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***Investigating Students' Learning Styles and their Impact  
on Learning EFL***

***Case Study: First Year Students in Assalas Private School***

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## ***Dedications***

*I dedicate this work to*

*My Parents, Rabah and karima who are the source of my strength.*

*My Brothers, Mouloud, Farid and Mayas, thanks for your help and continuous care.*

*Thanks for being always with me*

*My beloved husband, Juba, who is my first inspiration and my soulmate. Thanks for your support and encouragement.*

*All my family and friends*

***Radia***

## ***Dedications***

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*My lovely mother, Karima, who has raised me to be the person I am today and has been with me in every step of my life, through good and bad times.*

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## **Abstract**

*The present research is an attempt to investigate the students' learning styles and their impact in the learning of English as a foreign language in the Assalas private school of Tizi-Ouzou. Our investigation is concerned with the first year learners in secondary school and their teachers. It aims to know if the teachers are aware of these individual differences that exist inside the classroom or not. In order to meet the objectives of the study Visual, Auditory, Reading/Writing and Kinesthetic (VARK) theory about learning styles is applied. For the collecting data, 30 questionnaires were distributed to the learners and 14 classroom observations were conducted with their teachers. As far as data analysis is concerned, the mixed-methods combining both qualitative and quantitative methods have been adopted. The quantitative data are analysed using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) and the qualitative ones are analysed using qualitative content analysis (QCA). The results of the study indicate that the highest numbers (57%) of learners are auditory learners. The learners also confirmed that the use of learning styles have positive impact on the learning process. Besides, the findings revealed also that teachers are aware of the learning styles in the EFL classes.*

## **Key Words**

Learning Styles, VARK, Individual Differences, Auditory, Implications for learning Styles

## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

**CDs:** Compact Disc

**CNED program:** National Centre for Distance Education

**EFL:** English as a Foreign Language

**FL:** Foreign Language

**LS:** Learning Styles

**MI:** Multiple Intelligences

**MM:** Multimodality

**QCA:** Qualitative Content Analysis

**SPSS:** Statistical Package for Social Sciences

**TS:** Teaching Styles

**VARK:** Visual, Auditory, Reading/Writing and Kinesthetic

**%:** Percentage

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### Statement of the Problem

Learning is a process of acquiring new knowledge, skills, behaviours or modifying the existing one (Mayer, 2001). People learn so as to improve their existing knowledge or to develop their thinking and have new ideas about several topics. For learning a foreign language, learners need to increase their receptive (reading/ listening) and productive (writing/ speaking) skills. In EFL classes, for instance, learners are invited to exercise more than one strategy in order to retain new information and memorize the different subjects studied. During the learning process, students may encounter problems in receiving or producing information and this does not mean that they are not clever or unable to learn the language. However, in such cases, it is more advisable to say that the students neither know their learning styles nor use the suitable ones, this also happens due to a mismatch between teachers' way of teaching and learners' learning styles. According to Della-Dora and Blanchard (1978: 22), learning styles refer to "*a personally preferred way of dealing with information and experiences for learning that crosses content areas.*" In other words, we can simplify this definition by saying that each learner has his/her own style to learn, understand, memorize and retain information. Students can use different strategies or techniques to get and acquire knowledge.

There has been a recent growth in research on the concept of learning styles. Many researchers have been attracted on investigating it from different perspectives. Among these studies, we can cite Akgun (2002) and Rosniah (2004). The first work investigated the learning styles of English learners at private English courses. The aim of this research was to discover whether age, gender and educational level influenced the learners' learning styles. Its results indicated that the most preferable learning style was the kinesthetic one for the learners as well as for the teachers. Furthermore, Learning styles did not differ according to age or gender but it differed according to the level of education. The second work was conducted with first year Bachelor of Arts students' studies at Kebangsaan University of Malaysia. Rosniah found that

the students scored less satisfactory results in the English proficiency exam. The study has investigated the major and the minor learning style preferences of the students. The results indicated that their major preferences were the kinesthetic one. Besides, the research revealed that students had problems in coping with visual and auditory activities. They had difficulties in listening to a passage without seeing it in a written form because they were not familiar with the language. That is why they preferred the kinesthetic rather than the other styles.

However, the concept of learning styles is rarely treated in our country Algeria. For instance we found a work that has been done in June 2015 by Benmeddour Amna. The research has investigated the realization and awareness of the Visual/Auditory, Read/Write and Kinesthetic (VARK) learning styles among EFL teachers and learners: Appropriateness and Outcomes at the University of Mohamed Kheider of Biskra. It is based upon the third year English students. On the basis of the findings, the researcher has come to the conclusion that most of the participants cannot be considered as being aware of the term “VARK” learning style as a type among the learning styles.

A great deal of attention has been given to the preferable ways through which individuals recall and understand new information, but little attention has been paid to the impacts of learning styles to enable scholars to benefit from the language process. Moreover, the teachers' awareness of the students' individual differences in EFL classes has not been really taken into consideration and it has been neglected by researchers. For this reason, the present study is going to investigate students' Learning Styles and their Impacts for learning English as a Foreign Language in the Private School named 'Assalas' in Tizi Ouzou (Algeria).

### **Aims and Significance of the Study**

This research is significant for both teachers and students. On the one hand, this study will be beneficial for teachers because it will enlighten them to know more about the students'

different learning styles that exist in their classrooms. Also, it will develop their awareness about the individual differences in order to add and obtain best practice strategies into their daily activities. On the other hand, it has a value for students because it helps them to know their different way of learning and give them the opportunity to discover their preferable and suitable learning styles. So, EFL learners will develop a sense of responsibility towards their studies.

This study seeks to investigate the different learning styles and their implications for learning EFL, and it contains three main objectives:

1. To identify the different learning styles used by EFL learners and the most preferable ones in the Private School named ‘Assalas’ in Tizi Ouzou.
2. To investigate the impacts of learning styles for learning English as a foreign language.
3. To explore the extent to which teachers are aware of the different learning styles of their students.

### Research Questions and Hypotheses

Considering what has been mentioned above, the study tries to identify, investigate and explore the students’ learning styles at ‘Assalas’ private school in Tizi Ouzou. Most importantly, it studies the implications of learning styles for learning English as a foreign language. To examine the research objectives, the study attempts to answer the following research questions:

**RQ1-** What is the most preferable learning style used by learners in Assalas Private School?

**RQ2-** What are the main impacts of learning styles for EFL learning in Assalas private school?

**RQ3-** Are teachers aware of the different learning styles that exist in the EFL classes. If yes, how?

To predict the responses we have put in advance the following hypotheses:

**H1-** The most preferable learning style used by EFL learners is the reading and writing one.

**H2-** Learning styles have an impact on learning English as a foreign language because it makes the learning process more efficient and easier.

**H3-** Teachers are aware of the different learning styles that exist in the EFL classes in Assalas Private School, and they use different strategies to teach.

### **Research Techniques and Methodology**

The present work tends to investigate the students' learning styles and their implications for learning EFL. Thus, to affirm/infirm our hypotheses and to collect the information needed for our research, we have adopted the mixed-methods research which combines between a quantitative and qualitative research. To gather data from the participants, a questionnaire and a classroom observations have been used. For data analysis, we relied on two techniques which are the descriptive statistical data analysis (SPSS) for the quantitative data and the qualitative content analysis (QCA) for the qualitative ones.

### **Structure of the Dissertation**

The dissertation has followed the traditional complex model. It consisted of four main chapters in addition to a general introduction and a general conclusion. In the general introduction, the problem aims and significance of the research are expressed, the research questions and hypotheses are identified, and the method of the research is introduced. Chapter one provided an overview about learning styles in three sections. In the first section, the



definitions as well as the importance of learning styles are discussed. The second section has tackled matching teaching styles with learning styles; it has also shed light on the different models of learning styles. The last section has dealt with the theoretical framework. Chapter two has explained the methodology and the research techniques that are used in the study. It has also described the method used for the data analysis. Chapter three is the presentation of the findings, where the results obtained from the analysis of the students' questionnaires and the results obtained from teachers' classroom observations are stated. Chapter four has discussed the results obtained from the participants in order to draw some conclusions and to see if the results go in the same direction with the hypotheses. Finally, some suggestions and recommendations are provided in the general conclusion.

### Introduction

The aim of the current chapter is to present the theoretical background of the relevant studies concerning students' learning styles and their impacts for EFL learning so as to facilitate the complex learning process. First, the notion learning styles is defined from different perspectives. Second, much focus is put on the importance of learning styles in Education, in general and in EFL contexts, in particular. Third, a detailed explanation of learning style models is provided. Finally, much importance is given to the presentation of the analytical framework to rely on in order to analyse the data obtained.

