychology. Some of the famous thinkers in the personality psychology department have been world renowned psychologists like Sigmund Freud and Erik Erikson. It is individual differences in characteristics patterns of thinking, feeling and behaving. According to Cattell (1950, p.2), *“personality permits a prediction of what a person will do in a given situation.”* Personality is a an abstract concept which involves actions, emotions, recognitions and motivations of a person. Additionally, as Pervin and John (2001, p.3) define it , *“ personality is the part of the field of psychology that most considers people in their entirety as individuals and as*

complex being". That is, personality refers to differences between people in their psychological characteristics, not physical or biological differences. Personality may include a number of characteristics such as :

- **Extroversion and Introversion**

The concept of extroversion and introversion was introduced in 1910 by Carl Gustav Jung, existing as part of a continuum with each personality type at separate ends of the scale. Jung (1923) described extroverts as preferring to engage with the outside world of objects, sensory perception, and action. Whereas, introverts he described as being more focused on the internal world of reflection, are thoughtful and insightful. Eysenck (1967) also claims that differences in behavioral extroversion and introversion are the result of differences in the brain. He explained that extroverts tend to seek excitement and social activity in order to raise their naturally low cortical arousal levels, whereas introverts tend to avoid social situations in order to minimize their already high cortical arousal levels.

- **Inhibition**

Another aspect of personality is inhibition which is a set of defenses an individual builds to protect himself/herself. Ellis (1985, p.121) states that "*it is hypothesized that the defectiveness associated with inhibition discourages the risk taking which is necessary for rapid progress in L2.*" In other words, inhibition is a feeling that makes the person unable to act in a relaxed way.

- **Anxiety**

Many people who are good learners may experience anxiety. Scholars like Thomas defined anxiety as, "*a unique emotional state characterized by feeling of distress and tension about real or anticipated threats that may manifest in cognitive behavioral or physiological patterns.*" (Cited in Salkind, 2008, p.38). So anxiety acts as a double-edged trait which can be either positive or negative. A slight amount of anxiety can be helpful and increases the performance of the learner; it is known as facilitative anxiety whereas too much anxiety can

paly the reverse role demotivating the learner by decreasing his performance. It is called debilitating anxiety (harmful anxiety).

2.2.8 Intelligence

Intelligence can be defined in several ways. It is a unique characteristic of each individual. Gardner defines intelligence in his book Frames of Mind (1993) “ *A set of problem-solving skills, enabling the individual to resolve genuine problems or difficulties that he or she encounters and, when appropriate, to create an effective product; it also entails the potential for finding or creating problems, thereby laying the ground work for, the acquisition of new knowledge.*” (cited in Nardi, 2001, p.52). Gardner means that the ability to solve problems enables the person to remove difficulties in appropriate times, to create an effect product, or to create problems. So, intelligence is a problem solving activity in which we can prevent or create problems to happen. Moreover, Wechsler (1958) admits that intelligence is the ability to act rationally and purposefully and interact with the environment. This means that intelligence is the capacity of the mind especially to understand principles, truths, facts, or meaning, acquire knowledge and apply it to practice.

2.3 Gardner Types of Intelligence

Gardner (1983) suggests eight types of intelligence, which can exist on each individual. one can use one intelligence type or more depending on the task. Here is an overlook on each type of intelligence.

2.3.1 Logical- Mathematical Intelligence

This sort of intelligence is of special value in handling problems in logical reasoning, and in solving abstract mathematical problems. Gardner &Checkley (1997.p12; Baum, Viens,& Slatin,2005,p15) claim, “ *people with highly developed logical-mathematical intelligence understand the underlying principles of some kind of a causal system, the way a mathematician does.*” This means that, this kind of intelligence is associated with scientific thinking.

2.3.2 Spatial Intelligence

It means the ability to visualize with mind's eye. Armstrong (2018) mentions that spatial and visual intelligence is, “ *the ability to perceive the visual spatial world accurately (e.g. as a surveyor, cartographer) and to perform transformations upon those perceptions(e.g. interior, decorator, architect, artist or inventor* ” (p.2).

2.3.3 Bodily- Kinesthetic Intelligence

This type of intelligence is used in excellent and precise control movements, such as dancing or playing sport. Gardner and Checkley, (1997,p.12; cited in Baum, Viens, and Slatin, 2005 p.16-17) state:

Bodily-kinesthetic intelligence is the capacity to use your whole body or parts of your body-your hands, your fingers, and arms to solve a problem, make something, or put on some kind of a production. The most evident examples are people in athletics or the performing arts, particularly dance or acting.

Bodily-kinesthetic intelligence refers to learning by movement, this kind is used to manipulate thing, practicing sport, dancing and anything else to change your body situation.

2.3.4 Linguistic Verbal Intelligence

Linguistic-verbal intelligence is the capacity to use words effectively whether orally or in writing (Armstrong(2018,p.2). Or it is the ability to think and use language and express meaning and play with words; people who have linguistic and verbal intelligence are good at reading, writing, telling stories, memorizing words for a long time, like poets, authors, teachers...etc.

2.3.5 Musical Intelligence

According to Gardner (1993) musical rhythmic intelligence is, “ *the ability to recognize tonal patterns and sensitivity to rhythm, pitch, melody*” Qouted in Freeman (2000,p.170). That is to say, those kind of people are able to play musical instruments, sing, and compose music, like singers and music producers.

2.3.6 Interpersonal Intelligence

It is the ability to read people. This type of intelligence includes communication with, and understanding other people. Gardner and Checkley (1997,p.12; cited in Baum,Viens and Slatin, 2005,p17) assumed, “ *interpersonal intelligence understands other people. It’s an ability we all need, but is at a premium if you are a teacher , clinician,sales person, or politician. Anybody who deals with other people has to be skilled in the interpersonal sphere.*” The idea here is to get the right meaning of the interpersonal intelligence, which is an ability to listen to what other people says, to gain a good rapport with another person, and to be a dept at negotiation and persuasion.

2.3.7 Intrapersonal Intelligence

According to Gardner (1999) this intelligence involves the capacity to understand oneself, to have an effective working model of oneself- including one’s own desires, fears, and capacities and to use such information effectively in regulating one’s own life.

2.3.8 Naturalist Intelligence

The naturalist intelligence refers to being in harmony with plants, animals, and nature. It can be stimulated in the classroom through activities such as attribute grouping, charting, and semantic mapping.

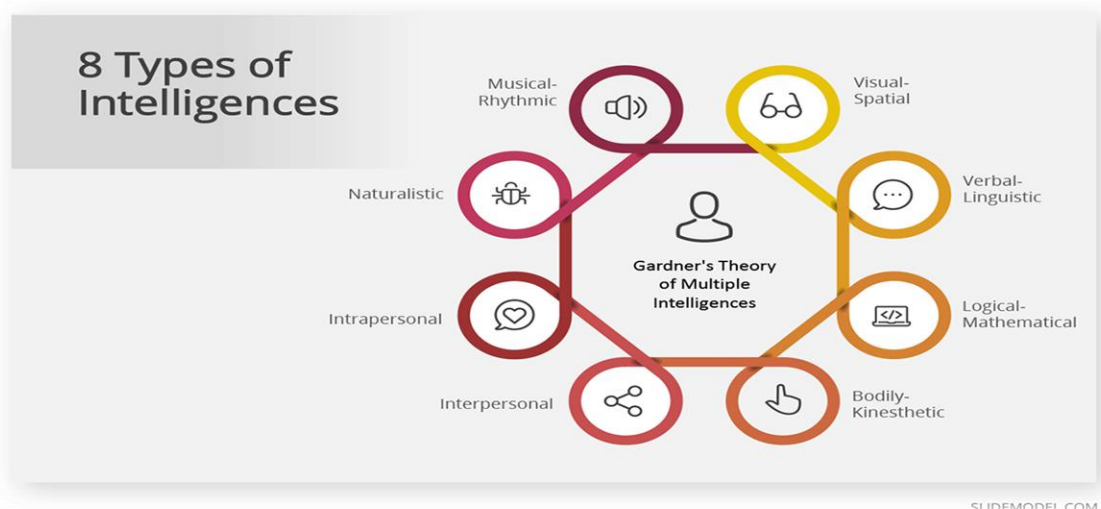


Figure02. Gardner types of Intelligence (image taken from slideModel.com).

To sum up, Multiple Intelligences theory involves eight kinds of intelligence originally coined by Howard Gardner namely Logical-Mathematical, Spatial, Bodily-kinesthetic, Linguistic-verbal, Musical, Interpersonal, Intrapersonal, and Naturalist. Concerning mixed ability classes, Intelligence and Multiple Intelligence play an important role in the students' minds with varied thoughts and reflections.

