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***Strategies for Gaining Learners' Attention in the EFL  
Classroom. An Analysis of Teachers' Views and  
Practices in Three Selected Private Middle Schools in  
Tizi-Ouzou.***

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## Dedications

*To the memory of my father Hocine who always supported me.*

*To my wonderful mother Ferroudja, your encouragements have been my motivation.*

*To all my brothers Ferhat, Meziane, Ahmed, Amar.*

*My youngest sister Tassadit.*

*My sister in law Zina and my nephew Hocine.*

*My best friend and binomial Melissa, your friendship has always been a source of strength.*

**Samia MENOUEUR**

*To the memory of my father Nafa; this achievement is as much yours as it is mine.*

*My precious mother Henia, your support is the key of my success.*

*My dear brother Yanis, your presence has been a source of strength.*

*To the memory of my grandmother Ferroudja.*

*My lovely sister in law Leaticia and my niece Lea.*

*My best friend and binomial Samia, with you, through highs and lows, we always find a way.*

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## **Abstract**

The present study aims to investigate EFL teachers' strategies and practices in the EFL classroom to grab their learners' attention, how these teachers view attention and the barriers that undermine it in the classroom, to motivate their learners in the private middle schools : ASSALAS, IKHOULAF, IJEGGIGEN N TFSUT located in the town of Tizi-Ouzou. Our research relies on the Engagement theory of Kearsley and Shneiderman (1998). To collect data, we attended twenty four (24) observation sessions with six (06) EFL teachers and an interview is conducted with the same teachers in the schools concerned. For the analysis of data, a mixed research method is used. The study combines quantitative and qualitative methods. We have used a Descriptive Statistical Analysis relying on the SPSS computer program to analyze the results obtained from the close ended questions of the interview. As for the interpretation of the teachers open ended questions of the interview and classroom observation, we have followed the Qualitative Content Analysis method. The main results of the interview indicate that all of the six teachers find gaining learners' attention as an important aspect in the teaching and learning process. Moreover, the classroom observations' results have shown that EFL teachers strategies are adapted to meet the learners' needs and interests. Finally, the interview has revealed that EFL teachers face some difficulties in capturing and maintaining their learners' attention such as learners different levels, afternoon lessons and the lack of the learners interest in the subject matter.

**Key words :** Attention, Strategies, Views and practices, Engagement theory.

## **List of abbreviations and acronyms**

- **EFL** : English as a Foreign Language.
- **Hp** : Hypothesis.
- **MMUTO** : Mouloud Maameri university of Tizi-Ouzou.
- **PBL** : Problem Based Learning.
- **Q** : Question.
- **QCA** : Qualitative Content Analysis.
- **SDT** : Self-Determination Theory.
- **SPSS** : Statistical Pacage for Social Sciences.

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### ▪ Statement of the problem

Teaching English as a foreign language has grown progressively in recent times. This is due to the increasing demand for English as a world wide language of interaction, along with its significance in international commerce, tourism, and industry. Nevertheless, learners may encounter in learning a new language needs a lot of efforts and time. In the context of education, a key challenge emerges when learners are not motivated, leading to academic underachievement. This stresses the importance of capturing and maintaining learners' interest as a crucial factor for successful teaching and learning experiences.

Applied linguistics as Chomsky, Krashen and Terrell and educational psychologists like Piaget and Vygotsky these two fields investigate how individuals presently learn and gain knowledge especially in the context of language acquisition and education. Both domains have formulated numerous theories and strategies to tackle the different obstacles encountered by teachers and students throughout the teaching and learning experiences. These challenges include difficulties in engaging learners, ensuring that they perform well, and promoting academic achievement, i.e. facilitating educational success. In foreign language learning, teachers must consider capturing students' attention as a key factor to assist learners in mastering a language. This element provides a significant boost to learners' involvement in the learning process as it encourages them to perform actively and improve their achievements. This is because attentive learners are more susceptible to assimilating knowledge, acquiring skills, and solving tasks more quickly and efficiently.

Teachers' role is crucial in grasping learners' attention. Anderman and Midgely (1998) state that "*although it may sometimes seem that teachers have no control over students' attitudes about learning, research confirms that they do*" (as cited in Brewster and Fager, 2000, p.5). In other words, teachers have the ability to influence their learners' perspectives on learning as opposed to the widespread belief that they lack authority over them. While extensive

investigations have been carried out concerning the teaching of English as a second language, there has been comparatively limited exploration of the precise matter of capturing students' interest. This is particularly the case of private middle schools, where EFL teachers face challenges in engaging their students in the lesson, such as large class sizes and a focus on grades and exam performance.

Previous studies have explored strategies for teaching EFL and most of these studies have focused on teaching strategies for acquiring vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation, and less focus on strategies to gain attention in the classroom. One research for instance has been concerned with Teaching Strategies and their Impact on Students' Engagement in Learning English (Nedaa Waleed Izzat Zohud, 2015). It has been conducted at An-Najah National University, Nablus, Palestine where the study investigates the role of teaching strategies in students' engagement in learning English through the descriptive method. The study examines the effect of different variables on teachers' perspective. The findings of the investigation demonstrate that a positive influence of teaching strategies on students' engagement to acquire the English language.

In another investigation titled: The Role of EFL Teachers in Enhancing Learners' Achievements (Souad Chemmar, 2012), has been studied in Biskra, Algeria. The research investigates the influence of EFL teachers on learners' accomplishments and evaluates the potential to enhance the process of EFL learning. The outcomes reveal that EFL students need their teachers to encourage them for the purpose of advancing their acquisition of English as a second language.

However, no study, precisely in the department of English at Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi-Ouzou has dealt with the strategies teachers use and the challenges that they face in engaging and maintaining the attention of EFL learners. The lack of studies on this subject has pushed us to fill the gap by investigating the strategies for gaining students' attention

by analyzing the EFL teachers' views and practices in three selected private middle schools in Tizi-ouzou.

### ▪ **Aims and significance of the study**

The current research is concerned with the teachers of the private middle schools, and the choice of this selection is based on the fact that, at this stage, learners are developing their attention skills, and they can also be easily distracted. Thus, gaining and maintaining learners' attention is a challenge for teachers as at this age range they are often easily inattentive. Additionally, attention would have a crucial role to push them to study and succeed. To investigate this issue, the study is conducted in three middle schools in the town of Tizi-Ouzou: ASSALAS private middle school, IKHOULAF private middle school and DJEJIGUENE N'TFSOUTH private middle school.

This research sets three main objectives. First, it aims to investigate the challenges and barriers that EFL teachers encounter in private middle schools when it comes to gaining and maintaining their learners' attention. Additionally, the study seeks to explore the views and practices of these teachers about the importance of engaging and keeping learners focused. Furthermore, the research investigates the various strategies and methods that EFL teachers use to motivate their learners and increase their involvement in English language learning. Overall, this study is worth conducting as it sheds light on the importance of attention and engagement in language learning to provide insights and recommendations to help teachers overcome the challenges they face in this area.

### ▪ **Research questions and hypotheses**

The research questions that the present work seeks to answer are the following:

- **Q1.** What are the views of EFL teachers in the private middle schools in Tizi-Ouzou about the importance of gaining and maintaining learners' attention?

- **Q2.** What are the challenges and barriers these teachers' face in gaining and maintaining their learners' attention in the schools under study ?
- **Q3.** What are the teachers' practices and strategies they use to engage and motivate their learners in English language learning ?

Attempting to answer the above questions, the following hypotheses are advanced:

- **Hp1.** EFL teachers consider gaining and maintaining learners' attention as a crucial factor for successful language learning as it allows learners to stay focused and engaged in the learning process.
- **Hp2.** EFL teachers face multiple challenges and barriers in gaining and maintaining their learners' attention in private middle schools which may include a lack of motivation and a distracting classroom environment.
- **Hp3.** EFL teachers rely on various practices and strategies to engage their students in English language learning such as incorporating interactive activities, using multimedia resources, providing personalized feedback, or creating a positive classroom atmosphere.

### ▪ **Research techniques and methodology**

This study adopts a mixed-method approach. That is to say, using research methods that focus on exploring and interpreting personal experiences, meanings, and perspectives to gain a deeper understanding of the EFL teachers' strategies for capturing learners' attention. The research data are collected from the private middle schools' teachers' at ASSALAS private middle school, IKHOULAF private middle school and DJEJJIGUENE N'TFSOUTH private middle school of Tizi-Ouzou. The data are collected using two main instruments; the first one classroom observation provides rich and valuable data for the dissertation on strategies for gaining learners' attention, and it helps to understand the dynamics of the classroom environment and how to improve teaching practices. The second, interviews are conducted with

the EFL teachers in private middle schools concerned, and they allow to obtain in-depth and elaborate information about their classroom experiences and practices.

### ▪ **Structure of the dissertation**

This dissertation follows the traditional-simple model. It involves a General Introduction, four chapters and a General Conclusion. The General Introduction presents the statement of the problem, aims and significance of the research, research questions and hypotheses, research techniques, methodology and structure of the dissertation. The first chapter is the “Literature Review”. It consists in reviewing the main important literature related to the study. The second chapter entitled “Research Design and Methodlody” introduces the data collection and the data analysis procedures. It gives a description of the research design, the research instruments, and the data collected from the respondents. The third chapter named “Presentation of the findings” presents the data gathered from the research tools and analyzed statistically. The fourth chapter is the “Discussion of the Findings” chapter, and it aims to discuss the answers to the research questions. The dissertation ends with the “General Conclusion” which involves an opening paragraph summarizing the entire work and offering recommendations for further research.

### Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature on strategies for gaining learners' attention. It explores the main theoretical framework has been used to investigate this issue and its concepts. This section focuses on the theoretical bases that have helped us discuss the results obtained from both the interviews and classroom observations of different strategies used by teachers and their effects on learners' attention in three private middle schools in the town of Tizi-Ouzou.

### 1. Attention

#### 1.1 The concept of attention

According to Kearsley and Schneiderman (1998), the concept 'attention' is an essential component of learning that involves the active involvement of learners in the educational process. In accordance with the Engagement Theory, actively participating in the learning process enhances learners' ability to retain information and achieve higher levels of success. Essentially, this theory claims that paying attention involves active participation in the education system. As a result, individuals who actively engage in their educational journey are prone to acquiring a deep comprehension of the content and retain it for an extended duration. Ormrod has also provided a different definition of attention as *"the process by which we focus on specific stimuli while ignoring other stimuli in the environment"* (2008, p. 133). This definition clarify attention as the manner in which we focus on certain elements while ignoring others around us.

Sousa (2017) discusses attention as an important aspect in the learning process. He stresses that teachers should use methods that grab and maintain learners' attention to foster their engagement and comprehension. This includes producing a motivating and interactive learning environment that adapts to how the brain naturally devotes attention to information. The brain directly focuses on certain information over others. This means that learners prefer to pay attention to information that is new, interesting, or directly related to their objectives or interests.

In the context of learning, attention refers to the cognitive process of selectively directing cognitive competences on towards specific information while avoiding distractions. This focused mental engagement aids in encoding, processing, and retaining relevant information, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of learning and promoting longer-term memory consolidation (Eysenck & Keane, 2015). In other words, attention in learning means focusing the individual mind on certain items and not getting distracted by others. It is like giving the brain the power it needs to remember and understand important stuff, which helps to learn better and remember things longer.

### **1.2 The importance of attention in school settings**

For Hattie, *"Attention is a critical determinant of learning outcomes, as it helps students prioritize information and filter out distractions"* (2009, p. 132). This means that attention is vital for educational results, enabling students to concentrate on data and the capacity to selectively ignore anything that distracts their attention affirming a more efficient learning experience.