### 1. Definitions of Learning Styles

Learning styles have received considerable attention in recent years. The term “learning styles” has been widely used in Psychology and Education in the 1930s (Pashler et al., 2008). Throughout time, a large number of people have asked about the significance of the term “learning styles”. This has led to the emergence of a variety of different answers, but there is only one formal response that define learning style as a preferred way of thinking, processing and understanding information. Each person prefers a pattern of thought and behavior that influences his or her learning process. Concisely, we all learn in different ways (Allen et al., 2011).

Scholars like Lebar and Mansor (2000), Reid (1995), and Dunn et al., (1978) consider learning styles as the preferable ways which differ from one individual to another. They are used by learners to comprehend, memorize and retain new information. Learning styles help to facilitate the learning process as well as to achieve the desired skill in a certain domain. Dunn et al., 978:11) define learning styles as *“the way in which each person absorbs and retains information and/or skills, regardless of how that process is described, it is dramatically different for each person.”* In other words, learning styles is a means through which an

individual acquires knowledge, no matter how the learning process is explained; each person understand it differently, depending on their own learning styles. Moreover, on learning styles Kolb (1984: 28) adds some elements that affect one's choice by highlighting that "*different people naturally prefer a certain single different learning style. Various factors influence a person's preferred style. For example, social environment, educational experiences, or the basic cognitive structure of the individual.*" In other words, Kolb sets out that people are not able to learn in the same way therefore, they apply different learning styles. The latter, can be influenced by several aspects such as society, environment, the Education system, and so on. Based on the definitions that have been given, learning Styles are techniques used by individuals for a better learning. By understanding their own process of learning, learners can be more efficient in their studies; and by comprehending how and why they learn, their education can vastly improve.

## 2. The Importance of Learning Styles in Education

Learning styles are of huge importance for both teachers and learners. According to Biggs (2001), identifying students' learning style gives them the opportunity to learn and understand better. In addition, the learning process becomes easier, faster and more successful. For instance, teachers, in literature modules use short stories as well as films in order to attain the students' different learning styles. It facilitates the intake of information. In addition, understanding students' learning styles increases their confidence, autonomy, getting more excited about the subject. They become accountable for learning, and the teacher will only act as a guide and a facilitator (Gilakjani and Ahmadi, 2011). For example, when a student discovers his/her own learning style, he/she is going to use it to facilitate the process of learning.

Ldpride (2008: 5) states that *“it is important to keep in mind that you as individual are a unique learner. No two people are exactly the same and no two people learn in exactly the same manner.”* This point refers to the individual differences; it highlights the fact that each student has his/her own style which is different from the learners. Individuals are different and each person prefers one way or style of learning rather than the other styles. Ldpride (2008) suggests three advantages of knowing and identifying learning styles: ‘academic’, ‘personal’ and ‘professional’. Academic benefits include finding out how to study and understand better in order to score good marks in tests or exams. The personal merits cover how to improve students’ self-esteem and self-confidence; it also involves how to optimize students and how to have an idea about the students’ weak and strong points. It is important to make the learning enjoyable and to increase the students’ motivation. The last advantage is the professional one, where students are required to know more about the professional topics. In this point learners are invited to gain an advantage over competition.

Learning styles are also relevant for teachers. Being aware of the individual differences that exist inside the classroom help teachers to design and plan lessons. Matching learning styles with teaching styles is vital in the classroom, so teachers are required to take into account the different learning styles by making use of wide range of strategies and techniques in order to meet the students’ needs (Becker et al, 2007).

### **3. Matching Teaching and Learning styles (TS/LS)**

Based on the different ideas by Felder and Henrique (1995) on matching teaching and learning styles in FL, teaching can considerably improve students’ outcomes, attitudes and behavior. They stress that teachers are not always obliged to use the styles that students prefer; rather they have to balance between the two TS and LS. Teachers can make use of several techniques and strategies to cover the various learning styles, such as to present concrete and

conceptual information, motivate students, combine reflective and active exercises and use group works, visual aids and drill exercises. Teachers do not have to use all these techniques in one course but they can pick some of them and develop TS that is effective for the learners and make the majority of them understand the subject presented. Dunn and Dunn (1979) advise teachers to match TS with LS and expand the teaching techniques so as to meet the students' individual differences.

Some authors (Felder and Silverman, 1988; Lawrence, 1993; Oxford et al, 1991, and Schmeck: 1998, as cited in Felder and Henriques, 1995) state that both teachers and learners may encounter or face several problems when there are mismatches between students' LS and teachers' TS. As a result, students may become lazy or get discouraged and the class becomes boring. Therefore, learners make less effort to get more knowledge and they do poorly in exams.

### **4. Models of Learning Styles**

Accounting for individual learning styles is not a new idea. As early as 334BC, Aristotle said that "*each child possessed specific talents and skills.*" (Reiff and National Education Association, W.D, 1992:3), and he noticed individual differences in young children. After Aristotle, there is many researchers who began forming their own ideas regarding learning styles. Among these researchers, Howard Gardner (1983), David Kolb (1984) and Neil Fleming (1992). As a result, different theories were advanced.

These theories differed from one to another in the categorization of learning styles as they had distinctive views, but they had a common point which consisted of the different ways of learning. People do not learn in the same manner and each learner has his/her own preferable style (Coffield, Frand et al, 2004).

### 4.1 Gardner's Multiple Intelligences

Learning styles are strongly connected to the American psychologist Howard Gardner's work (1983) around multiple intelligences. According to him, people can be intelligent in different ways. Therefore, MI somehow becomes synonymous with the concept of LS. Gardner believes that a human being has a range of intelligences. Some people have linguistic intelligence, other have musical intelligence. Gardner (1983) (cited in Reiff and National Education Association, W. D., 1992) proposes seven different learning styles into which he is sure that people are categorized. The categories are as follows;

1. Visual spatial: people that are good at visualizing things. These kinds of persons are often good with charts, videos and pictures;
2. Bodily Kinesthetic: humans who enjoy movements of using their bodies;
3. Musical: individuals who have a strong appreciation for music, rhythms and sounds;
4. Interpersonal: persons who enjoy interacting with others. They establish rapport with strangers and make friends easily;
5. Intrapersonal: people who enjoy self-reflection. They are able to analyze their individual desires, emotions and thoughts;
6. Linguistic: those who are good at writing stories, reading and memorizing information;
7. Logical Mathematics: human beings who think logically. Those who are good at working with numbers and scientific investigations.

Although Gardner's multiple intelligences represent different intellectual abilities, but a person can be a composite of multiple styles of intelligences (Gardner, H., & Hatch, T., 1989). For example, one individual can be good at reading and writing as well as at mathematics. Or a person can have both visual spatial and musical intelligence at the same time.

### 4.2 Kolb's Learning Style Model

David Kolb (1984) looks at learning styles in a slightly different way from both Gardner and Fleming. He believes that “*learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experiences.*” (Kolb, 1984: 24) He explains that one must first encounter a new experience, and then reflects upon it. These two steps lead to a new idea arising within the person due to analyzing and drawing conclusions upon their reflection and finally the person will apply the new ideas to the world around him (Experiential Learning, Kolb, 2017). For example, teachers tend to give children at primary schools based on observation like putting beans in cotton, some in light and the others in darkness. Then, after a period of watering, they grow and children notice that the beans grown in the light have more leaves than the ones grown in darkness. From this task, children have an experience through which they observe new things and after some reflection upon this experience, they finally conduct some conclusions. Later on, they try out what they have learned. In short, for Kolb learning is “*cyclical*” and it is simply turning “*experience into learning*”.

In addition, Kolb's theory (1984 cited in Saul McLeod, 2010:1-4) involves four types of learners: the converger, the diverger, the assimilator, and the accommodator.

1. The convergent learner is a person who can find solutions to practical issues and solve problems. He is more attracted to “*the technical tasks*” and he is less concerned with people;
2. The divergent learner, an individual who enjoys watching rather than doing, he is sensitive; he can look at things from different perspectives. The divergent learner tends to be imaginative and emotional;

3. The assimilator learner: a person with this style is less focused on people and is more interested in “*abstract concepts and ideas*”. He is good at understanding and organizing information in a clear way;
4. The accommodator learner is the one who relies on “*concrete experiences and experiments*”. People with this style are attracted to new challenges.