4. Problems of Mixed-Ability Classes

Teachers may encounter different problems when teaching mixed-ability classes. Therefore, they need to identify the root of those troubles and try to cure them. The differences among students like personality, abilities, motivation and so on pose various problems. As Penny Ur (1991, p.303, 304) suggests, there is a number of problems teachers encounter in teaching mixed ability classes; they are:

4.1 Lack of Materials

When teaching a mixed-ability class, most language textbooks are designed for an ideal homogeneous classroom environment. Teachers have to deal with the problem that students react to the textbook differently due to their individual differences. First, some students may find the textbook boring and very hard, whereas some find it interesting or very easy. Second, the teacher does not provide a range of teaching aids like: pictures, videos, slides and so on. As Ur (1993,p.83) states in his book A Course in Language Teaching, “ *the teacher works according to a syllabus, or according to his or her program, using textbooks and supplementary materials as the need arises.*”

4.2 Participation

The problem of participation has a great impact on the teaching process in mixed Ability classes. From one hand, certain students have the fear to speak and express their ideas, they cannot exchange their points of views or give their opinions. This is may be because they feel shy and /or they do not believe in themselves or they lose their confidence and they do not have the ability to participate, or even they cannot have an eye-contact with their teachers and prefer to sit in hidden and concealed way. In the other hand, some students are totally

different; they cannot keep calm; they have to participate by expressing everything that comes to their minds; they are curious thus; they are asking questions all the time, etc. As a result, mixed-ability classes consist of an active and risk-taking learners who are always participating in explicit way and interaction in that they contribute in creating a thriving and flourishing atmosphere rather than the weaker ones who are just sitting and hidden (Ur,1991, Harmer,2007, Brenner,2008).

4.3 Interests

Another problem proposed in mixed- ability classes is the interests of students. interest problems may arise due to the differences among students in terms of their attitude towards the subject matter and the teacher; their knowledge of language, and their personality. For instance, some students may find the lessons boring, as the topic has no familiarity with their own life or their interests. Furthermore, some of the students may not be interested in the lesson, unless they do get the chance to express their own ideas. Hence, teachers should be aware of the different interests of the students to organize and to arrange activities accordingly (Ur,1991, Harmer,2007, Brenner,2008).

4.4 Discipline

Discipline is another serious problem in multileveled classes. Often the quicker students finish the tasks given before the other students. As a result, they may misbehave while waiting for the others to finish. In this context, weaker students may lose their confidence or show ill- disciplined behaviour for a variety of reasons and can not complete the task (Ur,1991).

4.5 Individual awareness

Mixed ability classes provide multi-leveled cases and situations, due to the differences between students. Teachers in these classes tend to find the dealing with individual awareness a challenge. This challenge refers to the students favor their own awareness, i.e., self personal, individual way or method of learning. This capability differs from a student to another because everyone has his unique way of learning and heterogeneous classes combine together

all the differences of students. To sum up, teachers cannot pay attention and care to everyone own way of learning so that there will be a problem (Harmer,2007, Brenmer,2008, Simanova, 2010).

5. Solutions to cope with the problems

Actually, both students and teachers are struggling with various problems in mixed ability classes. That is why; teachers have to make a list of applicable and appropriate techniques or strategies to cope with those problems. Some teaching solutions suggested by (Ur, 1991, p.306). They are :

5.1 Variety

As Hess (2001, p .8) claimed “ *A variety of activities and techniques is important in all learning situations but particularly relevant in mixed ability classes because varieties of tasks can accommodate different levels in our class*”. For Hess, dealing with different tasks and methods is necessary in the learning process especially in mixed ability classes since varied activities can cater all learners’ level in a class. For the purpose to accommodate all learners, teachers are recommended to vary subjects, teaching approaches and methods, material, and tasks because the techniques that may be suitable for some students may be inappropriate for others.

5.2 Collaboration

Another strategy that helps teachers to deal with students differences in mixed ability classes is collaboration. It refers to working together and in a cooperative way. In this technique, learners are learning from each other when they work in pairs or groups. To help learners work collaboratively, teachers have to prepare and give their learners activities and exercises for the purpose of letting them sharing information, exchange their ideas and discuss tasks together. Mixed ability classes offer the chance for students to learn from each other since they have different qualities. For example, if teachers put strong learners with weaker ones the students can be here the basic and main source of knowledge in this team work; they will be more encouraged and motivated (Harmer,2007, Brenmer,2008).

5.3 Individualization and Personalization

Ur (1991, p.306, cited in مجلة العلوم الانسانية, p.524-525) defined individualization as *allowing learners choice in what tasks and materials should students use and how*". Individualization permits the chance of choosing what are the appropriate activities, materials for learners and the way they use them. Further, Natalie Hess (2001, p.12) described it as *"providing opportunities for students to work at their own pace, in their own style, and on topics of their choice"*. In other words, in personalization strategy is necessary to give students the chance to express their sensations, present themselves, show their experiences, give their opinions, ideas, and so on. Moreover, teachers have to motivate and support their learners to develop and extend their knowledge according to their own individualization and personalization by using activities as listening tasks, individual writing activities, reading, using personalized dictionaries. As a result, teachers of mixed-ability classes should take care of their learners' personalities and individualization in order to facilitate for them the difficulties they are subject to encounter in mixed ability classes and help them being interested and supported learners.

5.4 Open Endedness

According to Hess (2001, p.13, cited in مجلة العلوم الانسانية, p.525-526) examples of open-ended exercises are *"Giving students the beginning of a sentence and asking them to finish it, giving students a number of questions and allowing them to answer any number of these, brainstorming, ideas, writing their own definition of words, matching answers where several matches are acceptable as correct, answers., questions that may be answered in many different ways"*.

Open-ended tasks give students the opportunity to present and express themselves with a number of possible correct and right answers or responds. These exercises permit each student to accomplish and fulfill his own capacity imagination.

5.5 Classroom Management

According to Brown(2003), classroom management strategies are tools, techniques, and methods that a teacher uses to help in creating a safe and conducive classroom atmosphere in order to promote effective learning outcomes. In fact, teachers should manage their classes not only by setting effective teaching methods, goals, aims but also by considering each student needs and preference. Examples of good classroom management involve making learners work individually, in pairs or in groups not to exhaust them, preparing several oral presentations for the purpose of achieving all learners' desires, wants, to help auditory, visuals, kinesthetic learners, and personalizing learning. Therefore, dealing with mixed ability classes needs to apply a mixture of method and strategies to cope with all the demands of each student (Harmer,2007,Brenmer,2008).

5.6 Adapting Materials


In fact presenting the course with several teaching materials makes learning enjoyable. When adapting materials; such as: videos, pictures, games, competitions,dramatization, plays, songs, and so on. Language teaching/learning becomes simple, clear, and easy. When teachers design their own materials, the course will be rich and students won't feel bored. Therefore, mixed ability classes need mixed, different materials in order to have rich, varied, and suitable input (Harmer,2007, Simanova,2010).

5.7 Compulsory plus Optional Tasks

The strategy of compulsory plus optional tasks allows students to choose what quantity of tasks they want to complete the class is given a material and told what the minimum that everyone has to complete is (Ur, p.306). The rest of the task is optional. Therefore everyone is kept engaged all the time and can feel a sense of achievement when completing a task. This strategy is especially suitable for designing tests.

Conclusion

To sum up, this chapter is a review of relevant literature concerning our research topic which is teachers' strategies to cope with pupils' mixed abilities. It shows that mixed-ability students found in nearly all schools and classes present their teachers with marked difficulty in teaching effectively. These challenges require the instructors to employ effective management methods in addressing those challenges. This can be achieved by using different methods and strategies and settle on the most effective ones. Mixed-ability classes are known for their diverse strengths. Moreover, teachers who have a positive attitude towards the diversity in terms of students' abilities are more successful in teaching multilevel classes. In addition, the key strategies for teaching those classes are probably developing a positive and collaborative working atmosphere. Finally, the teacher must involve the whole class in the teaching process.



Chapter Two :
Research Design

Introduction

This section is methodological. It deals with the research design of the present study. It describes the research techniques used to investigate EFL teachers' strategies to cope with pupils' mixed abilities at the level of the middle schools selected in Tizi Ouzou. This chapter is divided into two parts; the first part is called procedures of data collection, and it depicts the context of investigation and the participants of the research. It also takes into consideration the tools used to collect the data. The second part is called procedures of data analysis; it presents detailed information about the procedure used to analyze the findings.

2. Procedures of Data Collection.

2.1 Context of Investigation and Participants

This research investigates teachers' strategies to cope with pupils' mixed abilities. The investigation takes place in a real context in two different middle schools in the wilaya of Tizi Ouzou; that are Aissat Idir in Mekla and Ait Abdelmoumen 01 in Ouadhia. It starts from 24th April until 12th May during the academic year 2021/ 2022. The target population of the present research involves EFL teachers in both middle schools under study.

2.2 Data Collection Tools

In order to collect data for our research, two main instruments were used: Classroom observation, and an interview. The classroom observation is the primary source of data collection and is carried out with four (04) EFL teachers. Besides, a semi-structured interview is conducted with six (06) EFL middle school teachers in the schools concerned.

2.2.1 Description of the Classroom Observation Sessions

In order to gather more data about the issue of investigation, classroom observation is opted for as a primary research instrument. According to Bell (1999,p.88) classroom observation is “*a technique that can often reveal characteristic of groups of individuals which would have been impossible to discover by other means*”. In other words, classroom

observation is a useful technique for collecting data about a group of people, as it allows us to discover what really happens inside the classrooms.