Besides, *"attention is a necessary precursor to learning, as it helps students attend to important information and ignore distractions"* (Willingham, 2009, p. 21). It has been claimed that attention holds a pivotal role in promoting effective learning by enabling learners to focus on pertinent details while avoiding disruptions. Fundamentally, as learners maintain their focus, they direct their cognitive capabilities for the current task, enhancing their abilities to absorb, handle, and maintaining vital data. Without attention, the learning experience is at risk, potentially causing learners to ignore crucial information, struggle with grasping ideas, or encounter challenges in retaining knowledge.

Thus, attention serves as a basic principle for successful learning, motivating learners to actively engage with educational content and enhance their learning outcomes. In addition,

according to Diamond, attention is important when it comes to learning, particularly in the fields of mathematics and science education (2013, p. 141).

## **2. Definitions**

### **2.1 Significance of 'Views' in EFL Education**

The term "Views" means exploring the perspectives and beliefs of EFL teachers regarding strategies to gain learners' attention. Posner defines "views" as *"Views are mental representations of information that have been stored in memory and can be accessed and manipulated to perform cognitive tasks"* (2008, p. 12). That is to say, views can be related to mental images that store the information that has been acquired and remembered. These mental images can be accessed and modified to enhance our thinking and understanding. Regarding the EFL teachers who rely on their collected mental images or "views" about their learners to guide their teaching practice. These mental representations serve as a dynamic resource that can be accessed, modified, and creatively applied to enhance the learning experience of their students.

### **2.2 Practices in education**

Freire (1970), practices in education refer to the techniques and methods, teachers use in the teaching and learning process. These educational practices involve the interactions between teachers and learners, the strategies are employed for knowledge transmission, and the overall educational approach. Freire's pedagogical philosophy focuses on the significance of educational methods that foster critical thinking, open dialogue, and active learners' involvement.

### **2.3 EFL teachers' views and practices**

According to Ormrod (2011), teachers' views and practices are characterized as the attitudes, beliefs, and understandings that teachers possess regarding the process of teaching and acquiring knowledge, along with the corresponding pedagogical techniques they employ to support students' learning. These views and practices have been designed by their own learning

experiences and their comprehension of subject matter, teaching methods, and instructional strategies. Teachers' perspectives and practices are important as they have considerable influence on student learning, which has the potential to determine the success or failure of educational initiatives. Therefore, understanding and evaluating the viewpoints and strategies of teachers is essential for enhancing the standard of education.

*"English foreign language teachers' views and practices refer to their beliefs, attitudes, and instructional strategies related to teaching English as a foreign language to non-native speakers"* (Schneiderman & Kearsley, 2013, p. 92). Schneiderman and Kearsley underscore the importance of understanding the beliefs, viewpoints, and the strategies of teachers who teach English as a foreign language. By taking into account these elements, they have been able to raise the quality of teaching and foster improved learning outcomes for non-native learners.

### **2.4 Technology**

Zhao (2013) *"Technology encompasses not only tools and devices but also the knowledge, skills, and processes associated with their creation, use, and management."* This definition emphasizes the comprehensive nature of technology, encompassing not just the tools themselves but also the underlying knowledge and skills needed to leverage them effectively.

### **2.5 Multimedia**

Reynolds (1992): *"Multimedia refers to the convergence of technologies that were formerly discrete: computers, video, audio, telecommunications."* That is to say, multimedia is the integration of once separate technologies like computers, video, audio, and telecommunications. This integration means these technologies now work together, combining text, images, sounds, videos, and interactive elements for a more engaging experience.

## **3. Strategies**

### **3.1 Teaching strategies**

Teaching strategies are defined in various manners by researchers. Herrell and Jordan (2004) state that teaching strategies are *"the approaches that can be used across curricular*

areas to support the learning of students" (p. 5). To clarify, they believe that teaching strategies are the various methods applicable in different areas of the curriculum with the aim to facilitate students' learning.

Wandberg and Rohwer (2010) define teaching strategies as "*The structure, system, approaches, techniques, methods, procedures, and mechanism that a teacher uses during instruction to facilitate students' learning*" (p. 164). In other terms, teaching strategies include a comprehensive set of instruments, methodologies, and customs that teachers utilize to establish effective and captivating learning experiences for their learners. Teaching strategies can be employed individually or in cooperation, and they must conform to the demands of the principal, teacher, and learners (Picard, 2004). That is to say, teaching methods must be adjusted to align with the preferences of the school head, teacher, learners, and can be applied either individually or collaboratively.

### **3.2 Attentional strategies**

Attentional strategies, as discussed in the visible learning research by Hattie (2008), are the various ways teachers use to grab and keep students' attention during lessons. These methods aim to get students actively involved in learning, making them focus better on the subject. In practical terms, attentional strategies can take different forms, like explaining things clearly, having interactive activities, asking interesting questions, and using multimedia or visual aids. These strategies are proven to create an exciting learning environment that not only interests students but also gets them actively participating in the learning process.

### **3.3 Analysis of EFL teaching strategies**

Analysis is crucial for examining the perspectives and methods of EFL teachers when it comes to how important they consider capturing learners' attention and the strategies they employ for this purpose. Analysis refers to the examination of the methods and approaches that EFL teachers employ to capture and maintain their learners' attention during the learning

process. In addition, this analysis, seeks to identify effective techniques for enhancing attention and comprehension in EFL classrooms, and analyzing to improve teaching practices.

Kearsley & Shneiderman define analysis as “ the process of examining a complex entity by breaking it down into its component parts and studying each part’s relationships and functions, as well as the entity’s overall structure and purpose” (1999, p. 24). According to them, analysis is important for finding solutions and thinking critically. It is to take a complex thing to see how it works and find ways to make it clear.

Kearsley and Shneiderman's definition of analysis is essential. It permits to understand EFL teaching strategies. By breaking down these strategies into smaller parts and analyzing their relationships and functions, and gaining a comprehensive view of how they contribute to the success of the teaching practices and learners outcomes in EFL classrooms.

### ▪ **Key cognitive theories of attention**

The study of capturing learners' attention has been investigated by phylosophers such as Socrates and Plato in ancient Greece who underscored the significance of involving learners' minds in the educational process. In the twentieth century, psychologists and researchers in the field of education, including Jean Piaget, Lev Vygotsky, and Benjamin Bloom, have played a part in the evolution of theories and tactics associated with attention in education. Strategies for gaining learners’ attention have likely improved over time and continue to be adapted to meet the changing needs of learners and teachers.

Kolb's “Experiential Learning Theory” is introduced in 1984; it proposes a comprehensive model for effective learning. This theory emphasizes the dynamic nature of the learning process which reveals a continuous cycle of four interconnected stages: concrete experiences, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation.

In the initial stage of this learning cycle, individuals engage in concrete experiences, where they directly interact with the subject matter or context. These hands-on experiences serve as a foundation for the next stages. For instance in an EFL class, learners engage in a role-

playing activity where they simulate real-life situations. This allows them to directly interact with English language elements in a practical context, serving as a foundation for language acquisition. Following this, learners move on to reflective observation where they carefully examine and assess their experiences as an example after the role-playing activity they write about the problems and barriers they encounter and this help learners to think about the ways to solve their problems.

The third stage, abstract conceptualization, involves the learner's efforts to obtain meaning and construct knowledge from the observations. It encourages the formulation of theories, concepts, and generalizations that provide a deeper understanding of the subject matter. Finally, active experimentation completes the cycle as learners apply their newly acquired knowledge and theories to real-world situations. This part encourages practical application, hypothesis testing, and extra developement of understanding through direct engagement. In this phase, they engage in classroom discussions or collaborative activities where they collectively identify the strategies to solve the problems they have faced.

One notable limitation of this theory is its emphasis on hands-on experiences to engage learners (Morris, 2019). This focus on practical, real-world activities, while beneficial for some, can neglect the importance of theoretical and abstract approaches. By primarily relying on concrete experiences, the theory risks ignoring learners who progress in abstract learning environments, thereby limiting its applicability to diverse learning styles and preferences. Furthermore, Kolb's theory does not adequately address the potential of multimedia and technology in enhancing engagement. In today's digital age, these tools offer powerful ways to increase accessibility, interactivity, and overall engagement in education. By omitting these elements, the theory appears somewhat outdated and less adaptable to the evolving landscape of modern learning environments.

The Self-Determination Theory (SDT), developed by Deci and Ryan (2000), offers valuable insights into effective strategies for capturing learners' attention. SDT suggests that learners become more engaged and attentive when their fundamental psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are encouraged in their learning experiences. Autonomy is a central element where teachers enable learners to make choices and decision making opportunities in their learning, recognizing that active participation motivates and supports attention. Adding to this, the theory stresses competence, suggesting that teachers can design challenging yet achievable tasks to stimulate motivation and maintain attention as learners experience mastery. SDT highlights the significance of building positive relationships within the learning environment, fostering connections between teachers and students and promoting constructive peer interactions. When students feel a sense of belonging and association, their attentiveness and active participation in the learning process are more likely to be maintained.

One of the limitations of this theory, in relation to learner attention, is its exclusive focus on autonomy. While SDT appropriately underscores the significance of learner self-governance in maintaining learners' motivation, a special emphasis on this aspect may unexpectedly cause a lack of structure within the learning environment (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Reeve, 2017). Such an imbalance can prove disadvantages for learners who grow in settings characterized by clear guidance and a well-defined framework for effective attention management. These individuals may engage with an extra of freedom and necessitate additional support to sustain their focus. Furthermore, this theory emphasis on competence introduces the risk of tasks becoming excessively challenging for certain learners, potentially leading to feelings of frustration and disengagement (Deci & Ryan, 2000). This stresses the cruciality to account for individual differences in learning styles and abilities when formulating learning environments based in SDT principles.

### ▪ **Theoretical framework**

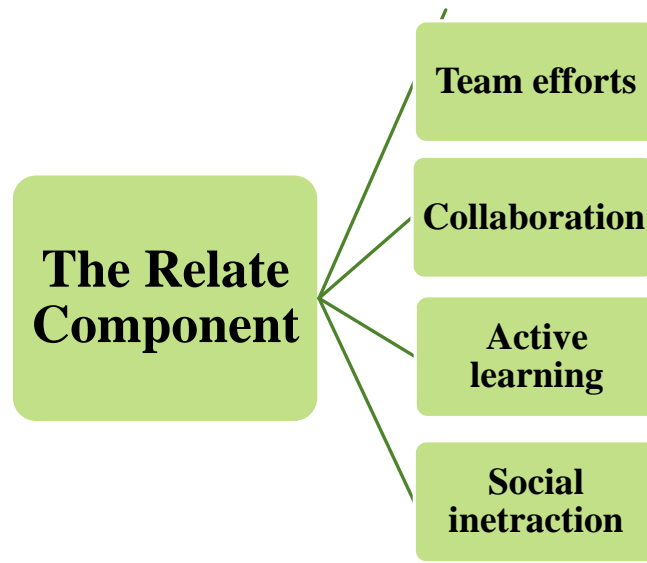
#### - **Engagement Theory: A Framework for Technology-Based teaching and Learning**

The engagement theory of Kearsley and Shneiderman (1998) has been formulated based on the authors' teaching experiences in electronic and distance education settings (refer to Kearsley, 1997; Schneiderman, 1994, 1998; Schneiderman et al, 1995). It revolves around the central concept of meaningful activities through interactions with others and worthwhile tasks. While engagement can theoretically occur without technology, the authors argue that technology can enhance engagement in unique ways that are otherwise challenging to achieve. Therefore, the engagement theory serves as a conceptual framework for technology-based learning and teaching although it is not directly derived from other established theoretical frameworks. However, it shares commonalities with many existing theories of learning and teaching, (Kearsley & shneiderman, 1998, p20).