### 4.3 Dunn and Dunn’s Learning Style Model

Rita Dunn (1984: 20) defines learning styles as “*the ways in which each person absorbs and retains information and/or skills.*” Merely, in this definition, the author wants to say that LS is ways through which a person understands certain information and it differs from one individual to another. People do not retain knowledge the same way. Dunn and Dunn’s Model talk about five types of stimuli that can affect the student which are environmental, emotional, sociological, physiological and psychological. For Dunns, teachers are able to provide several strategies to address all the students with different learning styles and make the learning more efficient. To illustrate, there are students who are able to learn in a noisy environment but there are those who are more comfortable in a quite atmosphere. Therefore, teachers should take into consideration these elements.

Dunn and Dunn (1984 cited in Dunn and Burke, 2006:1-5) the learning style model is organized as follows:

1. Environmental LS is to take into consideration “*the environmental stimuli*”, which means that teachers have to ask the students about their preferred way to get learning, whether they prefer studying in a quiet place, or in a noisy place. Besides, there are other factors like light, temperature and design.;
2. Emotional LS includes the degree of motivation and responsibility of the student;



3. Sociological LS seeks to know if the student likes studying alone, in pairs or in small groups with more or less guidance from the instructor;
4. Physiological LS relates to the “*perceptual strength*” of the student such as auditory, visual, tactile or kinesthetic. It also includes the time of the day and mobility; this is all about how the body and how the mind respond to the task or to the activity;
5. Psychological LS refers to the way learners process and respond to information and ideas, it is to check whether the student is “*reflective or impulsive* and if he is “*analytic or global*”.

### 5. Theoretical Framework

Learning styles are investigated by many scholars as mentioned above (Gardner, 1983), (Kolb, 1984) and (Dunn Dunn, 1984). As every research work should stress upon a theoretical bases, the present study relies on the theoretical work (VARK) proposed by Neil Fleming (2006), a researcher interested in the concept of learning styles.

The VARK model is developed by Fleming and Mills as a framework that reflects the “*preferred physical sense*” of learners while receiving and delivering information. VARK model of learning style has been modified from VAK to VARK learning style by Neil Fleming in 2006. The latter is modified by classifying students into four different categories which are Visual, Auditory, Reading/Writing and Kinesthetic (Nilson, 2010). The name of the model itself is picked out from those prefix letters of every category (VARK). The VARK learning style has classified students into one of these four categories based on how they prefer to intake or put out information (Lang, 2004). Students who are capable to use more than one learning style well are categorized as multi-modal learners (Flemings & Mills, 1992). For instance, in the classroom we can find learners that vary in between the visual LS and the auditory LS or they may use both LS at the same time.

1. **Visual learners** can learn through description and demonstrations. They prefer using a list to arrange their ideas as well as to maintain “*their advance rate*” on the learning. They can be distracted by movements or actions but noise does not bother them (Drago and Wagner, 2004). Students with visual LS are usually rich with imagination and they are supposed to be creative (Piping, 2005). In other words, they prefer to learn through seeing things such as teacher’s facial expressions, gestures, pictures, graphs, charts and maps to understand better the lesson and to memorize the information given about a specific subject. For example, a visual learner enjoys watching movies rather than reading books;
2. **Auditory learners** learn something by listening. They are interested in the words delivered by teachers instead of taking notes. After lectures, they generally discuss the topics with classmates or ask questions to improve their understanding. They are easily interrupted by noise (Drago and Wagner, 2004). According to Miller, this type of learners remember information better while listening to recordings or while discussing or speaking with other people; they can narrate stories in a clever and detailed way, read easily, learn a foreign language fast as well as speak it frequently as natives. This category of LS describes a preference for information that is heard or spoken (Armstrong, 2004);
3. **Reading/writing:** according to Drago and Wagner (2004), these kinds of learners are “*note takers*”; they study better from taking notes or reading materials. In other words, people who prefer this modality are often addicted to books, power points, diaries, and dictionaries. This preference emphasizes “*text-based input and output-reading and writing*” in all its forms, especially manuals, reports, essays and assignments (Fleming 2006). For example, while revising for exams/tests, students with these LS read a

passage and pick up the important information; then, they rewrite them in order to remember well and be ready for the examination;

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

Many theories have been suggested over the years and each has its positive and negative aspects. Therefore, most of them have been criticized in relation to their validity. Many researchers have argued that for instance, Kolb's model did not work the way they were intended to (Olga Khazan, 2018). Among these various models, the VARK model is the one to be widely accepted. It remains the most popular model among both students and educators. Thanks to this model, some learners immediately recognize that they are drawn to a particular learning style. Others find that their learning preferences lie somewhere in the middle. Because our research is about the use of learning styles by EFL learners, then the implications of this later for English learning, we believe that this theory will help us to get the desired results.

## Characteristics of Different Learners

The following table is a representation of the characteristics of different learners:

|                                |   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| <b>Visual learner</b>          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Observes rather than talks</li> <li>▪ Remembers faces</li> <li>▪ Memorise by seeing graphics, pictures</li> <li>▪ Notices details</li> <li>▪ Transforms information into knowledge by making drawing or images</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Auditory learner</b>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Enjoys talking hums and signs</li> <li>▪ Easily distracted by noise</li> <li>▪ Enjoys listening activities</li> <li>▪ Reads notes and texts out loud</li> <li>▪ Records notes, information, lectures and listens to recordings regularly.</li> </ul>                                       |
| <b>Reading/Writing learner</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Uses repetition of words and writing</li> <li>▪ Remembers and organizes things best in his mind by taking down notes</li> <li>▪ Makes lists to help them access information</li> <li>▪ Turns diagrams and maps into words</li> <li>▪ Adores reading textbooks, novels</li> </ul>           |
| <b>Kinesthetic learner</b>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Likes physical rewards</li> <li>▪ Enjoys doing activities</li> <li>▪ Prefers to move their body and manipulate things with their own hands</li> <li>▪ Finds difficulties to sit for long periods of time</li> </ul> <p>Good in applied activities like: painting, cooking, and sports.</p> |

(Daniela Boneva and Elena Mihova, 2012: 12)

## 6. What about mixture? Multimodality (MM)

There are situations where learners use only one learning style, but this is not always the case as there are some students who mix between the four styles. They have no specific preference so they are defined as multimodal. Students with multiple preferences are those who switch from mode to mode, depending on what they are working with. They choose the mode which suits a particular situation. For instance, if they have to deal with legalities they will apply their Read/write preference. If they are to watch the demonstration of a technique they will be expressing their kinesthetic preference (Fleming and Mills 1992).

### Conclusion

This chapter has put focus on the important notions related to the present research. It contains three sections: each section casted light on the concept of learning styles. The first section has investigated the essential concepts related to learning styles including the different definitions of learning styles. The second section has tackled the importance of learning styles in Education and their relation with teaching/learning process. The last one has presented an overview of the theoretical framework based on different learning styles' models and previous works.

### Introduction

This chapter deals with the research design used to investigate the students' different learning styles and their implications for learning English as a foreign language in the Private School named 'Assalas' in Tizi Ouzou. The procedures for data collection and data analysis are important to answer the research questions set in the general introduction. The chapter provides information about the participants and describes the two data collection tools: the questionnaire and the classroom observation. In addition to this, this chapter describes the data analysis tools. In order to analyse the information gathered from the questionnaire and the classroom observations, we have adopted the mixed-methods approach which includes both qualitative and quantitative methods.

### 1. Data Collection Procedures

#### 1.1 Context of the Investigation and the Participants

Our research has taken place in an Algerian private school in Tizi-Ouzou, named 'Assalas'. This school contains three levels: primary, middle and secondary school like the public ones, but the difference is that they follow the CNED (the National Centre for Distance Education) program which is a French public institution, created in 1939, it offers the opportunity to study at a high level, while living in any country or living around the world.

In Assalas Private School they start studying English since the fourth year in primary school. Our research is carried out in the secondary school with the first year students. 30 questionnaires were distributed for the students in order to attain the objectives of this study and to investigate the different learning styles as well as to identify the most preferable ones among students. Also, to find out the impact of the learning styles on learning English as a foreign language. 14 classroom observations were conducted with three different teachers to

see whether the teachers are aware of the individual differences that exist inside the classroom or not.

## 2. Data Gathering Tools

### 2.1 The Questionnaire

A questionnaire is a data collection instrument that consists of series of questions for the purpose of gathering information from respondents. According to Anderson (1990: 207), the questionnaire “*allows the gathering of reliable and valid data, relatively in a short time.*” A questionnaire is a useful option to use when conducting a research. It is cheaper and quicker than the other data collection tools (samples and interviews). It is made up of open-ended questions and close-ended questions. The former require depth answers where the respondents are free to express themselves. The latter indicate the questions where the respondents are not allowed to give details. They only tick ‘Yes’ or ‘No’. Additionally, the multi-choices answers are also used.