The classroom observation took place from 24th April until 12th May 2022 with four (04) different EFL teachers, in Aissat Idir and Ait Abdelmoumen 01 middle school of Tizi Ouzou. We attended twelve (12) sessions. Six (06) in Aissat Idir and Six (06) in Ait Abdelmoumen01. Each with forty-five (45) min. The pupils' number was different from one class to another. There were between 25 to 30 pupils. The classroom observation was carried out using a quantitative checklist of three (03) sections: The first section is classroom management which presents the teachers' role and control over the whole class. The second section is teachers' lesson presentation that deals with the way teachers explain and present their lessons. Then, the last section is concerned with methods and materials teachers use and employ in teaching multileveled classes.

2.2.2 Description of the Teachers' Interview

The interview is the second research tool that is selected to carry out the present research. It serves as an instrument to elicit the qualitative data of the present dissertation. It is defined by Gillham (2001,p.01) as “*a conversation where one person-the interviewer-is seeking the response for a particular purpose from the other person- the interviewee*”. That is, an interview is a discussion between the interviewer and the interviewee where the interviewer is asking questions and the interviewee is responding for the aim of getting information about specific topics. Interviews can be conducted face to face or through a phone discussions internet (Skype, video calls). In this study, a semi-structured interview is used as a second research technique for collecting data. It is used to gather information about teachers' strategies to cope with pupils' mixed abilities. They contain nine (09) questions. The same questions were asked to teachers in the same order. Interviews were conducted in Aissat Idir middle school with three (03) EFL teachers and three others in Ait Abdelmoumen 01 after finishing the observation. During the interview an audio record was used to record the conversation with the teachers who kindly accepted. The interview

lasted 10 to 30 minutes. The purpose of this interview was to investigate the different problems and strategies that middle schools EFL teachers in Tizi Ouzou encounter while teaching mixed-ability classes.

2.3 Data Analysis Procedures

The Mixed Methods Approach was adopted to collect the data needed in this research. The nature of our research findings have determined the techniques to use for analyzing the data, which were gathered from the classroom observation sessions and the semi-structured interview with the EFL teachers in the concerned middle schools. This method was chosen with the purpose of an in depth, and meaningful assesment of our findings. Creswell and Clarck (2011) assert that the combination of both quantitative and qualitative approaches can bring us to a full understanding of the research problem than with a single approach. Therefore, the connection of these two different approaches formulates a complementary analysis in a research.

2.3.1 Quantitative Data Analysis

According to Aliaga and Gunderson (2002), “*Quantitative research is an inquiry into a social problem, explain phenomena by gathering numerical data that are analysed using mathematically based methods*”. With a purpose of analyzing the quantitative data obtained from the close-ended questions of the semi-structured interview, the Rule of Three is used. The answers of the close-ended questions of the semi-structured interview are transformed into percentages, which is applied as follows: $X = \frac{zx100}{y}$

X is the calculated percentage, Z is the value of the answers, and Y is the total number of the participants. In addition to this the data collected from the classroom observation using a quantitative checklist, is analyzed by relaying on the theoretical framework cited in our literature review.

2.3.2 Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA)

As a data analysis procedure, it is used to analyze the qualitative data collected from the semi-structured interview and classroom observation. Hsieh and Shannon (2005, p.1278) define QCA as “*A research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of the text through systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns*”. This means that QCA is intended to analyze texts and interpret the meaning of texts. Moreover, Krippendorff (2004) provided another definition as “*a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts*”. This means, it gathers the soft data obtained from the participants and classify them into categories.

Conclusion

This chapter describes the methodology used to carry out this study. Firstly, it presents the participants and the context in which this investigation was conducted. Moreover, it describes the procedures of data collection; in this chapter we define the tools that we have used for conducting this research: which are classroom observation and interview. Finally, it clarifies the methods used to analyze the data collected from the classroom observation, and the semi-structured interview which is the rule of three, and the Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA). The coming chapter deals with the presentation of the main findings of our research.



Chapter Three :
Presentation of the Findings

Introduction

This chapter deals with the presentation of the findings of our study. The purpose of this part is to present the results obtained from two data collection tools; the classroom observation and the semi-structured interview. In the first part, the result of the observation that was collected using a quantitative checklist is presented in form of tables. The second part deals with the presentation of findings gathered via interview which was addressed to EFL teachers.

3.1 The Presentation of the Results of Classroom Observation

In this part we present the data gathered from the classroom observation sessions which is described using a quantitative checklist that is mainly based on the theoretical framework in our Literature Review. The objective of this observation is to evaluate, observe, and take notes on the teachers' ways of teaching mixed ability pupils in the same classroom. These are presented in three tables, which hold the number of the observed teachers according to the frequency of their use of each item, this denotes that for each item we point out how many teachers use it according to the rank order.

3.1.1. Section One: Classroom Management

This section aims to observe how teachers manage their classes in teaching mixed ability classes. We have attended twelve (12) classroom observation sessions from 24th April to 12th of May, 2022. The following table shows the observation sessions about the classroom management.

N°	Observed Items	Frequency				
		Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
01	Teachers' control of the whole class.	00	00	00	04	00
02	Pupils' seating Organization.	00	00	04	00	00
03	Group work	00	00	04	00	00
04	Individual work.	00	00	04	00	00
05	Time management	04	00	00	00	00

Table01: Classroom Management

The first item is about, “teachers’ control of the whole class”, as the table above shows, all the observed teachers (04) rarely control the whole classroom . As far as for the second item is concerned about “pupils’ seating organization” all the teachers (04) “sometimes” pay attention to the way their pupils’ are seating. As concerns the third and the fourth item, that is about individual/group work, as displayed in the table, it is revealed that, all the observed teachers (04) sometimes let their pupils’ work in groups or working individually. Regarding the last item which is about time management, the findings obtained show that, all the teachers (04) always manage their time and try to make it as an essential part in teaching multileveled classes.

3.1.2 Section Two: Teachers’ Lesson Presentation

The following table presents the way teachers explain and present their lessons and the way of teaching mixed ability classes.

N°	Observed Items	Frequency				
		Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
01	Relate the current lesson to the previous one.	00	04	00	00	00
02	Teachers' explanation based on the use of the board.	01	00	03	00	00
03	Teachers' explanation based on dictation.	00	00	00	00	04
04	Giving examples for better understanding.	00	00	04	00	00
05	Providing in-class activities.	00	04	00	00	00
06	Providing out-class activities.	00	04	00	00	00
07	Making a recapitulation at the end of the course.	04	00	00	00	00

Table 02: Teachers' Lesson Presentation

The table above is about “teachers’ lesson presentation”. First, we notice that all the participants (04) “often” start their lessons by relating the current lesson to the previous one. As for the second item, which consists of teachers’ explanation based on the use of the board, as it is presented in the table above, only one teacher (01) who always uses it, while the three (03) remaining ones sometimes use it. Besides, we notice that all the teachers (04) observed that they “never” use dictation in performing their lessons. In addition, the fourth item, that is about, giving examples for better understanding, the data collected indicate that, all the observed teachers (04) sometimes give examples to clarify many items to their pupils. Concerning the two last items, that are about, providing in-class activities and providing out-class activities, all the observed teachers (04) reveal that they often assign their learners in-class and out-class activities. As far as the

last item is, concerned it is making recapitulation at the end of the lesson. The findings show that all the teachers (04) always restate or recapitulate the whole lesson at the end of each session for their pupils.

3.1.3 Section Three: Teachers’ suggested Methods and Materials

The following table elicits data about the methods and materials teachers use in teaching mixed-ability classes.

N°	Observed Items	Frequency				
		Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
01	Using coloured markers.	04	00	00	00	00
02	Using teaching aids or audio-visual materials such as pictures, computer data show and so on.	00	04	00	00	00
03	Using games, competition, dramatization.	00	03	00	00	01
04	Dividing the class into groups according to their pupils’ abilities: slow, average and quick pupils.	04	00	00	00	00
05	Using interactive methods.	00	03	00	01	00

Table 03: Suggested Teaching Methods and Materials

As the above table show , we notice that all the observed teachers (04) always use coloured markers. Second, we notice that all the observed teachers (04) often use teaching aids or audio-visual materials such as pictures, computer, data show and so on. The results of the third item as it is showed in the table above , three (03) teachers often use games, competition and dramatization, while only one (01) ‘never’ use it. Four, it is observed that all the teachers (04) divide their classes into groups according to their pupils’ abilities: slow, average and quick pupils. The result of the last item reveal that only three (03) teachers often use interactive methods to catch pupils’ attention and motivate them; one (01) teacher rarely uses it.

3.2 Presentation of the Results of The Teachers' Interview

The interview is the second research tool that is opted for in the present study. It is conducted with six (06) EFL teachers at Aissat Idir and Ait Abdelmoumen middle schools of Tizi Ouzou. The following information are the detailed results obtained from the teachers' interview.

❖ **Question one : How long have you been teaching English as a foreign Language?**

The answers to this question indicate that the teaching experience of the interviewed varies for twelve (12) to thirty (30) years.