Fostering learners' engagement involves establishing a learning setting that encourages active cognitive processes like creating, problem solving, deducing, decision making, and assessing. For example, in a virtual collaborative environment, students may engage in creating multimedia presentations or solving complex problems related to real-world scenarios. As learners have been actively involved in these cognitive tasks, they have typically increased attentiveness and concentration on their learning. Engaged learning has also been correlated with motivation, as learners have been driven to acquire knowledge thanks to the meaningful quality of the learning context and exercises. Furthermore, engagement theory emphasizes the importance of collaboration and teamwork. An example of this could be seen in a group project where students collaborate on developing a community project. When learners work collaboratively in successful teams on ambitious projects that are meaningful to someone outside the classroom, they are more likely to be engaged and attentive. (Kearsley & shneiderman, 1998).

The engagement theory is based on the three following basic principles:

- a) **The relate component** : the "Relate" component in the Engagement Theory framework emphasizes the importance of teamwork, effective communication, and social interactions for successful collaboration. It provides insights into how teachers capture learners' attention positively impacting the teaching and learning process. (Kearsley & shneiderman, 1998). This principle includes the following presented (at a personal stage):



The first aspect is team efforts. Supporting learners to work in groups encourages a sense of unity and teamwork, making the learning experience more interesting and motivating. This approach involves communication, planning, management, and social skills, such as communication and adaptability (Kearsley & Shneiderman, 1998). Teachers, following this principle, may structure activities that encourage students to work together, leveraging each other's strengths.

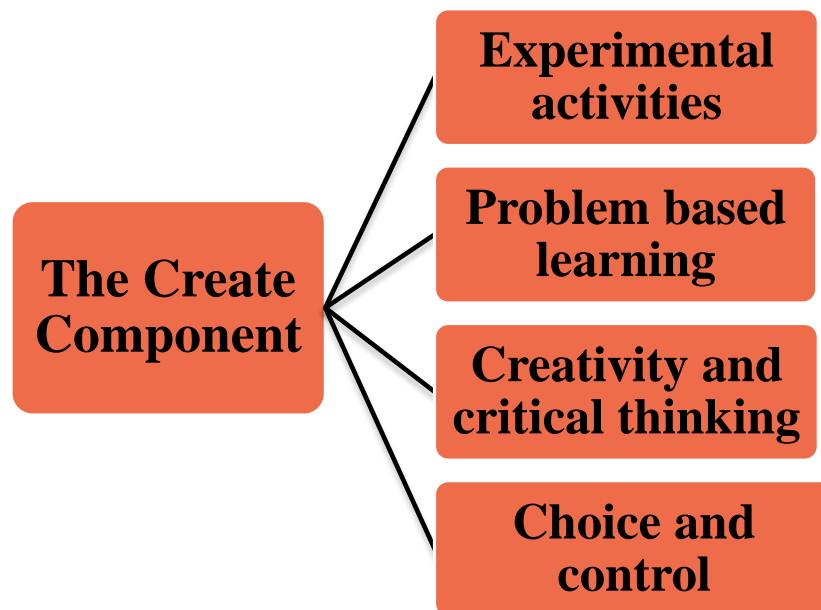
Another crucial element is collaboration, defined as the process of working collectively with others towards a shared objective. Collaboration frequently includes cooperation, communication, and the exchange of ideas and resources, increasing learners' motivation to learn. It can manifest in various formats, such as group assignments, teamwork, and peer interactions (Kearsley & Shneiderman, 1998). For instance, Kearsley and Shneiderman might recommend a collaborative online platform where students from different locations work together on a project, utilizing technology for communication and resource exchange.

The third aspect is active learning. The theory highlights the significance of learners' active involvement in the learning process (Kearsley & Shneiderman, 1998). It proposes that learners should actively participate in their own learning rather than being passive receivers of

information. An example aligned with Kearsley and Shneiderman's principles involve interactive simulations or virtual labs. In these activities, students engage with the material, ask questions, and contribute to discussions, promoting a deeper understanding of the subject matter. Technology can play a role in promoting engaged learning by offering interactive experiences that necessitate learners' active interaction with educational material.

Lastly, social interaction is underscored. The theory emphasizes the importance of social engagement in the learning process, suggesting that learners should have opportunities to interact with their peers, teachers, and other knowledgeable individuals to enhance their learning (Kearsley & Shneiderman, 1998). Technology has played a role in enhancing social engagement through online dialogues, cooperative learning tools, and various communication technologies, allowing learners to connect and acquire knowledge from one another.

**b) The create component :** focuses on promoting active participation and creativity in the educational process. It encourages learners to produce their unique process, resolutions, and understandings concerning the subject matter. The following are the principle elements involved in the "create" component presented (at a personal stage):



Experimental activities represent a means to offer chances for learners to participate in practical, experiential tasks that require active engagement, such as experiments, simulations,

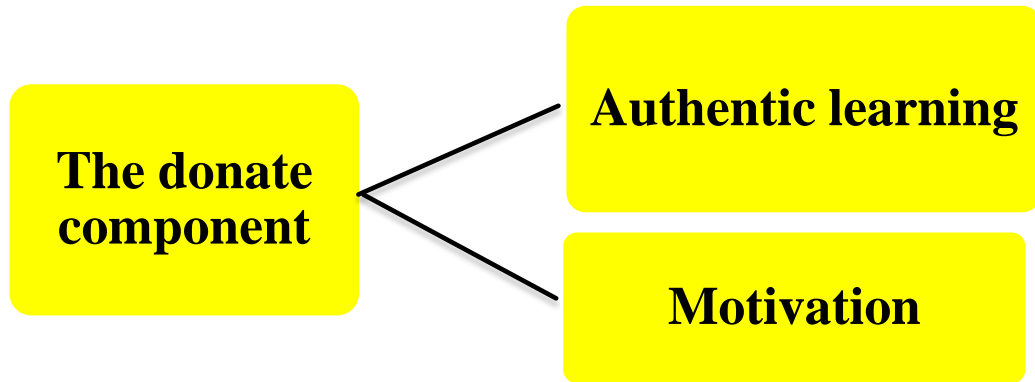
or roleplays (Kearsley & Shneiderman, 1998). These activities foster deeper understanding and application of knowledge, encouraging learners to explore concepts and ideas through active participation.

Problem-based learning supports active learning by engaging learners with actual challenges (Kearsley & Shneiderman, 1998). Working cooperatively in small teams to investigate the problem, suggest resolutions, and review the outcomes, PBL improves critical thinking, motivation, and the application of knowledge in real-world situations. teachers may present learners with real-world challenges, making them to work collaboratively in small teams to investigate, propose solutions, and evaluate outcomes.

Creativity and Critical Thinking involve enhancing learners' capacity to develop ideas, think critically, consider alternatives, and make links (Kearsley & Shneiderman, 1998). This can be accomplished through open-ended tasks, evaluation and analysis, and problem creation. By integrating these strategies, teachers can successfully improve learners' originality and critical thinking abilities.

Choice and control are highlighted in the theory, shedding light on the learner's comprehension or sense of being involved and influencing their learning process (Kearsley & Shneiderman, 1998). It incorporates the learners' autonomy, capacity to generate choices, and assert authority over the learning process. A sense of control is important for enhancing motivation, attention, and a beneficial educational experience. Teachers may implement this by incorporating options for project topics, allowing students to select tasks based on personal interests, fostering a sense of control and ownership.

**c) The donate component** : it focuses on learners sharing their knowledge and contributing to the learning community. It emphasizes the importance of active participation and collaboration in the learning process. It includes the following principles presented (at a personal stage):



Authentic learning is supported by the theory, which includes real-world, relevant, and meaningful educational experiences (Kearsley & Shneiderman, 1998). It recommends that learning should be located in authentic contexts that evaluate the real-life application of knowledge and skills. Technology can be used to provide real learning experiences through simulations, virtual environments, case studies, and other learning activities. For example, Kearsley and Shneiderman's work demonstrates the application of authentic learning through the use of virtual environments.

Motivation and relevance are highlighted in the theory as crucial elements in the learning process (Kearsley & Shneiderman, 1998). For instance learners are encouraged to explore content that is directly related to their goals and interests. Kearsley and Shneiderman's theory aligns with this principle by emphasizing active involvement and interaction. It suggests that learners should be encouraged to learn and discover the learning content relevant to their goals, interests, and experiences. Kearsley & Shneiderman's theory stresses the importance of active involvement and interaction in the learning process, coordinating well with our research focus. By exploring how teachers employ various attention-grabbing techniques, that illuminate the practical applications of the engagement theory demonstrating its relevance in today's educational surroundings.

## **Conclusion**

The extensive review of the literature underscores the widespread interest in the concept of "attention" among both educational psychologists and applied linguists. The concept of attention is studied from different perspectives and different contexts. This led to a complexity in giving its exact image. This chapter has provided valuable insights into the field of attention, illuminating key concepts, related constructs, and a range of theories that address the crucial challenge of engaging learners' attention. The adoption of the engagement theory is relevant to this topic as it helps in analyzing and identifying the strategies teachers use for gaining learners' attention.

### **Introduction**

This chapter presents the methodology used in this research. It depicts the tools and methodologies employed in gathering and analyzing information acquired through classroom observation and semi-structured interviews for the purpose of conducting this research. It has been divided into two sections. The initial part of this chapter concentrates on demonstrating the instruments and procedures of data collection, as well as describing the research environment and the individuals involved. The second part focuses on the data analysis procedures and instruments.

#### **a) Research methodology**

This chapter presents the methodology used in this research. The chapter depicts the instruments and procedures used in collecting and analyzing data obtained from classroom observation and semi-structured interviews. It is divided into two parts. The first part focuses on illustrating the instruments and procedures for data collection, as well as describing the research setting and participants. The second part focuses on the data analysis procedures and instruments.

#### **▪ Setting and participants of the study**

The study is conducted in three different private middle schools in the town of Tizi-Ouzou: ASSALAS, IKHOULAF, and DJEJJIGUENE N'TFSOUTH. The participants involved in the research are all the EFL teachers of the private middle schools; their number is six (06). The main emphasis of this study centers on teachers who work in middle schools. This specific choice has been established on the recognition that learners at this level have been building their focus abilities and have demonstrated increased weakness to distractions.

#### **a) Procedures and instruments of data collection**

In the attempt to answer the research questions, we use two main research tools: a classroom observation checklist of eight (08) items and an interview consisting of eight (08) questions.

- **Classroom observation :** In the Danielson Framework (2013), classroom observation involves trained evaluators carefully watching and noting what teachers and students do. This process follows a structured framework with four parts: Planning and Preparation, Classroom Environment, Instruction, and Professional Responsibilities. The main goal is to get a complete picture of teaching practices, helping teachers improve and enhancing the learning experience for students while supporting teacher growth. The instrument has been chosen for this investigation due to the reason that classroom observation permits drawing data directly from its real context, and this fact supports and enhances the validity of the investigation. The present study uses a checklist of eight (08) items for twenty four (24) sessions attended with six (06) private EFL middle school teachers, that is four (04) sessions for each class. Each observation session that we have accomplished takes one hour (01h), and the observations took place from May 2nd, 2023, until May 30th, 2023.
- **Cheklist :** A checklist is defined by Webster (2021) as a written or digital record containing a list of tasks or items that need to be accomplished or verified. It is commonly used as a means to promote application and precision across a range of tasks and activities. During each observation, the checklist has emphasized the crucial and necessary aspects of our investigation. Additionally, we have worked to understand the ways teachers have used strategies and the practices for capturing their learners' attention during the classroom observation sessions.