### 2.2 Piloting the Questionnaire Addressed to Students

To pretest our questionnaire a pilot work has been done. Our pilot study is in the form of a questionnaire which we have distributed to 9 students; this operation is done in order to ensure that the questions are answerable. So, the piloting has permitted us to edit and make changes to some questions so as to make it clear and easy to answer. As a result the main questionnaire has been obtained.

### 2.3 Questionnaire Designed to Students

For gathering enough data, a questionnaire was handed to students of “Assalas” on 08-05-2019. Indeed, to guarantee reliable data, participants are insured that their answers would be

kept anonymous. In the introduction, we explained the aim of the questionnaire which is to investigate students' different learning styles and their implications for learning English as a foreign language. The questionnaire contains 13 questions which are divided into two types: open-ended questions, where students are requested to give their own answers; and close-ended questions which consist of multiple-choice questions. It contains three sections; the first section includes personal information, which aims to show students' profile. The second section turns around students' preferable learning styles. The third one is concerned with the implications of learning style for learning EFL.

### 2.4 Classroom Observations

In order to complete the results gathered from the questionnaires a classroom observation were conducted. The observations were based on seven items to be checked during several classroom observations. According to Bailey (2001: 114), classroom observation “*is the purposeful examination of teaching and learning through the processes of data collection.*” In other words, classroom observation is very essential, it permits to the researchers to study the process of education in the setting itself and it provides more details than other data sources. It also allows them to gather valid data. In the present research, classroom observation allows us to discover whether teachers are aware of the different learning styles that exist inside the classroom or no. Furthermore, the classroom observation is conducted in ‘ASSALAS’ private school of Tizi-Ouzou from 21<sup>st</sup> April until 8<sup>th</sup> May, 2019. We conducted 14 sessions with three teachers.

### 3. Data Analysis

This part involves the procedures of data analysis. We adopt the quantitative method to interpret the data collected from the close-ended questions of the questionnaire distributed to the learners. This later, will be calculated with the help of the computer program named the



Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), as it is defined by Landau, S and Everitt, B.S. (2004: 11) *“it is a package of programs for manipulating, analysing and presenting data.”* In addition the software (SPSS) contains two main steps data view in which the information of each question is entered through numbers that are considered by the software as a code to process the analysis. The second step is variable view in which parameters are adjusted by providing the necessary information about the statistical data. By using (SPSS) data is transformed into different forms histograms, tables of percentage. In addition to (SPSS), we are going to use the Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA). The latter has been defined by Hsieh and Shannon (2005: 1278) it is *“a research method for subjective interpretation of the content of the text data through systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or pattern.”* The definition indicates that QCA has been adopted for interpreting opinions gathered from the open-ended questions and the classroom observation.

### 3.1 The Mixed-Methods

The mixed-methods combines both quantitative and qualitative methods in the same study so as to get a full understanding of the phenomenon under study. It raises greater awareness of the problem rather than using one method alone. Therefore, it can be useful for the research where a researcher needs a profound understanding of the research problem. Our choice to apply this method in our investigation is not random, but based on the fact that it guarantees credibility in reporting the results, as it combines quantitative and qualitative methods.

### 3.2 Quantitative Method

According to Aliaga and Gunderson (2002), “*Quantitative research is an inquiry into a social problem, explain phenomena by gathering numerical data that are analysed using mathematically based methods e.g. in particular statistics.*” In other words, quantitative method is used for the analysis of the data collected from students’ questionnaires in numerical form. It is a method where numbers are used to explain the findings.

### 3.3 Qualitative Method

Qualitative method is the opposite of the quantitative one. It is based on qualitative data or no numerical data. Shank (2002, 5) defines qualitative research as “*a form of systematic empirical enquiry into meaning.*” It is a research method which is adopted by the researcher as it allows him/her to get the facts rather than the numbers.

### Conclusion

The present chapter describes the setting, the participants and the research design in details. It has also given an overview about the data collection and data analysis procedures. It has presented the data collection tools involving students’ questionnaires and classroom observation. In addition, this chapter has dealt with the methods used in the analysis of the data collected which is the mixed-method such as quantitative method and qualitative method.

### Introduction

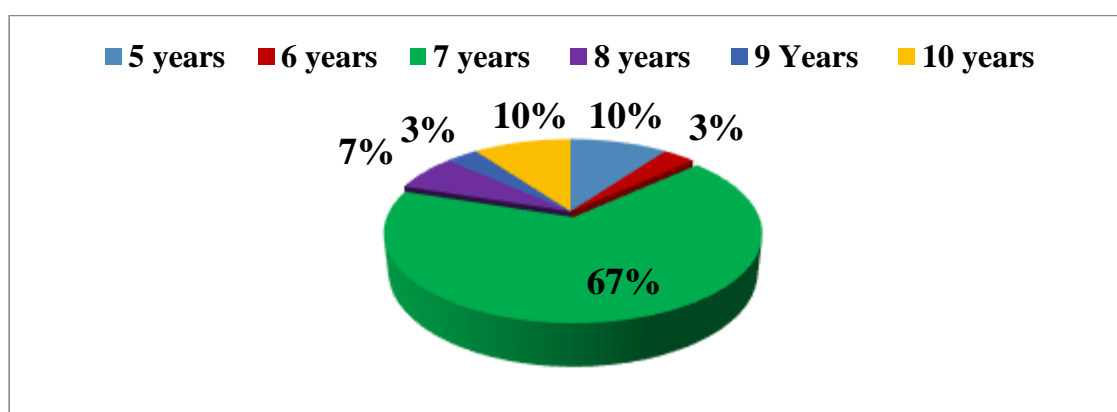
This chapter deals with the presentation of the findings of our study. The data have been collected through the use of a definite set of instruments, namely the questionnaire for learners and classroom observations for teachers.

#### 1.1 Presentation of the Results of the Questionnaires

The first research tool used to collect the required information for our study is the questionnaires distributed to students. Therefore, this unit is going to report the results of the students' questionnaires. The questionnaire was handed to 30 first year students; it contains three (3) sections and thirteen (13) open and close ended questions.

##### Section 1: Students' Profile.

##### Q1- How long have you been studying English?

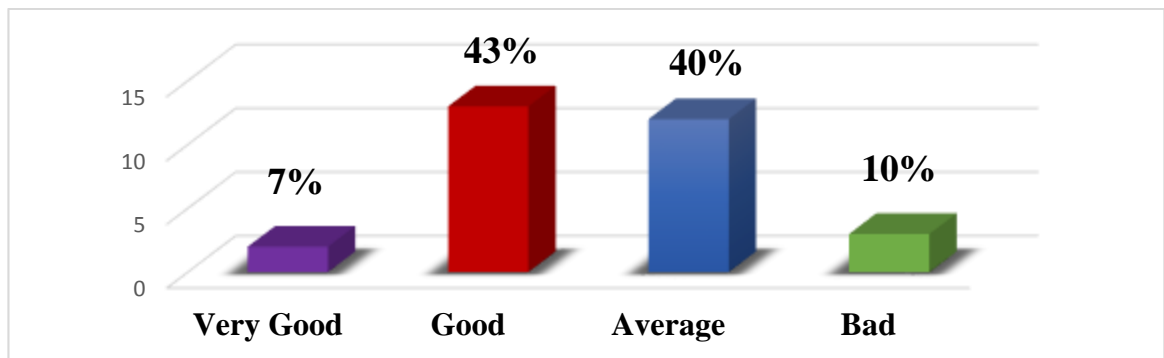


**Figure1: Students' Level in English**

From the first figure, we have noticed that the majority of first year students in high school study English since 7 years with the percentage of (67%). Some of the participants (10%) learn English since 5/10 years. Only seven percent of learners (7%) study English since 8 years. However, the minority of them (3%) studied English since 6/9 years.