❖ **Question two : As a teacher , how do you evaluate your pupils' personalities ?**

The purpose of this question is to know how teachers evaluate their pupils personalities. The interviewees claim that pupils have different personalities and most of them are extrovert that is they like to talk, share ideas with others, and take risks and the rest are introvert, that is to say, they are shy, quiet, and they prefer to work alone. Moreover, they claim that all pupils experience anxiety while studying and this happens due to different reasons, like “lack of vocabulary, lack of self-confidence, and fear of making mistakes”.

❖ **Question three : In your opinion , should pupils be divided according to their level ability? Yes or No**

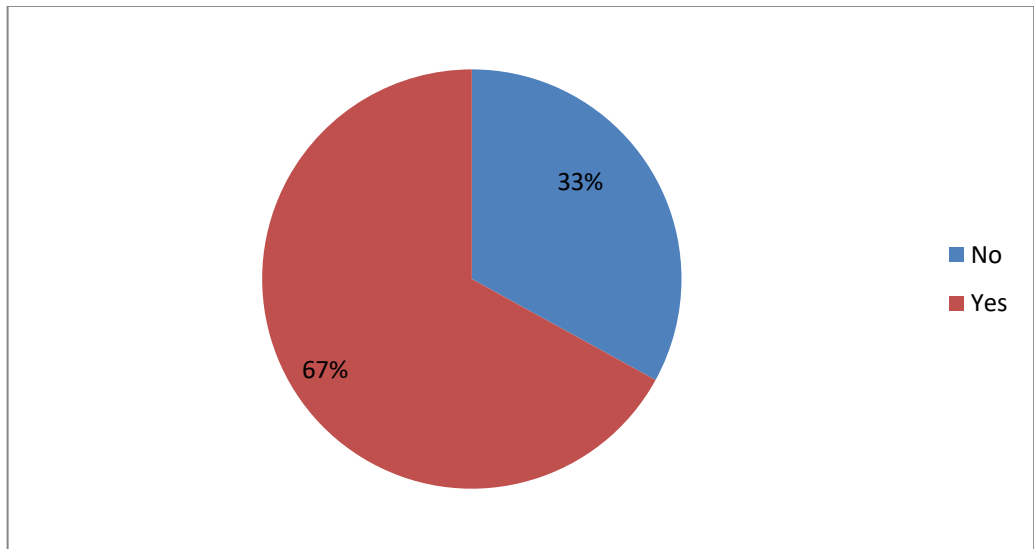


Diagram 01: Teachers’ Opinion about Dividing Pupils According to their Levels.

The purpose of the above mentioned question is to know the opinion of the teachers about dividing their pupils according to their level ability. Diagram 01 indicates that (33%) of the respondents answer that pupils shouldn't be divided according to their level of . However, 67 % of them claim that pupils must be divided according to their level of ability.

❖ **Question Four : How do you find teaching mixed -ability classes ?**

Regarding this question, the interviewees claim that it is difficult to teach a mixed ability-class , since we are dealing with different learners at the same time. All of them vary in levels, learning styles, intelligence, preferences, and so on. Two of them added that teaching mixed ability classes could be a huge uphill struggle. Another informant answered that it is enjoyable and challenging.

❖ **Question Five: Do you encounter any problems when dealing with mixed-ability classes ? if yes, you mention some of them.**

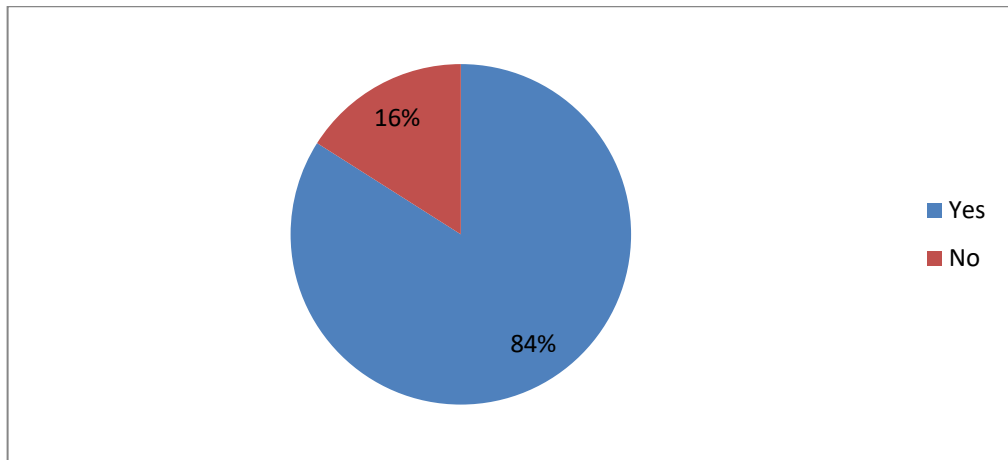


Diagram 02: Problems Teachers Encounter when Dealing with Mixed Ability Classes.

The purpose of this question is to discover whether the teachers encounter any problems when dealing with mixed-ability classes, to provide us with some of them. Diagram 02 indicates that (84%) of the respondents answer that they encounter many problems. However, 25% of them claim that teaching mixed-ability classes is not something difficult. The main problems the teachers have mentioned are lack of materials, large classes, interest, participation and discipline.

❖ **Question Six: Which strategies do you suggest as a solutions in order to cope with those problems ? Can you cite some of them please.**

Through this question we intend to know which strategies do the teachers suggest to cope with mixed-ability classes. The teachers have answered that they use different strategies to cope with mixed-ability classes. All the teachers Six (06) suggest collaborative group work, designing tasks and activities according to pupils' abilities and interests. They suggest also assessment , open-ended tasks and rewards as a best solutions for handling mixed ability classes.

❖ **Question Seven : How do you classify the pupils in terms of Multiple Intelligences?**

This question is conducted to determine how the teachers classify their pupils in terms of multiple intelligences. According to the findings, all the teachers (06) claim that all students are intelligent in different ways and each one shines in a special way. All the informants claim that their pupils possess linguistic intelligence and those pupils are good at using language and playing with words. However four (04) interviewees claim that pupils own a logical or mathematical intelligence i.e. they like numbers and abstract things. They also classify their pupils in terms of kinesthetic intelligence, this type of pupils learns best by touching, moving and interacting with others, while the remaining two (02) classify their pupils in terms of visual intelligence and musical intelligence.

❖ **Question Eight: Do you think that is important to implement the multiple intelligences theory in your classes as a strategy to teach EFL pupils in mixed ability classes?**

This question seeks to know to what extent teachers use this theory to enhance their pupils in learning process. All the respondents answer that it is important to implement multiple intelligences in their classes. They claim that pupils are using different types of intelligence in class according to their personality and cognitive abilities. It can be achieved by varying the tasks and of grouping pupils. They also argue, it is important since each type of intelligence tries to develop one aspect of pupils' learning process.

❖ **Question Nine: How do you encourage low ability, shy learners ?**

We have asked the teachers how they encourage lower ability and shy learners. Four (04) interviewees suggest encouraging lower ability, shy learners through motivating them using supporting words like good job, thanks , excellent, and so on. While the remaining two (02) they encourage weak pupils via rewards , for instance adding them extra marks or giving them simple gifts like books these will help them attain academic success.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented the different results that have been obtained from the answers of both the classroom observation and the semi-structured interview in the form of diagrams and tables for quantitative data. In addition to qualitative content analysis to interpret qualitative data. The same findings will be thoroughly discussed and interpreted in an attempt to bring answers to the research questions raised at the beginning of the research. These results are discussed and interpreted in the next chapter.



Chapter Four
Discussion of the Findings

Introduction

This chapter is devoted to the discussion of the findings gained from the classroom observation and the semi-structured interview conducted with middle school EFL teachers. The results are discussed in relation to the review of literature and the theory of Multiple Intelligences by Howard Gardner(1983). This discussion aims at answering the research questions by confirming or refuting the hypotheses set in the General Introduction. Hence, this chapter is divided into three major sections; each section aims at providing an answer to the research questions. It opens by discussing teachers' strategies to teach EFL pupils in mixed-ability classes. Then, the second section of the chapter provides a discussion of the problems EFL teachers encounter in mixed ability classes. Finally, the third section discusses teachers' solutions to overcome these problems.

4.1 Teachers' Strategies to Teach EFL Pupils in Mixed Ability Classes

Teaching mixed-ability classes is not easy in the fact that it is a demanding task to have successful learning outcome. Since pupils are different, teaching would be difficult for making them participate, do activities and understand the lessons. As a result, teachers have the responsibility to put their pupils in a better condition and especially those pupils who are weak in class. As Trenfor says, "*The best teachers are those who show you where to look but do not tell you what to see*". That is to say, in order for teachers to make their classes more active, they should implement innovative strategies and deploy different materials. The interpretation and the discussion will be organized according to the three sections of the observation sessions and the eighth (08) question asked in the semi-structured interview (*seeAppendix2*).

4.1.1 Classroom Management

In fact, teachers in mixed-ability classes should manage their classes not only by setting effective teaching methods, goals, aims but also by considering each pupils needs and preferences. Consequently, teachers have to organize the method of teaching by referring to classroom management.