- **Interview** :it is defined as "a data collection method in which a researcher and participant engage in a conversation focused on questions related to a research study" (Tavakoli, 2012 p. 294). That is to say, an interview is a method of gathering data in which a researcher and a participant engage in a conversation specifically aimed at addressing questions relevant to a research study. During an interview, the researcher interacts directly with the participant, asks specific questions, and gathers information that contributes to the research inquiry.

This approach allows for a deeper exploration of the participant's perspectives, experiences, and insights, providing valuable qualitative data for the research study. The interview conducted in this study has taken place in the three (03) private middle schools concerned. We have submitted the semi-structured interview to the teachers under analysis to acquire reliable data about the strategies they use and the challenges that they encounter in the classroom. The interview includes eight (08) questions. The questions have been presented to the teachers in face-to-face encounters.

- **Semi-structured interview** : Smith and Osborn (2008) explain semi-structured interviews as "*a qualitative research method that uses a set of open-ended questions to guide a conversation with the aim of exploring a particular topic in-depth, while allowing for the flexibility to adapt and examine contextual responses.*" That is to say, semi-structured interviews are a qualitative research method that uses open-ended questions to guide in-depth conversations on a specific topic, allowing flexibility to explore contextual responses. However, researchers and methodologists often use a combination of open-ended question types to gather comprehensive data and insights during semi-structured interviews.

### b) Procedures and instruments of data analysis

This section outlines the methodologies for examining the data gathered from the interview and the classroom observation sessions which are analyzed using the mixed method. Quantitative data is examined employing a descriptive statistical method (SPSS) while qualitative data is analyzed through qualitative content analysis (QCA).

- **Mixed method** : this study utilizes mixed methods research, which combines two research methodologies: Quantitative and Qualitative. However, the qualitative one is dominant. The statistical approach is employed to examine the outcomes derived from the closed-ended questions which are displayed in tables and diagrams. As for the qualitative method, it is used to depict and interpret the outcomes of the open-ended questions from both the interview and classroom observation.
- **Statistical method** : closed-ended items produce numerical data that is examined using a descriptive statistical technique with the aid of computer software known as the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). As it is cited on the IBM website, SPSS serves as an extensive software system specially crafted for the purpose of conducting data analysis. It includes a diverse set of functionalities and instruments that help users effectively handle, examine, and make sense of data.
- **Qualitative content analysis** : for examining the outcomes derived from the open-ended questions of the interview and classroom observation qualitative content analysis (QCA) is employed. It is defined as “a research method for subjective interpretation of the content of the text data through a systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns” (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005, p.1278). That is to say, it is about understanding and making sense of written or textual information. Zoltan (2007) states that qualitative research involves data collection procedures that result primarily in open-ended, non-numerical data, which is then analyzed primarily by non-statistical methods

(p.24). This means qualitative research collects descriptive, non-numerical data using open-ended methods and analyzes it through non-statistical approaches.

When employing qualitative content analysis (QCA), our process involves organizing and categorizing the words and information gathered from open-ended questions in a systematic manner. Through QCA, we carefully review all the detailed responses, group similar ideas together, and continuously enhance our comprehension of the information. Our goal is to uncover valuable insights, identify connections, and subjects within the language teachers use during interviews and classroom observations. This approach enables in-depth analysis of the information, aligning with the principles of qualitative research.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter has presented the methods of data gathering and procedures of data analysis, along with the contexts and the participants involved in the study. It has outlined the various research instruments employed in this investigation, including classroom observation and an interview. To analyze these instruments, two prominent scientific methodologies commonly utilized in the social sciences have been adopted. For the quantitative data, an exploratory statistical technique relying on the SPSS software package has been employed to analyze the information collected from the close-ended questions in the interview and classroom observation sessions. As for the qualitative component, content analysis has been adopted to interpret the data gathered from open-ended questions of the interview and the classroom observation. Furthermore, this section has presented the context and participants, including the specific timeframe and setting of the study.

### Introduction

This chapter concerns the presentation of the results acquired from the interview and classroom observation. The aim of this chapter is to perceive the strategies teachers use and the challenges they encounter to grab the learners' attention in the three private middle schools (ASSALAS, DJEJIGUENE N'TFSOUTH, and IKHOULAF) in the town of Tizi-Ouzou. Initially, the study employs the statistical examination for the closed-ended questions. Then, it incorporates the qualitative content analysis for the interpretation of the open-ended questions to examine the outcomes derived from the interview and the classroom observation. This results chapter is arranged into two sections. The initial section illustrates the presentation of the outcomes of the interview, while the second one presents the results derived from the classroom observation sessions.

### 1. Results of the teachers' interview

The first data collection tool used in this research is a structured interview, which has been conducted with 06 teachers from the three private middle schools concerned. This tool has served us to collect a large amount of information and details about the strategies that teachers use and the challenges that have weakened the maintenance of attention in their classrooms. The subsequent are the detailed results of the interview.

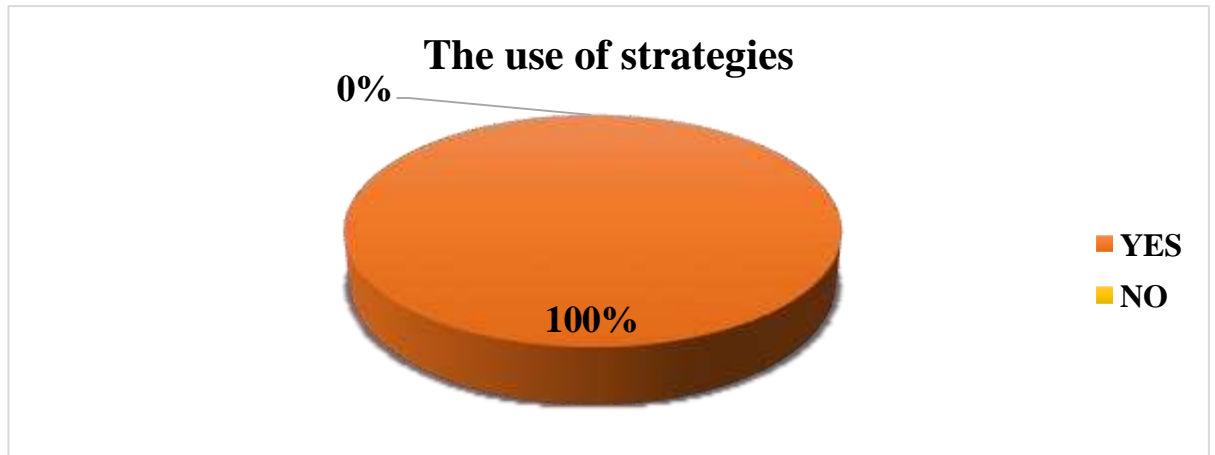
- **Question one:** Do you think that drawing learners' attention in class is important?

	Important	Not important
Frequency	06	00
Percentage	100 %	00%

**Table 01 : The importance of attention in the EFL classrooms.**

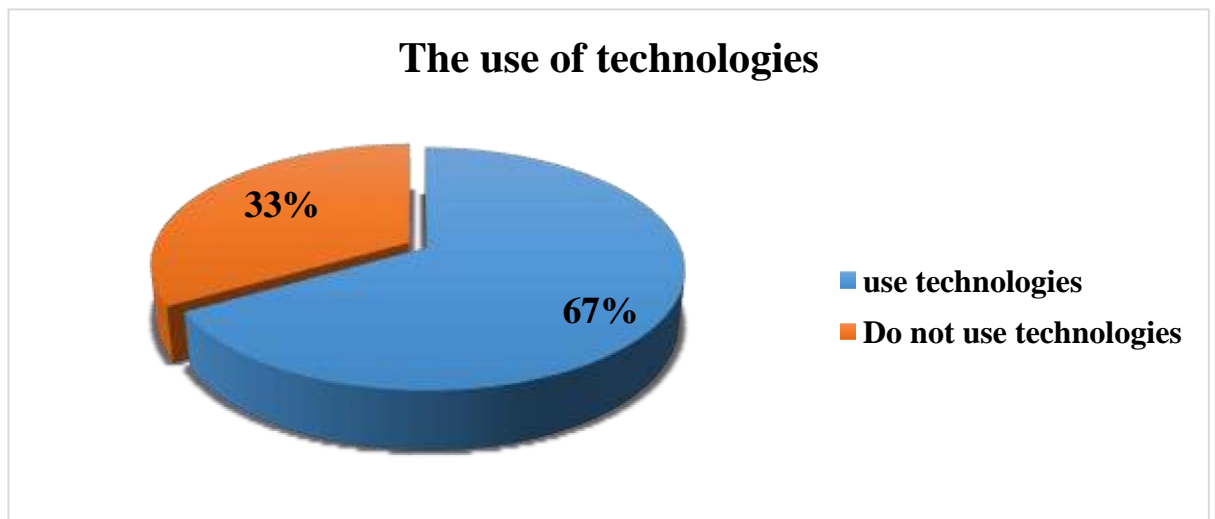
Table 01 indicates that six teachers (100%) of the participants think that drawing learners' attention in class is important because learners' attention is essential for effective learning. Their focus has enhanced engagement, comprehension, and participation, fostering a supportive environment that has facilitated understanding and encouraged the expression of thoughts.

- **Question two:** Do you use any specific technologies or strategies to capture learners' attention ?



**Diagram 01 : Teachers' use of strategies to capture learners attention.**

The results from diagram 01 show that 100% of the participants use strategies to gain learners' attention.



**Diagram 02 : The use of technologies as a strategy to capture learners' attention.**

The results from diagram 02 show that the majority of EFL teachers use technologies as a strategy, and only (33%) of them do not use it.

Teachers employ diverse strategies, including technologies and other ones, to capture learners' attention. These include using speakers, visuals, data projectors, videos, and games. Creating relevance to real-life experiences has also enhanced engagement.

- **Question three** : Do you take into account the learners' level while selecting the appropriate strategy ?

	YES	NO
<b>Teacher 01</b>	×	
<b>Teacher 02</b>	×	
<b>Teacher 03</b>		×
<b>Teacher 04</b>	×	
<b>Teacher 05</b>	×	
<b>Teacher 06</b>	×	

**Table 02 : Teachers' perspectives regarding the learners' proficiency level.**

Table 02 demonstrates that 05 out of 06 of EFL teachers considered learners' proficiency levels crucial when selecting the most suitable strategies. Activities should be adapted to fit various levels of difficulty. While some learners easily grasp challenging concepts, others require additional explanations. It is important to focus on lower-level learners before higher level ones, even if it requires extra efforts. Teaching covers a mix of weak, average, and fast learners, highlighting the significance of adapting strategies to match learners' abilities. Some teachers prefer personalizing the learning experience by connecting the subject matter to learners' experiences aids in strategy selection.

- **Question four** : What are the difficulties that you may face when capturing or maintaining learners attention?

Teachers often face difficulties keeping learners' attention in class due to several reasons. Some learners find the subject boring or are not interested in it while others have trouble focusing because of different skill levels. The classroom environment also plays a part with distractions like noise and afternoon classes making it harder to concentrate. Sometimes, learners become disinterested and fail to show a personal interest to the topic. Despite these obstacles, teachers have worked hard to find methods to make learning more interesting and engaging for all.

- **Question five:** How do you manage distractions in the classroom and bring learners back to attention?