**Q2- How do you perceive your level in English?**

- a. Very good      b. Good      c. Average      d. Bad



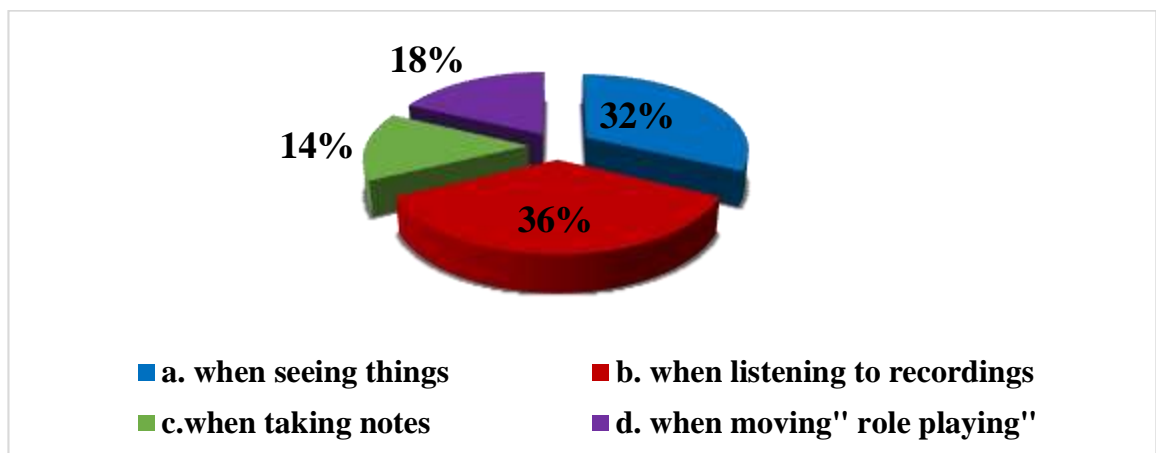
**Figure 2: The Students' Mastery of English Language**

The Results demonstrate that thirteen (43%) of students are good in English. Twelve (40%) of learners are average and three (10%) of them have a bad level in English. While, only two (7%) of them are very good practitioners of the FL.

**Section two: Students' Preferable Learning Styles**

**Q3- How do you enjoy learning English?**

- a. When seeing things like: pictures, graphs, maps      b. When listening to recordings  
c. When taking notes      d. When moving 'role playing'

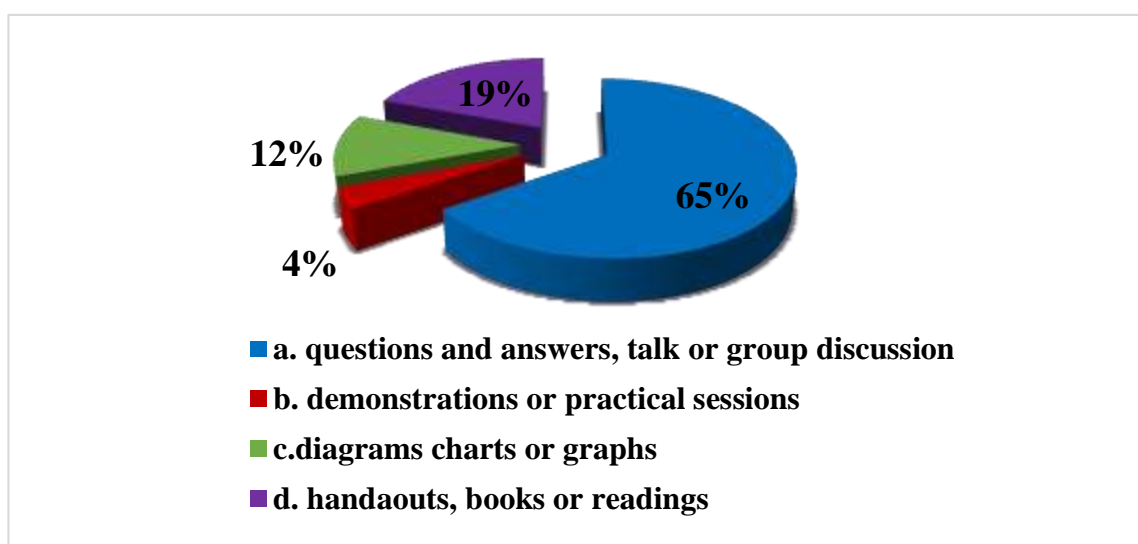


**Figure3: Students' Preferred Ways for Learning English**

According to the results obtained from this question, 36% of the students like learning English by listening to different recordings. However, the 32% of them prefer visualising items, such as graphs, pictures and videos. 18% of the learners took pleasure through movements and role playing. Only 14% of students learn by taking notes.

### Q4- Do you prefer a teacher who uses?

- a. Questions and answer, talk or group discussion?    b. Demonstrations or practical sessions  
c. Diagrams, charts or graphs?                      d. Handouts, books or readings

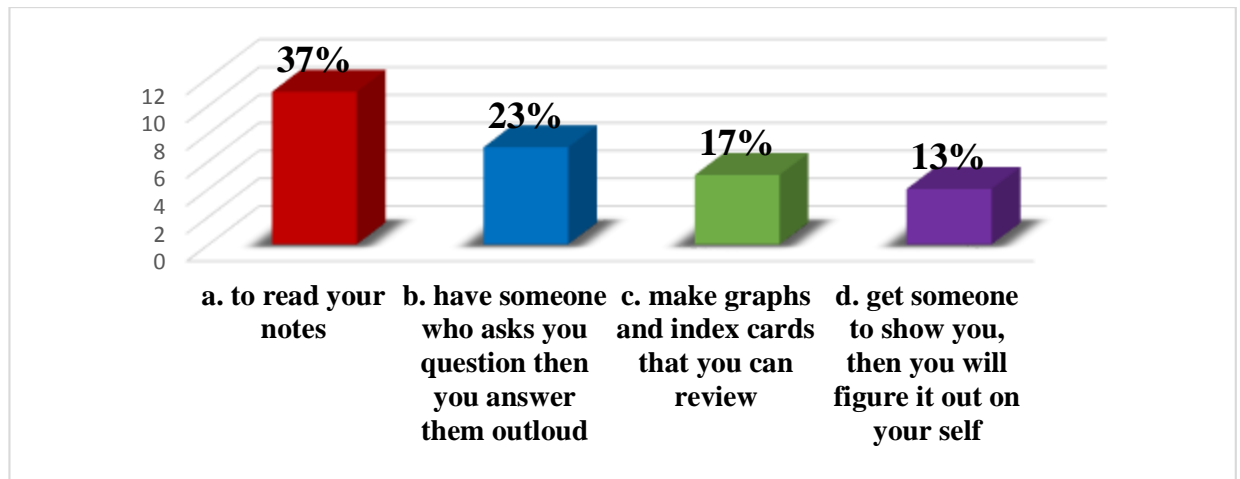


**Figure 4: Different Materials Employed by Teachers during EFL Classes**

Figure 4 indicates that, on the one hand, 65% of the learners prefer teachers who use questions/ answers, talk and group discussion. On the other hand, 19% of the students learn and memorise better through the use of handouts, books or readings. Other learners (12%) are more satisfied with a teacher who uses diagrams, charts or graphs. While only 4% prefer demonstrations.

**Q5- The best way for you to study for an exam is:**

- a.** To read your notes      **b.** Have someone who asks you questions that you will answer out loud      **c.** Make up graphs, index cards that you can review      **d.** To get someone to show you, then you will figure it out on your own

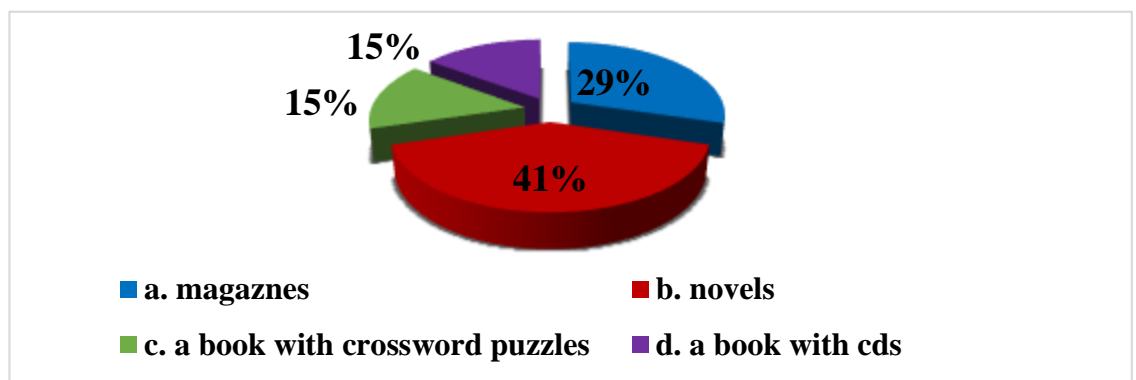


**Figure 5: Students' Revision Techniques**

The findings demonstrate that most of the students (37%) like reading their notes in order to prepare for their exams. Some learners (23%) revise by being asked so as to remember well the information. Few students (17%) have considered making graphs and index cards as best ways for revision, and only 13% of students prefer getting someone to show for them and trying to figure it out alone.