From our observation, we have noticed that, all the teachers (04) “Sometimes” let their pupils worked in groups or individually, paid attention to the way their pupils were seating. Moreover, they “Always” managed their time and tried to make it as an essential part in teaching multileveled classes. For instance, these strategies are examples of good classroom management. As a result, dealing with mixed-ability classes needs to apply a mixture of method and strategies to cope with all needs of each pupils. As Tomlinson (1994) said that children already come to us differentiated. It just makes senses that we would differentiate our instruction in response to them.

From the observation sessions , we have noticed that EFL teachers used group work strategy to enhance their pupils’ needs. To exemplify, teacher (01) formed groups of lower and higher pupils separated from each other, and gave different tasks to these groups . So, the higher and quicker pupils worked with more complicated tasks, whereas the lower pupils dealt with a simpler task or worked with the teacher as a group member.

4.1.2 Teachers’ Lesson Presentation

From the results obtained in the observation sessions, we noticed that EFL teachers in mixed-ability classes presented and explained their lessons in many ways by using different activities and strategies who helped them presenting their lesson effectively and got successful teaching process. During the observation sessions it is remarked that, all the teachers (04) “often” started their lessons by relating the current lesson to the previous one, also , most of them (03) “Sometimes” tried to give a good explanation by

giving examples for better understanding in order to get a successful teaching process, their lesson presentation was sometimes based on using the board. In addition, all along our presence in the classroom observation it is noticed that; all the teachers (04) while presenting their lessons, “often” accomplished to give worksheets to their pupils during the lesson and gave them also homework by the end of each session which means they provided them with in-class activities and out-class activities. Besides, it is noticed that all the teachers (04) “always” restated or recapitulated the whole lesson at the end of each session for their pupils.

The results have shown that EFL teachers at Aissat Idir and Ait Abdelmoumen 01 middle schools of Tizi Ouzou used different strategies that helped them explained and presented their lessons in mixed-ability classes in order to improve their teaching process and maximize the learning opportunities for all their pupils.

4.1.3 Suggested Teaching Methods and Materials

Teachers in mixed ability classes used suitable methods and materials not only relying on the course book but also on other materials to add variation. In fact, presenting the lesson with several methods and materials makes learning enjoyable. In this regard, Ainslie (1994,p.33) claims that, “ *we need to introduce new material in short segments so that older course members and slower or less advanced learners have the time to assimilate it before moving on to something else*”. That is, when teachers design their own methods and materials, the lesson will be rich and pupils won't feel bored.

From the classroom observation, we noticed that EFL teachers varied materials, like all teachers(04) often used audio-visual materials such as pictures, coloured markers,computer data show, and so on. Hence, teachers made use of visuals to grab pupils' attention and motivated them because even the most passive learners were often interested in realia or colourful and interesting pictures. Moreover, we noticed that teachers often used games, competitions and dramatization , so these are ways of ensuring their interest in lesson. Regardless of the differences among the pupils in terms of language level and learning styles,

they are motivated to use the target language while they are playing a game or participating in a completion or a role-play. While teacher (01) has used role-play, in which the pupils are asked to perform a “Journalistic Event”, the pupils were engaged by performing, listening, and focusing on their mates’ performance. In this context, Harmer (1998,p.92) argues that *“role play activities are those where students are asked to imagine that they are in different situations and act accordingly”*. Teacher (01) has incorporated this activity with the purpose of making the pupils communicate in order to discover their faults.

Moreover, they “always” used another method which is dividing their classes into groups according to their pupils’ abilities : slow, average and quick pupils . This method helped the slow learners in the sense that it eliminated competition offered by fast learners and gave equal chance to low-level pupils to express themselves. Furthermore, on the basis of the result interview the majority of the respondents (67%) said that pupils must be divided according to their level of ability. Since, for them grouping pupils according to their abilities is the easiest method to handle a class with varying abilities. In addition , during the classroom observation it is perceived that, (03) teachers “often” used interactive methods to catch pupils’ attention and motivate them . Therefore, the teaching methods and materials implemented by teachers in teaching mixed-ability classes played a crucial role that guarantee the good environment classroom.

4.1.4 Implementation of Multiple Intelligences Theory in Mixed-Ability Classes

As Gardner (1983) suggests , there are eight different areas in which an individual can be intelligent. From the interviewees’ answers, it is noticeable that all the teachers (06) claimed that all pupils are intelligent in different ways and no one is stupid, each one shines in special way (*seequestion7*). Nath & Cohen (2011,p.170) acknowledged *“ Gardner theory of “Multiple Intelligence” speaks of capacities that reside inside a person. He has identified at least eight intelligences that are important for students: verbal-linguistic, logical-mathematical, visual-spatial, bodily-kinesthetic , musical-rhythmic, interpersonal, and*

intrapersonal, and naturalistic” . As already mentioned in the literature review (chapter one) Gardner (1983) suggests eight types of intelligences, which can exist on each individual.

As a strategy of teaching and learning used in schools and universities to enhance pupils in their learning process, multiple intelligences theory can be used to address all sorts of intelligences. Hence, identifying multiple intelligences within the classroom can be very useful if teachers use this information to lesson planning that is adapted to pupils' intelligences. Moreover, implementing the theory of multiple intelligences in the classroom, teachers take into consideration the different types of learners they might have in their class, reinforce all types of intelligences in every pupil, and allow for an individual learning process that will ultimately enable each learner to utilize his or her specific abilities and demonstrate learning. According to the answers obtained from the eighth (08) question, it is deduced that all the respondents (06) argued that it is important to implement multiple intelligences in classes since each type of intelligence tries to develop one aspect of pupils' learning process.

As it is confirmed by teacher (05) “ *teaching pupils with multiple intelligences helps them to become self-advocated in their learning. They become autonomous and can internalize the way of learning that fits them and to cope with teaching styles*”. Indeed, EFL teachers in mixed-ability classes can implement multiple intelligences as a strategy to teach such classes. Moreover, a list of activities suggested by Alvis (1999, p.9) that can assist teachers to broaden their teaching strategies and to enrich all categories of their pupils' intelligences (*see Appendix 3*) the table shows activities related to eight types of intelligences that can be used by EFL teachers to show pupils how much they already know, to mobilize their existing knowledge, and to encourage their contribution.

To conclude, from the analysis of the obtained data it can be said that; EFL teachers at Aissat Idir and Ait Abdelmoumen01 middle school, use different strategies to teach EFL pupils in mixed ability classes and vary their ways of teaching in order to meet all pupils' needs and improve their level . As a result, this differentiation helps in involving the pupils

in the learning process. In fact, these findings answer the first research question and confirm the proposed hypothesis of the General Introduction, which is “EFL teachers use well-adapted strategies that help them dealing with mixed-ability classes and ensure all their pupils in their learning process”.

4.2 Problems EFL Teachers Encounter in Mixed-Ability Classes

Since mixed ability classes are the result of many factors such as motivation, age, learning styles, intelligences, and so on, teachers may find various difficulties in preparing and planning lessons in order to guarantee that all learners meet their requirements, demands, and advantages from the lesson. Venacio (2009, p.117) noted that “*teachers are in the process of making their students learn effectively. Even if their differences, teachers should undertake every single detail to over what is going on in class. Furthermore, these differences may lead to various problems*”. In this connection, EFL teachers at Aissat Idir and Ait Abdelmoumen 01 face many problems while teaching mixed-ability classes. The outcomes which are presented in diagram (02) reveal that the majority of teachers (84%) encounter many problems when dealing with multileveled classes.

This is confirmed by teacher two (02) who said that “*yes I do encounter many problems, because dealing with mixed ability classes is hard this is why I find challenges in preparing and planning lessons*”. In fact, mixed-ability classes is not easy and teachers encounter many problems this is due to the class richness of different abilities.

However, 25% of the respondents claim that they do not encounter any problems when dealing with mixed ability classes, this is confirmed by teacher four(04) who said that “*I do not encounter any problem because dealing with such classes is enjoyable and challenging*”. That is, dealing with mixed-ability classes is not something difficult for them, because this depends on their intelligence and patience also through using appropriate strategies and provide benefits for the EFL teachers.

In addition to this, the problems which are encountered by the EFL teachers when teaching mixed ability classes are deduced from their answers in the semi-structured

interview conducted with EFL middle school teachers. In fact, the teachers struggle a lot in order to realize an effective and successful learning process, since their aim while teaching multileveled classes is to improve their pupils' level through suitable teaching strategies, in which the pupils ensure efficiency and success in their learning process.

In fact the main problems which are encountered by the teachers when we interviewed them are as follows: lack of materials, large classes, learners' lack of interest, participation and discipline. Lack of materials is among the problems which are widely faced by teachers in their process of teaching mixed ability classes. Teaching mixed ability classes all the time with text-books push certain learners to feel dissatisfied and annoyed, while other pupils may find this enjoyable and helpful. Furthermore, other groups may find themselves lost because the topics are not interesting or meaningless, here, learners can have bad feelings and can be in a very bad mood.

This is confirmed by teacher five (05) who claimed that "*yes I encounter many problems such as the lack of materials to design the lessons*". Indeed, most language textbooks are designed for an ideal homogeneous classroom environment. Teachers always have to deal with the problem that pupils react to the textbook differently due to their individual differences. First, some pupils may find it interesting or very easy. Second, the teacher does not provide a range of teaching aids like: pictures, videos, slides and so on.