Teachers provide various suggestions on managing distractions in the classroom and refocusing learners' attention. One method is to establish silence by asserting the teacher's authority. This is achieved by requesting silence for a specific duration or using marks as a potential consequence. At times, raising one's voice or shouting can be necessary to regain control. Incorporating games can also help redirect learners' focus. Engaging learners with personal questions, observing their facial expressions, or maintaining a quiet presence in the middle of the class can be effective strategies. Additionally, some teachers employ tapping on desks or wait silently for learners to recognize the need to stop talking and refocus. These methods aim to effectively manage distractions and maintain an attentive learning environment.

- **Question six :** How do you handle situations where some learners are more engaged than others?

In situations where some learners are more engaged than others, some teachers use the active participation of the engaged learners to take advantage. Encouraging the learners to share their insights and contributions inspires the less engaged ones. Simultaneously, employing positive reinforcement and personal conversations to gently convince the less engaged learners into participating is another strategy. Recognizing that different learners

have varying skill levels, several teachers particularly concentrate on assisting those who are struggling to keep up, or assign tasks that align with their higher proficiency to keep them involved while also addressing the needs of the less attentive learners. To foster a collaborative environment, organizing frequent activities that require learners to work in pairs or groups allows the diverse skill levels to complement each other.

- **Question seven** : Do you use team efforts or collaborative activities? Could you share some examples that you have found particularly engaging for learners ?

The majority of the teachers include team efforts or collaborative activities in the teaching process. For instance, teachers often find success with activities like group research projects, where learners work together to explore real-world issues in relation to the course material. In these projects, learners select topics, conduct research, and present their findings collectively. Collaborative activities not only promote teamwork but also let learners delve into subjects that resonate with their interests. Another engaging strategy that other teachers use involves collaborative problem-solving challenges, where scenarios are designed to require learners to pool their skills and knowledge for solutions, fostering critical thinking and a sense of unity. Additionally, activities such as group debates or multimedia presentations on historical events offer them the chance to collaborate, share knowledge, and engage with diverse perspectives. Group case studies, role-playing simulations, and interactive online discussions are also effective strategies that encourage active participation, critical thinking, and meaningful connections among learners.

- **Question eight** : Do you think that communication is important to gain learners' attention ?

All the interviewed teachers claim that communication is an integral aspect for gaining learners' attention. It is considered as the foundational element that not only captures learners' focus but also lays the groundwork for a meaningful educational experience. Through effective communication, teachers establish a vital connection with their learners, crafting a pathway that bridges the gap between the subject matter and individual interests. This connection is solidified

through clear communication and dialogue, enabling teachers to contextualize the content and make it relevant to learners' lives. By conveying the significance of the material and evoking curiosity, teachers create an interactive and engaging atmosphere where learners become active participants in their learning journey.

**2. Results of the Classroom Observation sessions**

The other data collection tool we use in conducting our research is classroom observation. After getting teachers' approval, a total of twenty-four (24) attendances are assured with six (06) teachers of different levels, and we attend four sessions with each teacher of the first, second, third, and fourth year of the private middle schools under study. The observations have taken place from May 2, 2023, to May 30, 2023, and they are described in a checklist presented in the form of a table. It contains eight (08) items that describe the strategies teachers use to gain learners' attention. These items are observed in terms of always, sometimes, and never.

Items to be observed	Always	Sometimes	Never
1. The teacher starts the lesson with an attention grabber.	06		
2. The teacher uses eye contact and facial expressions to engage students.	06		
3. The teacher provided learners with choices and control over their learning process.		06	
4. Teachers' incorporation of multimedia such as videos, images, and audio clips effectively with interactive whiteboards to engage learners.	05		01
5. Teachers make sure that the lesson content has relevance to the real world.	06		
6. The teacher encourages active participation through group work, discussions with other interactive activities, and	05		01

creates a positive classroom environment to keep learners focused.			
7. The teacher uses flexible strategies to grab the learners attention.	04	02	
8. The teacher integrates technology to promote interactive experiences.			06

**1) The teacher starts the lesson with an attention grabber**

From the observation sessions, we notice that five teachers out of six always start their lessons with an attention grabber using different techniques; however, one teacher sometimes does not do it. For example, they audibly knock on the desk, give orders, ask provoking questions, or personal ones in relation to the subject, and purposefully elevate the tone of their voice. These actions are strategically designed to promptly redirect learners' focus from external stimuli to the lesson.

**2) The teacher uses eye contact and facial expressions to engage learners**

In the observed sessions, teachers always employ a range of techniques to effectively capture learners' attention. Some teachers rely on a combination of facial expressions and deliberate eye contact to establish an immediate connection with their learners. In other situations, a strong emphasis is placed only on the power of meaningful eye contact, drawing learners into the lesson with a thorough conveyance of authority and encouragement. However, in some sessions, these methods prove insufficient, as a result most of the teachers adopt other ones.

**3) The teacher provided learners with choices and control over their learning process**

Throughout the observed session, it is important to note that not all teachers employ the strategy of providing learners with choices and control over their learning process. Among those who implement this approach, it is mainly observed during oral and writing sessions. In these

specific instances, the teachers sometimes skillfully provide opportunities for learners to make decisions and exercise autonomy within the learning environment.

This approach fosters a sense of ownership and engagement among the learners, as they are encouraged to select from various learning materials, activities, or topics within defined limits. The observed classroom dynamic indicates that this strategy is successful in capturing and maintaining the students' attention as they appear more invested and motivated to participate actively in the learning activities. This finding underscores the significance of offering students autonomy in their learning process, suggesting its potential as an effective strategy for enhancing learner engagement and focus in the classroom. However, it is remarkable that such opportunities for choice and control have not been widely adopted by all teachers in the observed classrooms.

#### **4) Teachers' incorporation of multimedia such as videos, images, and audio clips effectively with interactive whiteboards to engage learners**

In all the sessions we attend with all the different grades, we notice that the incorporation of multimedia elements such as videos, images, and audio clips effectively with interactive whiteboards to engage learners has become evident that teachers employ these strategies with varying grade levels; however, only one never uses any multimedia tools during our observation sessions. It is notable that teachers consistently use images and videos for the first and second grades. In contrast, they predominantly employ audio clips and interactive whiteboards with the third and fourth grades. This observed pattern demonstrates that teachers adapt their multimedia strategies to suit the specific needs and learning preferences of different grade levels.

#### **5) Teachers make sure that the lesson content has relevance to the real world**

From all the observations we make, we conclude that in the twenty-four sessions that we attend, teachers always make remarkable efforts to align their lesson content with real-world relevance. However, it is noteworthy that even when the lesson content is related to the real world, it does not always guarantee the engagement of all the learners. This variation in learners'

engagement can be attributed to their diverse interests and preferences, as some individuals may not find certain topics captivating despite their real-world significance.

### **6) The teacher encourages active participation through group work, discussions with other interactive activities, and creates a positive classroom environment to keep learners focused**

The obtained results from the classroom observations show that the majority of the observed teachers always promote active participation among their learners through various means, such as group work, discussions, and other interactive activities. Additionally, two of the teachers adopt creative methods like role-playing and interactive games in addition to group work and discussions to effectively engage learners.

One teacher, in particular, refrains from incorporating group work and interactive activities, avoiding potential disruptions and noise in the classroom. With this specific teacher, participation primarily occurs through interactions between the teacher and individual learners.

### **7) The teacher uses flexible strategies to grab the learners' attention**

Throughout the observation sessions, we recognize that four out of six teachers always employ flexible strategies as a crucial element of their teaching approach, particularly in the afternoon when learners tend to be tired, making it an essential element to sustain attention. These teachers adjust their methods to align with the varying needs and energy levels of the learners. However, it is essential to recognize that not all teachers adopt these flexible strategies. Two of the observed teachers sometimes incorporate flexibility into their teaching strategies; nevertheless, in some sessions, we notice that they maintain only one strategy even when learners are not concentrated.

### **8) The teacher integrates technology to promote interactive experiences**

During the course of our classroom observations, we notice that across the three distinct private middle schools observed, comprising a total of six (06) teachers, none of the teachers

use technology such as the use of e-mails, online audio/videoconferencing, web databases, or other means to foster interactive experiences among their learners. While technology has become an increasingly prevalent component of contemporary classrooms, our observations reveal an obvious absence of its intentional use in promoting interactivity and engagement among learners in these particular educational settings.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter has displayed the findings obtained from the interview and the classroom observation, including six (06) teachers and twenty-four (24) classroom observation sessions attended in the three private middle schools (ASSALAS, DJEJIGUENE N'TFSOUTH, and IKHOULAF) in the town of Tizi-Ouzou. From the results gained, it is clear that all the teachers give enough importance to gain learners' attention and they use different methods to maintain it in the classroom. These results are going to be discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

### **Introduction**

The present chapter is devoted to the discussion of the results gathered from interviews conducted with EFL teachers as well as classroom observations. This section is divided into three main parts: the first part examines the outcomes of the teachers' interviews, the second part discusses the results of the classroom observations, and the third one is an interpretation of the data through the three basic principles of the engagement theory of Kearsley and Shneiderman (1998).

### **I. Discussion of the teachers' interviews**

This section is a comprehensive exploration of the perception acquired from semi-structured interviews with six (06) EFL teachers. These interviews provide qualitative and some quantitative dimensions to our study, offering a window into the strategies, barriers, views, and practices of EFL teachers in the context of gaining learners' attention allowing for an in-depth knowledge of the methods teachers employ to capture learners' attention.

#### **1) The importance of capturing learners' attention**

First and foremost, the unanimous agreement of the six teachers highlights the crucial role of capturing learners' attention and stresses a collective belief in the significance of learner engagement in the classroom. This alignment of perspectives emphasizes the pivotal connection between creating a supportive and beneficial learning environment and the ability to capture and maintain learners' attention. The teachers collectively acknowledge that such an environment is not only advantageous to academic success but is also essential in cultivating a sense of comfort, encouragement, and motivation among learners. One teacher specifically emphasizes the critical role of a supportive learning environment, stressing its importance for learners to feel motivated to actively participate in the learning process teachers agree that these three factors - student involvement, encouraging environment, and hands-on learning - work together to make education successful.

Furthermore, the teachers' perspectives meet on the notion that capturing learners' attention goes beyond mere classroom management; it significantly impacts the quality of learning outcomes. Another teacher claims that when learners are fully engaged and focused, their comprehension of the material improves, and their active participation in classroom activities increases. This insight resonates with contemporary educational theories which stress the importance of active engagement for meaningful learning experiences. Another teachers' comments underscores the serious consequences of neglecting this critical aspect of pedagogy. As such, it is evident that the development and implementation of effective strategies for capturing learners' attention should remain a top priority for EFL teachers, as it is a pivotal factor in promoting successful and meaningful learning experiences. This is in harmony with Hattie (2009) who argues that "*Attention is the gateway to learning.*" To engage students in learning, we must first capture their attention. Without attention, there is no reception of information, no encoding, no recall, and no learning.

### **2) Strategies and technologies for capturing learners' attention**

The result of the second question shows that the interviewed teachers confirm using strategies to capture learners' attention. This unanimous agreement stresses the importance that teachers attribute to engaging learners effectively in the English language as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom. However, a notable observation emerges from the data: despite the widespread adoption of instructional strategies, a specific subgroup of teachers, representing only two teachers (33%) of them, refrains from incorporating particular technological tools into their teaching approach to attract learners' attention. This findings prompts an in-depth examination of the reasons behind this technological difference within the broader landscape of current educational practices.

This suggests that a part of EFL teachers relies on traditional teaching methods or non-technological strategies to engage their learners. This divide between the overall use of strategies and the use of technology might be due to various factors, such as the teachers' unfamiliarity

with technology, access to resources, or pedagogical beliefs. Graham (2011) discusses the various benefits of using technology in EFL classrooms, such as increased engagement, motivation, and access to information. However, she also acknowledges the challenges that teachers face when integrating technology, such as lack of access to resources and unfamiliarity with technology. Further exploration into the reasons behind this divide can provide valuable insights into the integration of technology in EFL classrooms and its potential benefits in enhancing learners' attention and engagement.