**Q6- What kind of materials you like to read?**

- a.** Magazines   **b.** Novels   **c.** A book with crosswords puzzles   **d.** A book with CDs

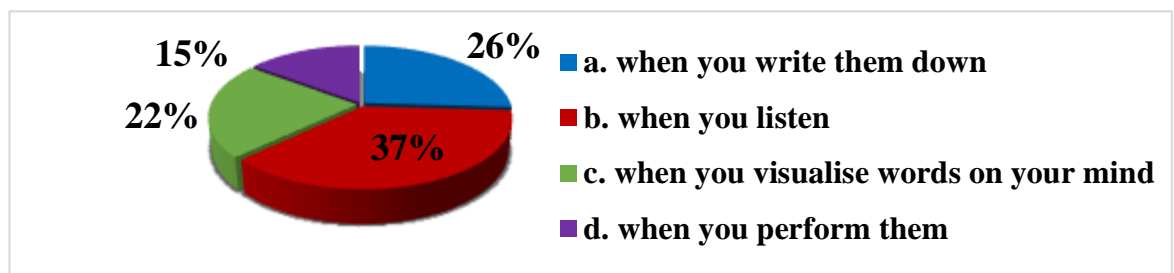


**Figure 6: The Materials that Students Appreciate Reading**

It is clear from figure 6 that the majority of students (41%) like reading books or novels and 29% of them prefer magazines. However, 15% like reading both books with crossword puzzles and CDs.

### Q7- How do you memorize things better?

- a. When you write them down      b. When you listen      c. When you visualize words in your mind  
d. When you perform them

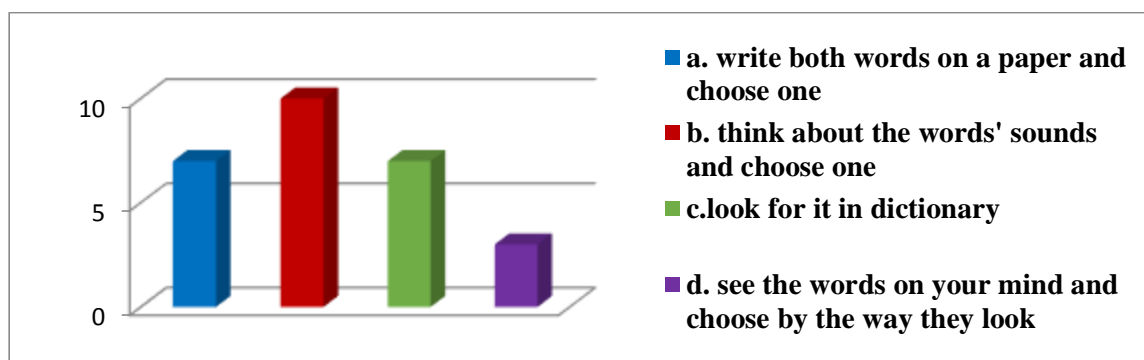


**Figure 7: Learners' Preferable Ways of Memorizing Information**

The results reveal that the highest percentage (37%) of students memorise information better by listening rather than by writing, seeing or performing them, and this is considered by (26%). Seeing or visualizing the words is chosen by 22% while performing the words is picked just by 15%.

### Q8- When you are not sure about the spelling of two words, You

- a. Write both words on a paper and choose one      b. Think about how each word sounds and chooses one  
c. Look for it in a dictionary      d. See the words in your mind and choose by the way they look

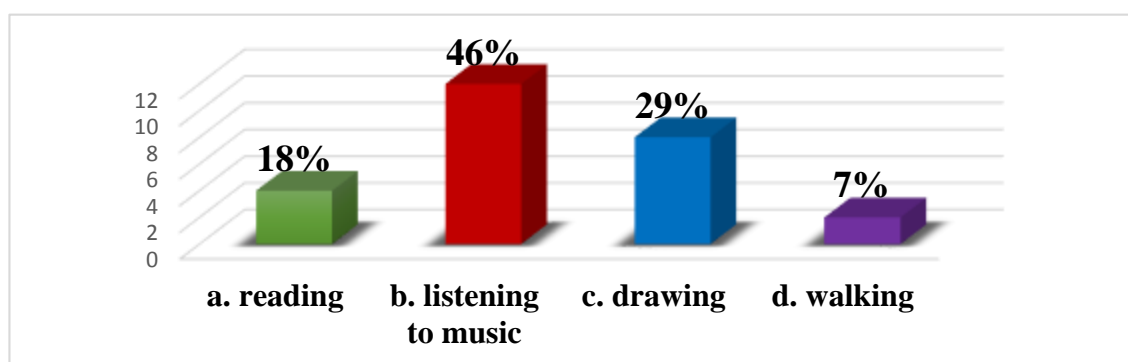


**Figure 8: Students' Ways of Checking the Words' Spelling**

Students' answers indicate that a great number of learners (37%) check the spelling of two words by thinking about their sounds. 26% of them vary in between writing the two words in a paper and chose one or looking for in a dictionary. Just 11% of learners answered that they confirm the spelling of a word by seeing it in their minds and then writing it.

### Q9- What do you do in order to relax during your free time?

a. Reading      b. Listen to music      c. Drawing      d. Walking

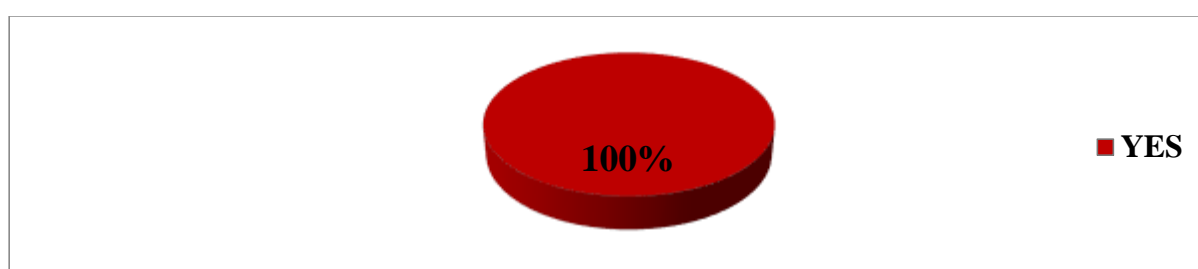


**Figure 9: Students' Free Time Activities**

This figure reveals that 46% of the students listen to music in their free time. 29% of them says that they like drawing. 18% of the learners prefer reading rather than doing something else. Few members of students (7%) choose walking in order to relax.

### Section three: the impact of the students' learning styles for their learning of English.

**Q10- Is it helpful to know your learning style? If yes, in which way this may benefit you? If no, justify your answer?**



**Figure 10: The Benefits of Learning Styles**



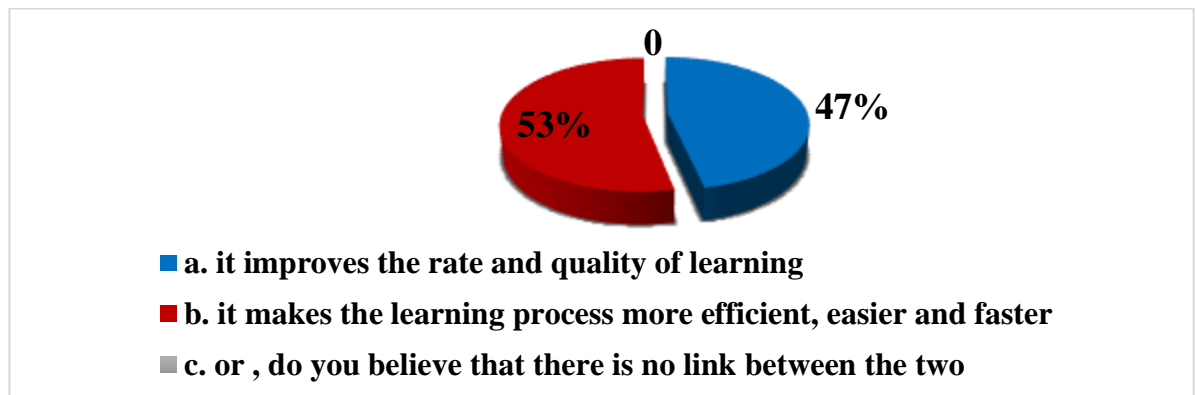
100% of the students confirm that learning styles are of a big importance as well as very helpful in the EFL classes. According to all first year students in Assalas School, LS help them to acquire more knowledge in a short amount of time. Also, they argue that when they enjoy the way they learn, this makes learning easier and better. In addition, learners believe that their personal LS make them more fluent; it facilitates studying especially during the exams period.