In this context Ur (1993,p.83) states in his book A Course in Language Teaching, "*the teacher works according to a syllabus, or according to his or her program, using text books and supplementary materials as the need arises*". That is, the choice of teaching materials to design their lessons is a problematic issue which is widely found in teaching EFL pupils in mixed-ability classes.

Moreover, another common problem which is provided by teacher (03) is large classes. Thus, most classes are comprised of large number of pupils, and the role of the teacher is to control them and deliver the lesson effectively. It is very difficult to set a lesson for a mixed-ability class since every pupil has a different level of understanding. This

becomes a challenging task for teachers because they need to address the needs of every pupils and try to employ the best method that suits them.

This is also reinforced by the data obtained from classroom observation sessions. We have noticed that all the teachers (04) rarely control the whole class this is due to the large classes that contain between 30 to 35 pupils in one class, so the teachers can not pay attention equally to all of them. For instance, if he/she tried to call on everybody in class to answer his/her questions, it would take too much time. The lesson would never be finished, and uninvolved pupils would get bored and start to do something else. A deep explanation of this can be understood through what Ur (1996) argues “*large classes are always heterogeneous, and heterogeneous classes are especially problematic when they are large*”. This means that, teachers in mixed-ability classes find the situation very difficult to control a large class, particularly the class includes a big number of pupils.

In addition, another problem that teachers face is learners’ lack of interest. This concept is connected with learning in general and with language in particular. However, interest problem may arise due to the differences among pupils in terms of their attitude towards the subject matter and the teacher, their knowledge of language, and their personality. As a result, teachers find it very hard to motivate all the pupils and generate interest in the topic being discussed. Some pupils find the lessons dull, and the topic has no familiarity with their own life and interests. Furthermore, the teacher may spend the whole session explaining so the other pupils do not have a chance to express their ideas.

As it is confirmed by teacher (04) that “*to teach pupils with different abilities and qualities, the problem I encounter is mainly, the interest of the pupils. For instance, during the lesson I take a group of weaker pupils who have problems of speaking skills, I notice that they do not enjoy tasks that have to do with the spoken form, whereas the good pupils favor and like communicative tasks, debate and discussions. I think pupils’ interest may be shown when certain learners enter in the lesson just to take a rest and to make a funny atmosphere*”

where others are fighting to learn and evolve their grades.” Indeed, interest relates to the pupils’ differences in personality, attitude and their knowledge of language.

In this context, Hess (2005) states that “*when we teach a mixed ability class we often feel discouraged when some students, often the ones who like speaking out in front of the whole class, participate and others look bored and invisible. We cannot make all the students active and feel interested in the lesson*”.

As the problem of participation has a great impact on the teaching process in mixed-ability classes, certain pupils have the fear to speak and express their ideas; they can not exchange their points of views or give their opinions. This is may be because they feel shy or they do not believe in themselves or they lose their confidence and they do not have an eye-contact with their teachers and prefer to sit in hidden and concealed way. On the other hand, some pupils are totally different; they can not keep calm; they have to participate by expressing everything that comes to their minds; they are curious thus; they are asking questions all the time.

This is confirmed on the basis of the interview, all the teachers (06) claim that the pupils have different personalities and most of them are extrovert and the rest are introvert in their responses to question 2 (*seeAppendix02*). That is, lack of participation in mixed ability classes is due to differences of pupils’ personalities. As a result, mixed-ability classes consist of an active and risk taking pupils who are always participating in explicit way and interaction in that they contribute in creating and flourishing atmosphere rather than the weaker ones who are just sitting and hidden. Accordingly, *Prodromou (1992) argues that “In mixed ability class there are students, often the strong ones and the ones who like speaking out, always participate, and the others who are the weak and bad students, always do not participate and look as invisible*”. This means that some learners are advanced and always participate in the classroom, taking many turns, while others show in difference and may not speak for the ensure lesson.

Furthermore, the last problem which was encountered by teachers is discipline. In the process of teaching, the differences in language ability cause either boredom of more advanced learners or lack of concentration of weaker students, who often are lost in the lessons. For that reason teachers might feel incapable of controlling the class; while they are occupied by certain pupils, usually weaker ones, who need more extensive explanations, the rest of the class might begin to feel without being surprised and thus switching into a mother tongue and discussing issues which are not related to the content of the lesson.

As it is confirmed by teacher three (03) that *“I often find mixed-ability classes chaotic and difficult to control, the problem I encounter is mainly, discipline. For instance, often the quicker pupils finish the tasks given before the other pupils . As a result, they may misbehave while waiting for the others to finish. The weaker pupils , on the other hand, cannot finish the tasks as quickly as the strong ones and may lose their confidence and/or show ill-disciplined behaviour”*. Indeed, teachers can be in very complicated problem and they lose control of the whole classroom.

According to Podromou (1989, p.2) states:

Teachers frequently attribute their continued frustration to students' unwillingness to learn, and often to mixed ability classes where so-called “bad” or “weak” learners are held responsible for holding the the class back. In such circumstances, teachers fall back on conventional teacher-centred approaches and disciplinary problems measures as means of keeping the centrifigural forces together.

From the above discussed results, we may answer the second question and confirm the second hypothesis suggested in the General Introduction which states that EFL teachers encounter many problems to teach mixed ability classes such as lack of materials, large classes, learners' lack of interest, participation and discipline.

4.3 Teachers' Solutions to Overcome Problems of Mixed-Ability Classes

Actually, both pupils and teachers are struggling with various problems in mixed ability classes. That is why, EFL teachers focus on helping pupils to become more effective learners, and this can be achieved by finding out what strategies and methods they prefer in order to reach all of them especially those with low level. As Hess (2001, p.8) claimed “*A variety of activities and techniques is important in all learning situations but particularly relevant in mixed ability classes because varieties of tasks can accommodate different levels in our class*”. This means that, dealing with different tasks and methods is necessary in the learning process especially in mixed-ability classes since varied activities and techniques can cater all learners' level in a class.

Due to the different problems that EFL teachers of Aissat Idir and Ait Abdelmoumen 01 middle schools of Tizi Ouzou encounter while teaching mixed ability classes, these teachers suggest different strategies and tasks that help them to facilitate the process of teaching pupils with different abilities and qualities in the same classroom. From the outcomes displayed in question 6 (*see Appendix2*) we deduce that teachers (06) suggest different solutions strategies to cope with mixed-ability classes like encouraging collaborative group work, designing activities according to their pupils' abilities and interests, assessment, open-ended tasks and rewards strategy.

Collaborative group work, it refers to working together and in cooperative way. In this strategy, all learners have the same opportunity to contribute their thoughts through writing. As it is confirmed by teacher (02) “*I suggest collaborative group work as a strategy to teach pupils with different abilities. For me, this strategy offer the chance for the pupils to learn from each other while working in pairs or in groups*”. In relation to this Hess (2005, p.10) claims “*students who work together will participate, learn how to compromise, negotiate meaning, become risk takers and self-evaluators*”. That is to say, working together supports learner autonomy, because pupils will learn not to count on teacher all the time but rather figure out the unknown expression on their own. They can learn from each other and

share their opinions and experiences, which will lead to increasing their tolerance and awareness of people's differences. Thus, pupils will not only learn a language, but also moral abilities, such as respect of each other, willingness to help and support each other rather than laugh at someone's failure.

In addition, all the teachers (06) said that designing tasks and activities according to their pupils' abilities and interests can be an effective solution to handle mixed ability classes. Therefore, teachers focus more on simplifying the task with remaining the same content and objectives. In addition, because learners differ in processing information, they should be allowed to respond in different ways, teachers should provide their pupils the opportunity to respond to difficulty, this will allow them to be more creative and will encourage them to be more interested in what they are learning. Ainslie (1994, p.33) points out that, "*lesson by lesson and even task by task learners must be aware of their learning objectives, must set a task that is within their capabilities*". That is, teachers must use tasks according to pupils' abilities, like tiered tasks.

Assessment is another teaching strategy that allows the teachers to know the pupils' level, as well as it enables them to know whether the current methods are matching learners' level and preferences or not. Tomlinson (1999) argues that "*for a teacher is very important to assess learners not just after each unit but on a day to day level because it helps to see how the lesson went and how it can be improved next time*".

Furthermore, the teachers suggest also open-ended tasks as a solution to cope with mixed ability classes. Thus, open-ended tasks give pupils the opportunity to present and express themselves with a number of possible correct and right answers or responds. These exercises permit each pupil to accomplish and fulfill his/her own capacity imagination. Accordingly, Ur (2016) views that; it is essential to put many open-ended questions, as they facilitate answer variety. When teachers asked open-ended questions, pupils may use vocabulary and phrases they are familiar with and, therefore; construct sentences adjusted to their own language level.

As it is confirmed by teacher (04) “*I think using open-ended questions, encourage pupils to use language by giving longer answers that help build a wider range of vocabulary, express their own thoughts and opinions*”. To illustrate, teacher (04) gives a practical implementation of this strategy (*seeAppendix4*) where the table presents a task that aims at interviewing classmates about their eating habits and levels of physical activity. The pupils’ walk around the classroom and ask questions to gather information about their classmates. To make sure that everybody is able to fulfill the exercise in time, pupils are told that it is required for them to interview a minimum of two classmates. stronger pupils have an opportunity to speak more, and the weaker ones can successfully fulfil the mandatory task with no sense of failure.