Additionally, it might be beneficial to analyze the types of technologies employed by the 67% of teachers (04) who do use them. Understanding which technologies are favored and how they are integrated into teaching practices offers practical guidance for teachers looking to incorporate technology effectively into their EFL instruction. One teacher expresses that while they use strategies, the effectiveness of these strategies can vary depending on the specific classes they are teaching. Benson (2001) emphasizes the importance of teacher agency in adapting technology to their specific teaching styles and student groups. He argues that effective technology use requires flexibility and customization based on learners' unique needs and the teacher's comfort level. This suggests that teachers adapt their methods based on the unique characteristics and needs of their learners. This teacher has mentioned employing visual aids, pictures, and audio elements, showcasing a multi-modal approach to engage learners before commencing the lesson.

In this regard, Tomlinson (2014) emphasizes the importance of adapting teaching methods to accommodate the diverse learning profiles of the learners within a classroom. This approach aligns with the idea of using flexible strategies based on individual class dynamics. On the other hand, another teacher stresses the relevance of connecting classroom content to real-life situations. This involves the use of visual aids to provide context and make the subject matter more relatable to learners. This approach aligns with the idea that real-life applications can enhance learners' attention and motivation. Therefore, to strengthen this result, we rely on

Lave and Wenger (1991) who assert that active participation in real-life activities and communities of practice enhances learners' attention, motivation, and engagement. They emphasize that learning within authentic contexts, where individuals take on meaningful roles, contributes significantly to their focus and interest in the learning process.

Furthermore, one teacher has shared his personal teaching practices by stating, "*Personally, I use videos, games, and encourage learners to work together in pairs or groups sometimes. I also make use of images from the book.*" This articulation not only highlights the richness of strategies but also underscores the adaptability and innovation integrated within the pedagogical approach of EFL teachers. The strategic integration of videos and games go beyond traditional teaching methods, including a contemporary and engaging dimension into the learning environment. The emphasis on cooperative learning experiences signifies an exit from the traditional ones, learner centred learning, fostering an comprehensive and collaborative atmosphere. Furthermore, the incorporation of visual aids, taken from textbooks, serves as main focus, feed to diverse learning styles and enhancing comprehension. Collectively, these different approaches represent a teaching style that is not only didactic but interactive and responsive, emphasizing the whole enrichment of learners' participation and involvement in the educational process. Thus, teachers create an environment that stimulates curiosity, encourages active participation, and ultimately contributes to a more profound and sustained acquisition of EFL.

The result of question number three (03) shows that all the teachers' responses in the three different private middle schools unanimously agree on the significance of taking into account the learners' level when choosing appropriate teaching strategies. This indicates a shared understanding among EFL teachers regarding the importance of adapting the strategies to meet the specific needs and abilities of their learners. This is in harmony with the pedagogical principles that stress the loyalty of these teachers to effective teaching practices.

One interesting viewpoint given by a teacher underlines the diversity in learners' learning process, stating that some learners may be weak while others progress more quickly. Vygotsky

(1978) suggests that learners have different levels of readiness for new knowledge and skills. This means that individuals vary in their abilities to acquire and get new information and skills. It acknowledges that not all learners are the same; instead, they come with diverse backgrounds, prior experiences, and levels of familiarity with the subject matter.

This response underscores the complexity of the classroom setting, acknowledging the challenge faced by teachers in meeting the diverse levels of proficiency among learners. It emphasizes the essential requirement for teachers to adopt a differentiated approach to teaching, recognizing the unique needs and capabilities of each learner. In a heterogeneous learning environment, where learners possess varying degrees of language proficiency, the significance of adapted instructional methods becomes crucial. This recognition of diversity within the learner body necessitates teachers to employ a flexible and adaptive teaching style, offering a range of strategies and materials that accommodate the varying pace and comprehension levels of individual learners. By doing so, teachers not only acknowledge the complexity inherent in the classroom but also actively work towards creating an comprehensive educational experience that addresses the diverse learning needs of their learners.

Another teacher has mentioned that, in their opinion, considering the variety and differences among learners is the key to selecting the appropriate teaching strategy. Emphasizing the importance of recognizing and accommodating the unique strengths, weaknesses, and learning styles of each learner implies that teachers must be flexible and adaptable in their pedagogical approaches to meet the diverse needs within the classroom. The responses stress the importance of considering learners' level when selecting appropriate teaching strategies. This feedback reinforce the complexity of the teaching environment, where teachers must take into account diverse learners with varying abilities, paces of learning, and behaviors. This confirms the critical role that teacher adaptability and differentiation play in creating effective learning

experiences for EFL learners. It also supports the notion that an individualized, learner-centered approach is essential for promoting engagement and academic success in the EFL classroom.

### **3) Challenges in capturing and maintaining learners' attention**

The results exposed in the teachers' interview about the difficulties that teachers could face when capturing or maintaining learners' attention. Based on the responses provided by the interviewed teachers, these challenges shed light on the obstacles of the classroom environment.

One significant challenge, as highlighted by the interviewed teachers, is related to the learners' level. Marzano (2004) stresses the significance of implementing differentiated instruction to meet the diverse levels of learners. He emphasizes that successful teaching involves adapting approaches to individual requirements, offering specific assistance to overcome comprehension gaps. This approach not only prevents frustration but also fosters active engagement among learners. One teacher claims that capturing learners' attention can be particularly challenging when learners are struggling with the subject matter. In such cases, when learners are dealing with difficulties, they may become disengaged and find it challenging to focus. This issue underlines the importance of addressing learners' varying levels of proficiency and providing necessary support to bridge gaps in understanding.

Another challenge is mentioned by the teachers related to the relevance of the lesson content to the learners' interests. When the content fails to align with the learners' interests or has not resonated with them, maintaining their attention can be challenging. Dewey (1938) emphasizes the significance of aligning education with students' experiences and preferences to foster significant and effective learning. This highlights the significance of including engaging and pertinent materials into the curriculum, as well as adjusting teaching approaches to make the content more engaging and pertinent to the lives of the learners.

Environmental factors can also create challenges to capturing and maintaining learners' attention. Excessive noise and other distractions within the classroom can make it hard for

learners to concentrate. This issue emphasizes the need for creating a supportive learning environment that minimizes disturbance and allows learners to focus on the lesson. In this regard, Diamond (2013) suggests reducing distractions and noise can lead to improved attention and academic performance. Besides, Medina (2008) discusses the significance of a conducive learning environment, emphasizing that a noisy or distracting environment can interfere with students' ability to concentrate and process information effectively.

Additionally, as noted by one of the teachers, keeping learners engaged during afternoon lessons can be particularly challenging. After a long day of classes, many learners may feel tired and exhausted, which can reduce their ability to stay attentive. In line with this, Cooper (2001) suggests that students' attention and cognitive abilities tend to decline in the afternoon, making it more challenging to maintain focus and engagement.

In relation to the ways teachers manage distractions in the classroom, various strategies are mentioned to shed light on the practical approaches they employ to maintain an effective and focused learning environment. Several teachers have confirmed the importance of establishing silence by asserting their authority in the classroom. This involves requesting learners to be quiet for a specific duration or using marks or consequences as possible obstacles. In some cases, raising one's voice or shouting is considered necessary to regain control. This corresponds to the strategies employed by the teachers. Bandura, who states the significance of teachers as authorities in the learning environment. Bandura's social cognitive theory highlights how teacher authority can shape student behavior and attention (1977). For instance, one participant claims, "each time we manage with games, because they are attractive". Piaget (1950) argues that learners construct their knowledge through active engagement with their environment, including games and interactive activities. That is to say, gamification can make the classroom environment more dynamic and enjoyable for learners.

Another strategy mentioned by the six (06) teachers is engaging learners with personal questions and observing their facial expressions. Vygotsky emphasizes the importance of social

interaction and personal relevance in the learning process (Vygotsky, 1978). To clarify, personalization can help recapture learners' attention and enthusiasm for the lesson. Moreover, some teachers point out the cruciality of maintaining a quiet presence in the middle of the class. By doing so, they can effectively monitor and manage the classroom atmosphere without the need for excessive verbal intervention. The use of non-verbal strategies such as tapping or silent waiting to regain learners' attention emphasizes the significance of non-verbal communication in classroom management. Scholars like Mehrabian have stressed that a significant part of communication is non-verbal (1972). These cues can effectively signal learners to refocus without the need for destructive verbal confrontations.

#### **4) Fostering engagement and addressing unequal participation**

The outcomes of the interviewed teachers show that teachers employ various strategies to manage the classroom effectively and make sure that all learners have the opportunity to participate and learn. They have provided valuable insights into their practices and views on this matter. One common method mentioned by the teachers is applying the active participation of the engaged learners. These learners can play a crucial role in motivating their less engaged peers. By encouraging the more engaged ones to share their perceptions and contributions, teachers create a dynamic classroom atmosphere where knowledge is exchanged. This not only benefits the less engaged learners but also reinforces the understanding of the engaged ones. Encouraging engaged learners to share their insights and contributions is similar to creating a collaborative learning environment. Johnson, D. and Johnson, R. (2009), argue that cooperative learning strategies enhance student engagement and lead to better learning outcomes.

To gently convince less engaged learners to participate, teachers use positive reinforcement and personal conversations. By acknowledging and appreciating even small contributions from less engaged learners, teachers boost their confidence and motivation. Positive reinforcement can motivate desired behavior (Skinner, 1953). Personal conversations

can build rapport and address individual student needs, fostering a supportive classroom atmosphere.

Teachers adopt strategies to individual learners depending on their level. They may focus more on assisting those who are struggling to keep up, providing extra guidance and resources. Simultaneously, they may assign tasks that align with the higher proficiency of some students, challenging them and keeping them engaged while not neglecting the less attentive learners. Creating a collaborative learning environment is another key strategy mentioned by the teachers. Some teachers involve organizing activities that require learners to work in pairs or groups. In such collaborative settings, learners with diverse skill levels can complement each other. More proficient learners can provide support and guidance to their peers, helping them understand and engage with the content. This method reflects the principles of collaborative learning, which posits that students learn effectively when they engage in social interaction and cooperation (Bruffee, 1993).

The majority of the teachers express their use of team efforts and collaborative activities as integral parts of their teaching strategies, as it allows learners to delve into topics that resonate with their interests. Fostering learner engagement through collaborative activities not only captivates their interest but also enriches their comprehension of various academic subjects. On the other hand, some teachers claim that collaborative problemsolving challenges have emerged as compelling strategies in the EFL classroom, captivating learners with real-world scenarios. Teachers design scenarios that necessitate learners to combine their skills and knowledge to seek solutions, making the learning process more dynamic and interactive. This approach aligns with educational scholars' viewpoints, such as Johnson and Johnson (1999), who have extensively researched cooperative learning. They argue that collaborative problemsolving enhances critical thinking, promotes effective communication, and fosters a sense of unity among students as they work together to overcome challenges. Additionally, the value of group case studies, role-playing simulations, and interactive online discussions is emphasized by teacher, sparking

learners' interest and active participation. These pedagogical methods encourage active participation, critical thinking, and meaningful connections among learners. The Johnsons argue that activities like role-playing simulations and group discussions can facilitate deeper learning and enhance students' understanding of complex topics (2009). Highlighting the importance of these engaging approaches in attracting learners' interest and facilitating a comprehensive understanding of academic concepts.