### **Q11- How the use of your preferable learning style influences the EFL learning?**

- a. It improves the rate and quality of your learning
- b. It make the process of learning more efficient, easier and faster

Or, you do believe that there is no link between the two

If you choose the last one, develop your answer in the following lines:



**Figure 11: The Influence of Learning Styles on EFL Learning**

From these responses we can notice that LS influence the learning of English as a FL. 53% of the learners consider that LS affect the learning process by making it more efficient, easier and faster. 47% of them claim that LS have an impact on EFL by improving the rate and quality of learning.

### **Q12- How do you learn English when your teacher takes your learning style into account?**

From this question, we tend to know whether instructors match teaching with students' personal learning styles and if it is the case including how do the students react towards it. From

the students' views, we get the idea that teachers implement LS in EFL classes. The following are some arguments advanced by first year learners:

- When our teachers accommodate their TS with our LS we learn English
  - With pleasure
  - The lesson becomes easier to understand, especially as the language we learn is a FL.
  - I participate more during their classes
  - I become satisfied as he/ she takes into account our way of learning
  - I become motivated and I look forward to learn more during their classes
  - The process of learning becomes more efficient, and so on.

### 1.2 Presentation of the Results of the Classroom Observations Sessions

Classroom observation is one possible way to have a clear idea about what is going on during the teaching-learning process. Before starting our observations, we planned what are the points we aim to take notes about. The checklist constitutes the teacher classroom management, their awareness about learners' learning styles and the demotivating factors.

From the attended sessions from the 21<sup>st</sup> April to 6<sup>th</sup> may (2019), we have noticed the importance of learning styles' impacts because it is considered as one of the most essential steps in the teaching-learning process. Before starting the first observation session, we have asked whether it is possible to make contact with the students of 'Assalas School' in order to introduce our theme, later we have debated with the English teachers about the unfolding of their classes, latter we debated with the English teachers about the unfolding of their classes. Besides, we prepared a checklist to gather the desired data. The questions introduced below are the questions included in the checklist:

### **Q1- Do teachers use different strategies to explain new information?**

From our classroom observations, we realised that all teachers applied various strategies to explain new information. They established clear learning goals, deadlines and expectations for students' work to have a clear conception of what is being asked of them. Moreover, they provided feedback as well as introduced new topics, but each teacher had his/her own way to do it. What was also noticed from the first sessions is that, teachers made sure to explain difficult words through different ways. Some teachers preferred to explain the words by drawing them on the blackboard, while some others wrote them directly and explained them with a simple vocabulary. For instance, one teacher explained the meaning of 'Hawks' by showing a picture of the bird itself and saying it in French 'un faucon'.

### **Q2- Do Teachers take into account the different learning styles that exist in the classroom?**

During the observed sessions, we perceived that all of the three teachers utilized different learning styles. They employed demonstrations to give more explanations about a particular concept. For example, a teacher drew 'the letter A' which symbolises 'adultery' in Shakespeare's novel during his/her course. In addition, they used pictures, films, recording, paintings, graphs, diagrams and tables. In brief, in 'Assalas School', English teachers used learning styles typically because they believed that it was the best way to remember and to make students active as well as to reach their interests. To clarify it, teachers were aware of the visual, auditory and reading/writing LS, but it was not the case with the kinesthetic one, it was rarely used. According to Mr Zaidat, a teacher in Assalas private school, *'students vary in the speed and the manner with which they acquire new information, ideas and this is considered as evidence that learners have different individual learning styles. Therefore, as teachers, we must take them into account.'*

### **Q3- Do teachers use various teaching activities?**

From our observations, we remarked that teachers prepared a number of activities through visual, auditory or reading and writing aids so as to get the attention of all the learners and to facilitate the learning process. Furthermore, we observed, the use of group or pair work as they are more beneficial for learners, and sometimes individual work. Group projects can help students develop a host of skills that are increasingly important in the professional world (Caruso & Woolley, 2008; Mannix & Neale, 2005). Positive group experiences, moreover, have been shown to contribute to student learning, retention and overall college success (Astin, 1997; Tinto, 1998; National Survey of Student Engagement, 2006).

### **Q4- What are the materials used by teachers?**

In Assalas private school, we observed that teachers used both textbooks and authentic materials. When it was a literary text, novel or short stories, teachers preferred to employ textbooks as they provided students with a detailed sequence and balanced presentation of information. In contrast, instructors utilized authentic materials such as recording, videos, pictures and paintings, when it concerned an oral activity or a presentation.

### **Q5- What is the kind of language used by teachers?**

Teachers always used an explanatory and instructional language to clarify the idea and to make it easy to understand. They used synonyms, explanations, equivalent expressions to facilitate the understanding of the idea too.

### **Q6- Is there any interaction between teachers-students, students-students?**

There is a huge cooperation between teachers and their students; they interacted with almost all the students. Indeed, they were very careful in using their eye contact equitably in

the classroom which helped to control the classroom. Students' interactions were most welcomed because teachers believed that this would lead to meaningful communication in the classroom. Additionally, we noted a huge interaction between students due to the fact that they enjoyed group and pair work. As a result, these cooled down the atmosphere and made learners feel at ease during their performances.

### **Q7- Is there any demotivating factor during English classes?**

We observed from the very beginning that there were few students; two groups with only fifty learners (15) in each group, this created a positive classroom atmosphere. Besides, we acknowledged some noise from students, but this cannot be seen as a demotivating factor as long as learning took place. Without forgetting to mention that two of the teachers were Entertainer type of instructors, who made learners feel at ease and act in a comfortable way. In short, on the whole, from classroom observation sessions, we did not perceive any demotivating factors.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter has presented the results obtained from the classroom observation sessions and the students' questionnaire in the Private School named 'Assalas' in Tizi Ouzou. Based on the analysis of the questionnaires that were delivered to students we have noticed that most students are auditory learners. However, other students have different learning styles like visual and reading/writing. Additionally, through the classroom observations, we have concluded that the instructors are aware of the different learning styles that exist in their classes and they imply them in English classes. Hence, they include different methods in teaching EFL.

### Introduction

This study was undertaken to investigate the students' different learning styles and their implications for learning English as a foreign language. In this chapter we discuss and interpret the results obtained from the two research tools: students' questionnaire and the classroom observations. This chapter is divided into two sections: the first section deals with the discussion of the results obtained from the students' questionnaires and the second is concerned with the discussion of the findings gathered from classroom observations.

### 1. Discussion of the Results of the Questionnaires

#### 1.1. Students' Profile

Based on the findings obtained from the first year students, we outlined that the longest period of learning English was ten (10) years, with the percentage 10% because there were learners who failed and repeated the years of study, while the shortest one was five (5) years. Only 3% of students had recently attended the Assalas School as they were studying in public schools they did not have the opportunity to begin studying English since primary school. The majority of learners (67%), however have been studying English for seven (7) years as they started acquiring English language from the fourth year (4) in Primary School. In Assalas private school, students learn English in an early age. So, we can say that starting the acquisition of a foreign language in an early age is very beneficial for a child because he/she can learn easily and absorb the knowledge without difficulties. This saying was confirmed by Edwards. V (1999) who demonstrated that acquiring language in an early age helps to develop the cognitive competences, to communicate better, and to speak a language as natives.

Moreover, we noticed that first-year learners had a diversified level of English. That is, the greatest numbers of them (43%) were good and nearly the same number (40) were average

English learners. Other learners (10%) mentioned that they were bad in English as they did not give much importance to the language for the reason that they are in the scientific field. There were just few students (7%) who said that they were very good. This category enjoyed the learning of English since their early age, and sought to improve more their English vocabulary and to speak it well as natives by watching movies and listening to music. Movies play an important role in learning EFL. For this reason they used them as a medium to acquire a language. This belief is supported by Ismaili (2012: 122), who said that “*movies are part of visual literacy and they are an enjoyable source of entertainment and language acquisition.*”

### 1.2. Students’ Preferable Learning Styles

From the results displayed in the previous chapter, it appears that 36% of the learners (36%) preferred learning English by listening to different recordings or to the teachers’ explanations. We noticed that learners wanted to improve their pronunciation and their vocabulary; therefore, a lot of them were more attracted by the auditory LS rather than visual items which were chosen by 32% of the students. Tabanlıoğlu (2003: 6) argued that “*auditory learners are good at arranging words in order, making associations and reviewing them in order to facilitate their retrieval in terms of vocabulary.*” 14% of the learners acquired a language easily by readings or taking notes, while (18%) argued that the pleasant way for learning English was through performing or role playing.