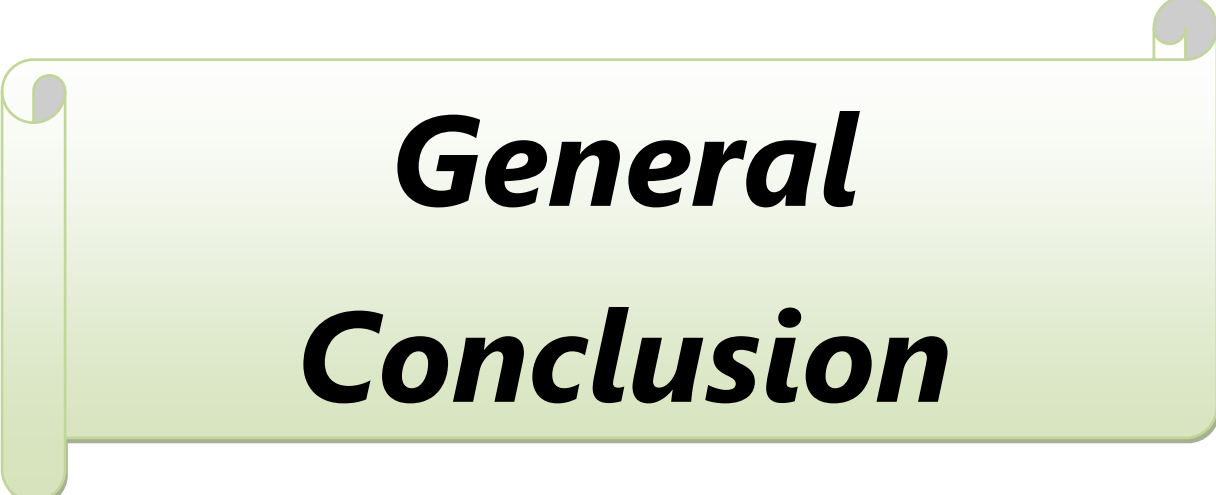
From the results of the semi-structured interview it is concluded that all the teachers (06) use rewards as a solution especially to encourage low ability and shy learners. As indicated in question (08), two teachers said that they encourage weak pupils via rewards, for instance by adding them extra marks or giving them simple gifts like books which will help them to attain academic success and motivate them to learn. In this regard ,Cotton (1998, p.1) states that “*instructional reinforcement is the provision of verbal, symbolic, tangible or other rewards for desirable academic performance or effort at the classroom level*”. That is to say, whatever the type of rewards, it can promote the pupils’ performance and strengthen their desire to learn. This means that the best way to motivate pupils is through the application of rewards strategy.

These findings partly confirm our third hypothesis which claims that EFL teachers can vary tasks and strategies making the lesson more interesting and improve their pupils’ level.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter has discussed and interpreted the data of the observation sessions and the semi-structured interview done with middle school EFL teachers in the region of Tizi Ouzou, relying on the Review of Literature and Multiple Intelligences Theory by Howard Gardner (1983). The discussion of the findings provides us with clear answers for the Research Questions stated in the General Introduction, and confirms all the suggested hypotheses.

The outcomes of the classroom observation sessions and the semi-structured interview have revealed that, EFL teachers employ a variety of strategies and methods and as long as they use multiple of teaching methods, that help them to know their learners' level and needs which can make a progress of the teaching-learning process and overcome the problems they face in mixed-ability classes. The results also revealed that there are many problems EFL teachers encountered while dealing with multileveled classes such as lack of materials, large classes, lack of interest, participation and discipline. Further, dealing with mixed-ability classes needs big effort, that is why EFL teachers suggest a suitable and thriving strategies to create a helpful teaching and learning environment for them and meet all the pupils needs in those classes.



***General
Conclusion***

The current research work aims at investigating EFL teachers' strategies to cope with pupils' mixed abilities at the middle school level in the region of Tizi Ouzou. It has attempted to take a closer look at mixed-ability classes and individual differences. The purpose of the dissertation is to identify the different problems that those teachers encounter when teaching mixed ability classes and to suggest some solutions to help the teachers dealing with multileveled classes. Conducting this research and dealing with this topic is not easy since the work addresses teachers' difficulties in dealing with mixed-ability classes; thus, this research is conducted using the theoretical framework based on Howard Gardner's (1983) Frames of Mind, the theory of Multiple Intelligences.

This work seeks to answer the questions raised in the General Introduction. To answer these questions, we have advanced some hypotheses that state that EFL teachers use well-adapted strategies that help them dealing with mixed-ability classes and ensure all their pupils in their learning process, that EFL teachers encounter many problems when teaching mixed ability classes such as lack of materials, large classes, lack of interest, participation and discipline, it has been stated that EFL teachers can vary task and strategies making the lesson more interesting and improve their pupils' level.

To answer the research questions and to check the hypotheses advanced in this study, we have adopted the mixed-methods approach combining quantitative and qualitative methods in both data collection and data analysis. The research data are gathered using two collection tools which are classroom observation and an interview. We attended twelve (12) classroom observation sessions in Aissat Idir and Ait Abdelmoumen (01) middle schools in the region of Tizi Ouzou during the academic year of 2022. Moreover, to reinforce the validity of the data obtained from the classroom observation, a semi-structured interview was conducted with (06) EFL teachers in both middle schools under study. It contained nine (09) questions. For the quantitative data analysis, the rule of three was utilized to

analyze the close-ended questions of the semi-structured interview. Concerning the qualitative data, we used Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA) to interpret the data obtained from the classroom observations and teachers' interview.

The discussion of the outcomes of the classroom observation sessions, and the semi-structured interview has given evidence to the research questions of this study. The present research reveals that; the results obtained from classroom observation checklist, and teachers' interview show that, EFL teachers at Aissat Idir and Ait Abeldmoumen 01 middle schools of Tizi Ouzou use different teaching strategies and vary tasks and materials that help them to create a helpful teaching-learning and meet all the pupils' needs in those classes. Thus, the results obtained from both the classroom observation sessions and the semi-structured interview have confirmed the first hypothesis advanced in the General Introduction.

In addition to this, the results of this inquiry reveals that; EFL teachers at Aissat Idir and Ait Abdelmoumen 01 middle schools of Tizi Ouzou are encountered many problems while teaching mixed ability classes. Among them we have lack of materials, large classes, learners' lack of interest, participation and discipline. Therefore, these results confirm the second hypothesis advanced in the introduction, which has advanced that EFL teachers encounter many problems when teaching mixed ability classes.

Furthermore, the discussed results of the interview have demonstrated solutions suggested by EFL teachers to overcome the problems faced in mixed ability classes, they suggest different strategies and tasks that help them to facilitate the process of teaching pupils with different abilities in the same classroom. The appropriate solutions suggested by EFL teachers are collaborative group work, designing activities according to their pupils' abilities and interests, assessment, open-ended tasks and rewards strategy.

Besides, these results confirm the third hypothesis stated in the General Introduction, which has stated that EFL teachers can vary task and strategies making the lesson more interesting and improve their pupils' level.

It is worth mentioning that our study encountered some limitations. First, the core limitation is time. Because of the insufficient amount of time, we haven't succeeded to do more sessions in classroom observation to get more information to enrich and enlarge this research and do more sessions with different middle schools. The fact that the two middle schools which were selected were far from each other, we have just observed these two schools.

Finally, we hope that we have contributed to the field of research in general and we will open opportunities for further research in this area. The strategies used by teachers to cope with pupils' mixed abilities provide this research with clear outcomes about its effective strategies to teach multileveled classes. Our investigation is limited to middle school, so further researches on the same study can be conducted on the secondary school using other research tools like questionnaire.



Bibliography

Bibliography

Bibliography

- AL-Shammakhi, F., & AL-Humaidi, S (2015) *Challenges Facing EFL Teachers in Mixed Ability Classes and Strategies Used to Overcome Them*. World Journal of English Language ,5(3), pp.33-45.
- Alvis, T. (1999) *The Best of Multiple Intelligences Activities from Teacher Created Materials*. Westminster, CA: Teacher Created Materials : ls
- Ansari, M.S (2013). *Coping with the Problems of Mixed Ability Classes: A Study in the Context of Teaching English as SL/FL*. International Journal of English: Literature, Language & Skills.
- Armstrong, T. (2018). *Multiple intelligence in the classroom (4th ed)*. Alexandria, Virginia. USA: ASCD. Chatman, C., Chi, H., & Davis, W. (2010). Active learning approaches to Teaching information assurance. Research Gate. Retrieved from <https://files.ascd.org/staticfiles/ascd/pdf/siteASCD/publications/books/Multiple-Intelligences-in-the-Classroom-4th-Edition-Sample-Chapters.pdf>
- Bell, M. (2005) *Peer Observation Partnerships in Higher Education Milperra*. NSW: Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia.(inc)
- Belhadj, Dj. (2018) *The Impact of Cooperative Learning on Teaching Mixed Abilities Classes*. Master. diss. University of Mostaghanam.
- Bensaid, A. and Benguit, N. (2020) *Investigating Teachers' Awareness and His Role When Dealing with Mixed-Ability Classes*. Master. Diss. University of Tiaret.