### **5) The importance of communication**

The results of the last question of the interview show that every single interviewed teacher emphasizes the crucial role of communication in the classroom, asserting that it is an indispensable element for gaining learners' attention. They view communication as the base on which a meaningful educational experience is built. Through effective communication, teachers establish a vital connection with their learners, forming a solid relationship between the subject matter and individual interests. One teacher in particular has expressed his opinion, stating, "I think that communication is very important since it integrates a solid connection between the learners and the teacher, which permits us to gain their attention." This statement stresses the notion that communication is not only a tool but a link that connects teachers and learners, facilitating the exchange of knowledge and engagement.

Moreover, all the interviewed teachers stress the fact that communication fosters an interactive and engaging classroom atmosphere. When teachers communicate effectively, they establish a setting where students actively engage in their personal learning journey. To underscore this point, Kearsley and Shneiderman (1998) argue that effective communication has been a pivotal element in involving students in the learning procedure, particularly when technology has been employed. Effective communication is crucial when engaging learners, especially in the context of technological advancements in education. In a time where technology is becoming increasingly prevalent in classrooms, the importance of teachers' ability to communicate effectively is increased. This becomes particularly evident when one considers

the potential obstacles and diversions that technology may present. Therefore, clear and impactful communication is essential to sustain student engagement in this context. Understanding the relationship between communication and the learning environment is pivotal. It underscores the transformative power of effective communication in fostering engagement, especially in the context of technological integration. This perspective aligns with contemporary educational theories that recognize communication as a fundamental component for creating meaningful and interactive learning experiences.

### **II. Discussion of the classroom observation sessions**

In this section, the focus is placed on the examination of the outcomes arising from the classroom observation. Through this classroom observation, we garner additional insights and responses relating to our research results and hypotheses. Furthermore, it serves to strengthen the conclusions derived from the interview data.

#### **1) Attention grabbing strategies**

During the process of observation, we analyze whether teachers start the lesson with an attention grabber, and it becomes evident that the majority, specifically five out of the six teachers, employ attention-grabbing techniques at the outset of their lessons. These methods vary in nature but share the common goal of immediately redirecting learners' focus from external distractions to the commencement of the lesson.

One noteworthy technique observed is the audibly knocking on the desk. This action is similar to a sonic signal, signaling to learners that it is time to shift their attention from their immediate surroundings to the teacher and the subject matter. By using sound in this manner, teachers create an auditory stimulus that helps establish a clear transition point into the lesson. Marzano (2007) emphasizes the importance of sensory experiences in learning and suggests that using sound, such as intriguing music or sound effects, can help in capturing students' attention and setting a positive tone for a lesson.

Another effective strategy employed by these teachers is giving clear orders at the start of the class. By doing so, teachers assert their authority, establish behavioral expectations, and effectively capture learners' attention. This approach is in accordance with the perspectives of education authorities Wong and Wong (2009), who underscore the significance of setting clear expectations and routines to foster a well-organized classroom atmosphere. Furthermore, some teachers begin their lessons with thought-provoking or subject-related personal questions to spark learners' curiosity and activate their cognitive processes right from the start. Moreover, teachers intentionally raise their voices at the beginning of the lesson, using this change in vocal intensity as a non-verbal cue to stress the moment's significance and effectively capture learners' attention through auditory signals. This strategy aligns with the research of educational psychologist Skinner (1994), who highlights the role of auditory stimuli in shaping behavior and attention.

Regarding the use of flexible strategies to grab learners' attention, it becomes evident that four out of the six teachers consistently integrate flexible strategies into their teaching approach. These teachers recognize the significance of adaptability, especially during afternoon sessions when learners tend to be tired or less focused. However, it is important to acknowledge that not all teachers adopt flexible strategies to the same extent. Two of the observed teachers occasionally incorporate flexibility into their teaching methods but, notably, in some instances, they maintain a single approach even when learners appear to be less concentrated. This observation highlights the variability in teachers' approaches and the potential impact on learner engagement. In this regard, Kearsley and Shneiderman (1998) emphasize the importance of adaptability and responsiveness in teaching to engage learners effectively. Teachers who employ flexible strategies demonstrate their commitment to creating a dynamic and engaging learning environment.

### **2) Non verbal-communication and engagement**

Throughout the observed sessions, it is remarkable that teachers employ a range of approaches to establish an immediate connection with their learners. Some teachers sometimes combine the use of facial expressions and deliberate eye contact to create a captivating and engaging presence in the classroom. This serves not only to capture learners' attention but also fosters a positive and receptive classroom atmosphere. In contrast, in certain instances, teachers place a strong emphasis only on the power of eye contact. This focused use of eye contact proves to be a convincing tool for initiating engagement and directing learners' attention toward the subject matter. However, it is worth noting that in some observation sessions, these methods are insufficient to sustain learners' attention. As a result, most teachers use additional strategies like knocking on the desk and facial expression. This observation focuses on the dynamic nature of teaching, where teachers adapt their techniques based on the specific needs and responsiveness of their learners.

### **3) Learners' autonomy and choices**

The third item that is observed reveals the evidence that not all teachers have employed the strategy of offering choices and control to their learners. Nevertheless, among those who implement this approach, it is primarily observed during oral and writing sessions. In these specific instances, teachers skillfully integrate opportunities for learners to make decisions and exercise autonomy within the learning environment. This might involve allowing learners to select from various learning materials, activities, or topics, often within established limits or parameters. This aligns with the findings of educational researcher Deci (1997), who promotes the significance of providing autonomy support to enhance motivation and engagement in the learning process.

The classroom dynamics demonstrate that giving learners choices and control over their learning process is highly effective in capturing and maintaining their attention. Learners who had the opportunity to make decisions and exercise autonomy in their learning, were more motivated and engaged in the learning activities. However, it is essential to note that not all

teachers in the observed classrooms adopt this strategy. Some teachers recognize the benefits of providing choices and control to learners, while others may not have fully embraced this approach. Scholars like Csikszentmihalyi (1990) and Dweck (2006) emphasize the role of autonomy and mindset in fostering learners' engagement and motivation. Highlighting autonomy fosters independence and responsibility, while advocating for a growth mindset promotes adaptability and enthusiasm. When combined, these elements contribute to increased engagement and motivation among learners.

#### **4) Technology integration**

All over our classroom observations, it is noticeable that none of the observed teachers employ technology such as e-mails, online audio/videoconferencing, web databases, or other means to foster interactive experiences among their learners. Our observations reveal a visible absence of its intentional use in promoting interactivity and engagement among learners in these specific educational settings. However, it is essential to acknowledge the evolving landscape of education where technology can serve as a valuable tool to engage learners in meaningful ways. Scholars like Puentedura (2006), Garrison and Anderson (2003) emphasize the transformative potential of technology in education. These scholars demonstrate how technology can go beyond mere substitution and fundamentally enhance the learning experience by promoting interactivity, collaboration, and engagement.

Throughout our attendance in sessions across different grade levels, it is evident that teachers consistently employ multimedia elements effectively with interactive whiteboards to engage their learners (Smith et al., 2021). However, this practice is adapted to the specific needs and learning preferences of each grade level. Notably, only one teacher did not employ any multimedia tools, indicating a common use of multimedia resources in contemporary EFL instruction.

A significant pattern has emerged in the choice of multimedia elements across grade levels. Teachers predominantly use images and videos when working with first and second-

grade learners. These visual elements likely cater to the younger learners' developmental stages and their tendency for visual stimuli (Jones & Brown, 2019). In contrast, for third and fourth-grade learners, teachers predominantly employ audio clips in conjunction with interactive whiteboards. This adaptation suggests a recognition of older students' growing cognitive abilities and the benefits of incorporating auditory elements to enhance engagement. This reflects the teachers' pedagogical flexibility and responsiveness to the diverse needs of learners at different grade levels (Anderson, 2020).

### **5) Real-world relevance**

Regarding the result of the twenty-four sessions we have attended across various settings, it is clear that teachers regularly made remarkable efforts to coordinate their lesson content with real-world relevance. This practice stresses the teachers' recognition of the importance of connecting classroom instruction to the wider context in which learners live and operate.

Teachers' efforts to adapt lessons with real-world relevance accord with contemporary educational theories, including the principles of authentic learning and contextual teaching. Wiggins and McTighe (2005) promote the idea of designing curriculum and instruction that connects with real-world problems and authentic assessment. It aligns with the concept of authentic learning like Problem-Based Learning. Lynch and Grubb (2017) explore how schools can deliver subject matter in meaningful ways that align with real-world contexts and engage adolescent learners.

### **6) Active participation and classroom environment**

The results obtained from the classroom observations reveal a common line among the majority of the observed teachers. These teachers promote active participation among their learners through various means, including group work, discussions, and other interactive activities. Such methods are pivotal in engaging learners, facilitating peer interactions, and promoting a collaborative learning environment.

Besides, two of the observed teachers go a step further by adopting creative methods like role-playing and interactive games in addition to group work and discussions (Jones et al., 2021). These creative approaches inject an element of novelty and excitement into the classroom (Smith, 2020), further enhancing learners' attention. In contrast, it is noteworthy that one teacher takes a distinct approach by refraining from incorporating group work and interactive activities, potentially to avoid disruptions and noise in the classroom. In this specific teacher's classroom, participation primarily occurs through one-on-one interactions between the teacher and individual learners. While this approach may create a quieter learning environment, it may also limit the opportunities for collaborative learning and peer interaction, which are known to enhance attention and deepen understanding (Johnson, 2019).

The observed practices align with contemporary educational theories, including the principles of active learning, cooperative learning, and student-centered instruction. Scholars such as Johnson, Johnson, and Smith (1998) emphasize the advantages of cooperative learning in engaging students and fostering collaboration among them. In other words, Positive interdependence is a concept frequently employed in the context of cooperative learning and teamwork. In this context, individuals or team participants rely on one another, stimulating cooperation, collaboration, and mutual assistance. Additionally, Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory emphasizes the significance of social interaction and collaboration in the educational process.

### **III. Interpreting data through the Engagement Theory**

Analyzing the data findings within the framework of the three fundamental principles proposed by Kearsley and Shneiderman (1998) enriches our comprehension of the perspectives, practices, and strategies employed by EFL teachers to capture the attention of learners in three private middle schools (ASSALAS, IKHOULAF, DJEJJIGUENE N'TFSOUTH) in TiziOuzou. This analytical approach encompasses three interconnected components: the Relate Component, the Create Component, and the Donate Component, which facilitate the examination of our data.

### 1) The relate component

The "relate" component, is a vital aspect within the field of education, focusing on the essential role of teamwork. This dimension highlights the importance of active learning facilitated through effective communication, proficient task management, and fluent in social interactions within a group context. These foundational elements are identified as the basis for effective teamwork, serving as drivers in cultivating a unified work atmosphere environment and ultimately contributing to increased productivity.

The emphasis on teamwork within the "relate" component aligns with contemporary educational theories recognizing the transformative impact of collaborative learning on learners' engagement. By prioritizing communication, task management, and social interactions, teachers employing this approach establish an environment that not only captivates learners' attention but also develop vital skills for effective collaboration.

The interview responses indicate the crucial role of drawing learners' attention in class and how this impacts the teaching and learning process positively. In the context of the Engagement Theory framework for technology-based teaching and learning proposed by Kearsley and Shneiderman (1998), the interview results provide valuable insights into its key components. It is evident that technology integration plays a pivotal role, with the majority of EFL teachers using technology as a strategy to engage learners. Additionally, teachers employ a diverse range of engagement strategies, including technology as well as speakers, visuals, videos, and games, highlighting the theory's emphasis on varied approaches to captivate learners' attention. More importantly, the interview results illustrate how teachers address varying levels of learner engagement, using strategies such as influencing engaged learners to inspire others and providing personalized support to struggling learners, consistent with the theory's aim of ensuring universal engagement. Collaborative activities are also considered effective, reinforcing the theory's emphasis on interaction among learners.