Bibliography

- Bremner, S. (2008) *Some Thoughts on Teaching a Mixed Ability Class*. Scottish languages review, 18, pp. 1-10. Retrieved from https://dev.scilt.org.uk/Portals/24/Library/slr/issues/18/18_bremner.pdf
- Checkley, K. (1997) The First Seven and the Eighth: A Conversation with Howard Gardner. *Educational Leadership*, 55(1), pp.8-13.
- Creswell, J. and Planko Clark, V. (2011) *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research*. 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Corr, A., & Mathews, G. (2009) *The Cambridge Handbook of Personality Psychology*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Cotton, K. (1998) *Instructional Reinforcement School Improvements Research Stories*.
- Dornyei, Z. (2001) *Motivational Strategies in the Language Classroom*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Dornyei, Z. (2005) *The Psychology of the Language Learner: Individual Differences in Second Language Acquisition*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum
- Ellis, R. (1985) *Understanding Second Language Acquisition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Freeman, D. L. (2000) *Techniques and Principles in Language Teaching (2nd ed)*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Fisher, R. (2001) *Teaching Children to Learn*. Retrieved from https://books.google.co.id/books?id=14_K5WpKQaIC&pg=PR3&hl=id&source=gbs_selected_pages&cad=2#v=onepage&q&f=false

Bibliography

- Gass, S.&Selinker, L.(2008). *Second Language Acquisition: An Introductory Course*. (2nd ed). London and New York: Routledge.
- Gardner, H. (1983). *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*. New York: Basic Books.
- Gardner, H. (1999) *Intelligence Reframed: Multiple Intelligences for the 21st Century*. New York : Basic Books.
- Gordon, S. (2010) A Case Study on Multilevel Language ability Grouping in an ESL Secondary School Classroom: Are We Making the Right Choices? Ontario Institute for studies in Education. Phd. dissertation. University of Toronto.
- Harmer, J. (1998) *How to Teach English: An Introduction to the Practice of English Language Teaching*. London: Longman.
- Harmer, J.(2007) *The Practice of English Language Teaching*.(4th ed). London: Longman.
https://www.academia.edu/19053666/HarmerJ2007The_Practice_of_English_Language_Teaching.
- Hafhaf, W. (2019) Dealing with Mixed Ability Classes in Comprehension and Written Expression Teaching. Master. diss. University of Tlemcen.
- Hess, Natalie (2001) *Teaching Large Multilevel Classes*. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press.
- Hedge, T. (2000) *Teaching and Learning in the Language Classroom*. Oxford: University Press.

Bibliography

- Huang, L. Y. (2014) *Investigating Mixed-Ability Teaching in Taiwanese Primary Schools*. International Education Studies. 7 (5).
- Hsieh H. F. and Shannon S. (2005) Three Approaches to Qualitative Content Analysis. *Qualitative Health Research*.
- Ireson, J., &Hallam, S. (2001) *Ability Grouping in Education*. London: Paul
• Chapman Publishing. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781446221020>
- Krippendorff, K. (1980) *Content Analysis: An introduction to Its Methodology*. Beverly Hills, California: Sage Publications.
- Nardi, D. (2001) *Multiple Intelligences & Personality Type: Tools and Strategies for Developing Human Potential*. Huntington Beach, Calif: Telos Publications.
- Nath, J. L., & Cohen, M. (2011) *Becoming an EC-6 Teacher in Texas: A Course of Study for the Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities(PPR) TExES*. BelmontCA:Wadsworth Cengage Learning.
- Naomi Tade, Djo.(2017) A Case Study of The Teacher's Challenges and Strategies in Teaching 5th Grade Students of Mixed Ability classes. Satya Wacana Christian University, Salatiga. Retrieved from:
<https://repository.uksw.edu/handle/123456789/15991>
- Online English Dictionary for Learners. (2003). Retrieved from:
<http://dictionary.reverso.net/en/english-cobuild/mixed+ability>
- Pitchard, A. (2008) *WayS of Learning: Learning Theories and Learning Styles in the Classroom*. (2nd ed). London and New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis.
- Podromou, Luke. (1992) *Mixed Ability Classes*. London: Macmillan.

Bibliography

- Prodromou L. (1989) The Mixed Ability Class and the Myth of the Bad Language English Teaching Forum Volume 29(4).pp.
- Purpura, J.(1999) Learner Characteristics and I2 Test Performance. In R.L. Oxford. (ed), Language Learning Strategies in the Context of Autonomy, Synthesis of Findings from the International Inventional Conference. On Learning Strategy Research. (pp. 61-63), New York: Colombia University.
- Şalli-Çopur D. (2005) Coping with the Problems of Mixed Ability Classes. The Internet TESL Journal, XI (8). <http://iteslj.org/Techniques/Salli-Copur-MixedAbility.html>
- Salkind, N. (2008) Encyclopedia of Educational Psychology. (ed) Kansas: Sage Publications.
https://books.google.dz/books?id=iSeZNUeVpTsC&printsec=frontcover&hl=fr&source=gbs_View_API&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false
- Simanova, A. (2010) *Dealing with Mixed Ability Classes*. Diplôme thesis, Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic.
- Richards, S. (1998) *ELT Spectrum*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Richards, J., & Burms, A. (2012) *The Cambridge Guide to Pedagogy and Practice in Second Language Teaching*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.
- Tomlinson, Carol Ann. (1999) *The Differentiated Classroom: Responding to the Needs of all Learners*. Virginia: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Ur, P. (1991). *A course in language teaching: Practice and theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ur, P. (1993) *A course in Language Teaching: Practice and Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bibliography

- Ur, P. (2016). *Penny Ur's 100 Teaching Tips*. Cambridge University Press. pp. 48-50.
- Valentic, D. (2005) *ELT in Multi-Level Classes*, Hupe Newsletter.
- Xanthou M. and Pavlou P. Mixed Ability Classes in the EFL Setting of Primary Schools in Cyprus. The Impact of Private Tuition, School Location and Gender. In C. McRoy(2010), *The Cyprus Review*(ed.)Nicosia: University of Nicosia Press.
- Zhuanglin, H. (1989) *Linguistics: An Introduction*. Beijing: Peking University Press.



Appendices

Appendix 01

Classroom Observation Checklist

Sections	Observed Items	Frequency				
		Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
N 01: Classroom Management	01. Teachers' control of the whole class.					
	02.Pupils' seating Organization.					
	03.Group wok.					
	04. Individual work.					
	05. Time management.					
N 02: Teachers' Lesson Presentation	01. Relate the current lesson to the previous one.					
	02.Teachers' explanation based on the use of the board.					
	03.Teachers' explanation based on dictation.					
	04.Giving examples for Better understanding.					
	05.Providing in-class Activities.					
	06.Providing out-class Activities.					
	07. Making recapitulation at the end of the lesson.					

N 03: Methods and Materials	01. Using coloured Markers.					
	02. Using teaching aids or audio-visual materials such as pictures, computer, data show and so on.					
	03. Using games, competition, dramatization.					
	04. Dividing the class into groups according to their pupils' abilities: slow, average and quick pupils.					
	05. Using interactive methods.					

Appendix 02

Teachers' Interview

A semi-structured interview which contains nine (9) questions. Two (2) questions are close-ended and the remaining ones are open-ended. It is conducted with six (06) EFL teachers' in AissatIdir and Ait Abdelmoumen 01 middle schools of Tizi Ouzou.

1. How long have you been teaching English as a Foreign Language?
2. As a teacher, how do you evaluate your pupils' personalities?
3. In your opinion, should pupils be divided according to their level ability? Yes or No.
4. How do you find teaching mixed-ability classes?
5. Do you encounter any problems when dealing with mixed ability classes? if yes, you mention some of them.
6. Which strategies do you suggest as a solutions in order to cope with those problems? Can you cite some of them.
7. How do you classify the pupils in terms of Multiple Intelligences?
8. Do you think that is important to implement the multiple intelligences theory in your classes as a strategy to teach EFL pupils in mixed ability classes?
9. How do you encourage low ability, shy learners?

Thank you for your Contribution!

Appendix 03

This appendix includes a “**List of Activities**” suggested by Alvis (1999, p.9) that can assist EFL teachers to broaden their teaching strategies and to enrich all categories of their pupils intelligences.

<i>INTELLIGENCE TYPES AND APPROPRIATE EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES</i>	
Intelligence Type	Educational Activities
Linguistic	Lectures, worksheets, word games, journals, debates
Logical	Puzzles, estimations, problemsolving
Spatial	Charts, diagrams, graphic organizers, drawing, films
Bodily	Hands-on, mime, crafts, demonstration
Musical	Singing, poetry, jazz chants, mood music
Interpersonal	Group work, peer tutoring, class projects
Intrapersonal	Reflection, interestcenters, personal values tasks
Naturalist	Field trips, show and field trips, show and tell, plant and animals projects

Intelligence Types and Appropriate Educational Activities, adapted from Christison(1998).