Furthermore, all teachers claim the vital role of communication in capturing learners' attention, aligning closely with the theory's focus on establishing connections between teachers and learners to create an interactive and engaging learning environment. The classroom observation sessions offer an in-depth understanding into the "relate" component of the theory. Some teachers apply non-verbal signs like eye contact and facial expressions thereby establishing immediate connections with their learners, in accordance with Mehrabian (1971) highlights the importance of non-verbal cues such as eye contact and facial expressions in conveying rapport and building trust between teachers and students. Active participation is consistently encouraged through group work, discussions, and interactive activities, emphasizing the importance of creating a positive classroom environment, Kohn (1993) argues that classroom environments that emphasize interactive activities and collaborative learning foster deeper engagement and motivation compared to traditional lecture-based setting. Moreover, the study's findings reveal that flexibility in teaching strategies is recognized by a significant majority of teachers (four out of six) as playing a pivotal role in maintaining learners' attention, particularly during the afternoon when learners tend to be tired. This aligns with the engagement theory's principles, which focus on the need for teachers to adapt their methods to meet the diverse learning preferences and needs.

### **2) The create component**

The create component, as stated by Kearsley and Shneiderman in 1998, is a foundational aspect of the engagement theory that places a strong focus on integrating elements within the learning process that foster creativity and inspire purposeful learning experiences. This component involves the deliberate incorporation of strategies such as experimental activities, problem-based learning (PBL), creativity, critical thinking, and the offering of choice and control to empower learners. It serves as a motivator for stimulating learners' curiosity, encouraging innovative thinking, and ensuring that learning efforts have meaningful and

achievable outcomes, ultimately enhancing the overall engagement and effectiveness of the educational experience (Kearsley & Shneiderman, 1998).

The interview results shed light on how EFL teachers consider learners' proficiency levels when selecting strategies, and how they adapt activities to fit various levels of difficulty. Firstly, the recognition that learners' proficiency levels are crucial aligns with the "create" component of the theory. It emphasizes the need for teachers to be adaptable and responsive to the diverse abilities of their learners. Harmin (1995) advocates for "responsive teaching" where teachers adjust their instruction based on ongoing student assessment and feedback. This resonates with the idea of recognizing diverse abilities and adapting accordingly. By doing so, teachers have effectively engaged learners and have ensured that the material is appropriately challenging for each individual. The interview results also highlight the importance of focusing on lower-level learners before higher-level ones, even if it requires extra effort. This approach resonates with the "create" component's principle of personalization. Teachers who prioritize lower-level learners recognize the value of adapting strategies to meet the needs of all learners, ensuring that everyone can access and engage with the learning material. Brown (1994) proposes the "scaffolding" concept, where teachers provide temporary support to help learners reach higher levels of understanding. This aligns with the interview results where teachers adjust activities to fit various levels of difficulty.

The findings of classroom observations indicate that five out of six observed teachers start their lessons with attention-grabbing techniques, ranging from audibly knocking on desks to asking provoking questions. These strategies effectively redirect learners' focus and set the stage for engagement. Moreover, some teachers enable learners by offering choices and control over their learning, particularly during oral and writing sessions. This approach fosters a sense of ownership and motivation among learners (Kearsley & Shneiderman, 1998).

Our classroom observations reveal a significant gap in the integration of technology beyond multimedia elements in promoting interactive learning experiences. Despite effectively

engaging learners with multimedia elements like videos and images through interactive whiteboards and adapting strategies to grade levels, the absence of tools such as e-mails, online audio/videoconferencing, and web databases in the observed educational settings raises important questions about employing technology's full potential to enhance learner attention. This observation underlines the need to bridge the gap between technology's potential and its actual use in fostering interactive and engaging learning environments, aligning with the engagement theory's emphasis on connecting instructional practices with emerging technologies (Kearsley & Shneiderman, 1998).

### **3) The donate component**

The donate component places a strong emphasis on cultivating an educational environment that prioritizes authentic learning experiences. Within this framework, learners are motivated by the real-world relevance of their studies. Moreover, their contributions and efforts are designed to own real significance and practical applicability that extend beyond the limits of the classroom setting. By prioritizing the "donate" component, teachers seek to inject learning with meaning and relevance, motivating learners to actively engage and apply knowledge in real-world contexts, ultimately enhancing the authenticity and depth of their educational experiences (Kearsley & Shneiderman, 1998).

The interview results provide insights into difficulties and strategies employed by teachers to manage distractions and re-engage learners. Firstly, the challenges mentioned by teachers, such as learners' diverse levels, lack of interest in the subject, distractions in the learning environment, boredom, afternoon fatigue, excessive noise, and a lack of personal interest in the subject content, highlight the complex nature of maintaining learner engagement. These challenges align with the "donate" component's emphasis on recognizing and addressing the factors that can slow down engagement. Teachers employ strategies aligned with the "donate" component to manage distractions and re-engage learners. These techniques encompass asserting authority, understanding individual needs, and employing various

attention. By using methods such as requests for silence, personal questions, and observance of facial expressions, teachers aim to maintain classroom discipline, serve individual interests, and encourage active participation. Techniques like using games, tapping desks, and patiently waiting for focus restoration indicate an initiating approach to addressing distractions and fostering engagement, in harmony with the principles of the "donate" component.

The observation results affirm that teachers are indeed making remarkable efforts to align lesson content with real-world relevance. This practice corresponds to the principles of the "donate" component, which emphasize the importance of connecting learning to the practical, everyday experiences and interests of learners. When teachers make these connections, it can enhance engagement by showing learners the practical applications and significance of what they are studying.

However, the observation results also show a critical aspect of the "donate" component. Despite the efforts to make lessons relevant to the real world, it is noted that this alone does not guarantee the engagement of all learners. This observation aligns with the understanding that learners have diverse interests and preferences. Some individuals may not find certain topics captivating, even if they have real-world significance. This highlights the complexity of engagement and the need for teachers to consider individual differences and adapt their teaching approaches to meet the variety of learner interests (Kearsley & Shneiderman, 1998).

## Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the data collected from the teachers' interviews and the classroom observations regarding the strategies teachers use to gain learners' attention and the analysis of their views and practices. This chapter is divided into three sections: it starts with

the discussion of the outcomes of teachers' interviews, then it discusses the results of the classroom observations, and ends with the interpretation of the data through the three basic principles of the engagement theory of Kearsley and Shneiderman (1998).

### General Conclusion

This research has examined the strategies used for gaining learners' attention and has been concerned with EFL teachers' views and practices in three private middle schools in the town of Tizi-Ouzou. It has had three main objectives: the first objective of this study consist of investigating the challenges and barriers that the EFL teachers have encountered in these schools when it has come to gaining and maintaining their learners' attention; Then the second has explored the beliefs and views of the EFL teachers regarding the importance of engaging and keeping learners focused. The last objective of the study has focused on identifying the strategies used by EFL teachers to incite their learners to learn.

The study of the methods for gaining learners' attention has fascinated many researchers all over the world. As an initial step of our research, we have taken Kearsley and Schneiderman's (1998) strategies for gaining learners' attention. The study has sought to discover the teachers' methods for engaging their learners. Thus, the first question, which has stated: "What are the views and beliefs of EFL teachers in the private middle schools in Tizi-Ouzou about the importance of gaining their learners' attention?", and the first hypothesis, which has claimed that EFL teachers have considered gaining and maintaining learners' attention as a crucial factor for successful language learning as it has allowed learners to stay focused and engaged in the learning process, has been confirmed. This could be explained by the fact that EFL teachers have considered gaining learners' attention as an important element in the teaching and learning process.

The second question, which has stated: "What are the challenges and barriers that EFL teachers face in gaining learners' attention in private middle schools?", and the second hypothesis, which has asserted that EFL teachers have faced multiple challenges and barriers, has also been confirmed. The last question, "What are the teachers' practices and the strategies

they use to engage learners?", and the hypothesis that EFL teachers have relied on various strategies and practices has been confirmed.

To conduct this investigation, we have applied the mixed methods approach, which has combined quantitative and qualitative methods for data collection and analysis, with a predominant emphasis on qualitative methods. Six (06) EFL teachers in the three private middle schools have responded to the semi-structured interviews, which has consisted of eight (08) questions aimed at analyzing their views and strategies for gaining learners' attention. To enhance the validity of the data collected from the interview, we have used a second tool, which has been classroom observation using a checklist of eight (08) items for twenty-four (24) sessions attended with six (06) private EFL middle school teachers to observe their practices and the way they have encouraged their learners to stay focused. To analyze the quantitative data, we have employed the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to process and interpret the statistical data derived from the closed-ended interview questions. Concerning the qualitative data, we have conducted qualitative data analysis (QCA) to make sense of the non-numerical information gathered.

The study has shown that teachers have assigned significant importance to attention despite the challenges they have encountered in maintaining learners' attention in the real context of the teaching process. Among these difficulties, teachers have faced learners' different levels, environmental factors, and afternoon lessons. Furthermore, the study has found out that the attentional techniques that teachers have used to grab learners' attention have included promoting active participation in the classroom, using positive reinforcement, addressing individual interests and needs, creating a collaborative learning environment, and fostering communication between the learners. It is hoped that this exploratory research, conducted within the English department at MMUTO, has offered a valuable contribution to the field of education by shedding light on the subject of attention and revealing the challenges teachers

have encountered when capturing their learners' attention. It is worth noting that our study has specifically focused on three private middle schools in Tizi-Ouzou and has primarily concentrated on teachers' views and practices.

To increase our understanding of this issue, future investigations might consider broadening their focus to encompass a wider range of middle schools or even other educational levels including primary schools. Furthermore, there is a necessity to evaluate the efficacy of these strategies from the perspective of the learners themselves.

Our own research encountered several limitations; which posed challenges in achieving our objectives. The major limitation has been the lack of relevant scientific articles and books in relation to our research topic, making it challenging to select a theory with full principles that might cover all the aspects of the conducted work. In addition to that, the limited number of EFL teachers in the schools under investigation has refrained the collection of a large body of data.

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### **1. Teachers' interview**

This interview is part of our research which aims to collect data about teachers' attentional techniques in the Algerian private middle schools, the objective of this interview is to get your views and practices about the strategies you use in classroom to gain your learners attention and the barriers that block its application.

1. What do you think about the importance of drawing learners' attention in class ?
2. Do you use any specific technologies or strategies to capture learners' attention?
3. Do you take into account the learners' level while selecting the appropriate strategy ?
4. What are the difficulties that you may face when capturing or maintaining learners' attention ?
5. How do you manage distractions in the classroom and bring students back to attention?
6. How do you handle situations where some students are more engaged than others?
7. Do you use team efforts or collaborative activities? could you share some examples that you have found particularly engaging for learners ?
8. Do you think that communication is important to gain learners' attention ?

**Classroom observation**

Items to be observed	Always	Sometimes	Never
9. The teacher starts the lesson with an attention grabber.			
10. The teacher uses eye contact and facial expressions to engage students.			
11. The teacher provided learners with choices and control over their learning process.			
12. Teachers' incorporation of multimedia such as videos, images, and audio clips effectively with interactive whiteboards to engage learners.			
13. Teachers make sure that the lesson content has relevance to the real world.			
14. The teacher encourages active participation through group work, discussions with other interactive activities, and creates a positive classroom environment to keep learners focused.			
15. The teacher uses flexible strategies to grab the learners attention.			
16. The teacher integrates technology to promote interactive experiences.			