In addition, we highlighted that a great number of students (65%) were interested more with teachers who used question/ answers or discussing topics. Teachers of ‘Assalas private school’ gave the opportunity for their learners to express themselves freely, and they involved them to discuss different topics and subjects. This is why the majority of scholars gave much importance to question/ answer and group discussion or teachers’ explanations rather than practical sessions or graphs which were considered important just by the lowest number of the

students (4%). 19% of the learners preferred teachers who used handouts, books or readings because they believed that improving the reading and writing skills was very important while learning EFL, they are more interested in the English literature. There was another category of learners with the percentage of 12% that preferred teachers who used demonstrations, drawings on the blackboard, pictures, films and videos in order to understand more and retain information easily. When gathering the data, we noticed that there are learners who were multimodal learners, for example, two students (2) mentioned that their preferences vary between a teacher who used questions/ answers and the one who used graphs, and pictures. Lang (2004) said that the students who are capable to use more than one learning style equally are seen as multimodal learners.

Furthermore, the results of the questionnaires revealed that learners used different techniques to study for an exam. 37% of students agreed that reading notes was the best strategy to revise for exams as it helped them to remember mainly all the information given and the subject studied; it also gave them a chance to score good marks in exams. There are other students (23%) who argued that having someone to ask them questions, make them more aware of the subject studied as well as help them to keep the information in their minds. Others (17%) liked revising by transforming the written work into graphs or index cards so as to remember the information well. There are another category of students with percentage of (13%) who liked revising by having someone to give them a brief explanation of the topic and key words; then, they would do activities or tasks in order to understand better. They considered this technique as the best way for revising.

The collected data showed that most of students (41%) liked reading novels in order to enrich their vocabulary, ameliorate their reading/writing skills and have enough knowledge about the English literature. Another type of learners (29%) found that magazines are more useful than books; they liked reading and seeing pictures or representations at the same time.



In addition to that, the rest of learners (15%) affirmed that books with CDs or crossword puzzles are more important than the others. On the one hand, books with CDs help learners to improve the listening/speaking skill and their pronunciation. On the other hand, books with CDs help learners to improve the listening/speaking skill and their pronunciation basing on the idea of Makay (1997: 9) states that: “*listening has opened up new horizons to human beings.*” For example, when a reader finds difficult words to pronounce, he/she is going to listen to the CD and learn the right pronunciation. Additionally, books with crossword puzzles sustain students to develop their critical thinking and problem solving.

The results obtained suggest that learners used different strategies to memorize better the information. A large number of them (37%) envisaged that listening to the information is the best way to memorize them better, but others (26%) saw that writing down the information is more efficient and practical. There is also the strategy of visualising words in your mind chosen by 22% of learners and the strategy of performing the idea given taken into account by 15% of learners. First year learners in secondary school, were more interested by the auditory LS listening and speaking because their main aim was to speak English and to learn the language very well, they listen to English music and they watch tutorial videos in YouTube, which give them the opportunity to learn the accent and to have more information about the English culture, society and language.

From the questionnaires, we realized that 46% of the students enjoy listening to music in their free time. This option helps them to pick up new words, learn the accent or pronunciation of the language. Music is an efficient way or manner to relax. 29% preferred drawing; they express themselves through pictures, illustrations. Some learners (18%) preferred reading and learning something new from the books rather than doing something else; they find their pleasure while reading. The lowest number (7%) of learners has chosen walking; these learners feel relaxed when they walk or when doing movements such as practicing sports.

From the gathered data, we remarked that a greater number of students said that they discovered their own learning styles basing on their learning experience. They tried different ways and they kept the suitable one for them or the learning style that make the learning process easier, faster and successful. A small number of students declared that they do not have an idea about learning style before. They learn using different manners; however, they affirmed that they will try to discover their LS and take it into account.

After the data collection and the analysis of the questionnaires, we can conclude by saying that the majority of learners had chosen the answers that reflect the auditory learning styles. One of the reasons which were given by students was that all of them like listening to English songs, videos and tries to learn the English accent. They stated that even if they watch videos or they read novels, they need to listen to the teachers' explanation in order to retain and memorize better the information given. This can be supported by the work of R. Bandler and J. Grinder (2006) who affirmed that *"auditory learners can learn better through the use of "audio tapes, videos, storytelling, songs and drills"*. Another type of learners argued that they need to see pictures so as to visualize the items and understand more. Piping (2005) asserted that *"visual learners can be seen as imaginative learners, which means that they learn through seeing pictures in their minds that is why they are categorized as imaginative learners"*. Moreover, some enjoyed learning with the use of Reading/Writing LS because they believe that reading novels and short stories is the best way to have more knowledge about a specific language, improve the vocabulary and develop the writing skills. This kind of learners are described by Drago and Wagner (2004) as note takers, their strong ability to understand and memorize something is ensured by writing down the needed information. In addition to that, few learners preferred the kinesthetic learning style, they mentioned that they like practical sessions; and they understand by performing or using gestures, movements such as mingling, and role playing. During our research we put a light on some students that have more than one learning

style, who are considered as multi-model learners. For instance, some students' learning style vary between the visual and auditory; they like seeing pictures and listening at the same time.

### **1.3. The Impact of the Students' Learning Styles on their Learning of English**

By making reference to the results obtained, all the students (100%) agreed that knowing their learning styles helped them to improve their learning process. Identifying a student's own way of learning created a useful atmosphere for learning. For instance, if he/she discovered that he/she has an auditory learning style, he/she will concentrate on the listening and speaking more than the other modes because he/she knows that this method will facilitate the retaining of information and revision for exams or tests. Identifying the students' LS help the teachers to plan the lessons and explain the subject in a way that all the learners will get the idea, and understand the purpose of the lecture. This was clarified by Brown (2003) who explained that it is important to understand the students' learning styles in order to facilitate the teaching process. Furthermore, it is beneficial for learners to know their own LS because it gives them the opportunity to get knowledge in an easy way and to understand or to interpret the information using their specific method.

In addition, a big part of learners (53%) consider learning style as a means to facilitate the learning process. Learners believe that LS are vital for them as they are beneficial for the teaching-learning process. Another part of learners (47%) viewed LS as a medium to improve the quality of learning. When learners have specific LS, they develop their learning process from good to better because they know the strategies or methods that suit them and they use them in order to memorize and retain the information easily. According to Sek et al (2014) learners who want to improve their learning level will be provided with relevant materials from their instructors so as to increase their satisfaction, self-confidence and become aware of the learning process. Besides, Peacock (2001) suggests that LS and TS should be balanced and a

mismatch between them cause failure. He clarifies this by saying that, on the one hand, students should take more responsibility for their own learning by making efforts when studying in or outside the class in order to meet their needs and improve their learning. On the other hand, teachers should help learners to find out their LS and assist them to make it useful for the learning so as to ameliorate their educational level. For instance, learners have to be active by making researches, asking about clarification, revising at home and doing exercises alone; they should make more efforts in order to attain and achieve their goal. Teachers in their turn have to make use of variety of strategies in order to satisfy the students' needs. They should evaluate the learners and assess them to know their level and to discover if they are improving or not.

Depending on the answers obtained from the questionnaires, students argued that when teachers take into account the individual differences that exist inside the classroom, the learning process becomes beneficial for both teachers and learners. As a proof, Willingham et al. (2015) confirmed that learners comprehend better when they receive information by paying attention to their preferable learning style. Teachers plan the lessons by making reference to the students' diversity and they use various strategies in order to meet the students' needs by taking into account the students' LS. Additionally, learners become more motivated and they enjoy learning in such conditions. This idea was supported by Brown (2003) who said that the students' achievements and motivations are often improved when their learning styles are matched with teachers teaching styles. They will have an opportunity to master a language and to learn enough words perfectly. Teachers can meet the students' different LS by making use of several materials. According to Ngeow (1999) and Xu (2011), understanding what types of learning styles that EFL students have, will give them an understandable and a clear way of learning; that is to say, while using a preferable LS learners feel comfortable in learning. In addition, EFL teachers may use purposeful activities in order to address all the students such as giving oral presentations for auditory learners, using pictures, paintings for visual learners, short

stories, and writing essays for reading/writing learners and using body movements, games and experiments for kinesthetic learners.

In order to make the above discussion clearer, we are going to cite some of the students' answers and arguments as well. The learners of 'Assalas private school' believed that there is an impact of learning styles during EFL classes, which help them in improving their levels. For instance, one of the students said that: *'when our English teachers used different styles, I found myself more interested during his/her classes; this helped me to understand the lessons and to have good marks'*. He added that: *'this was not the case when I was in the previous school because the teacher used only one style which was the reading/writing learning style and it did not suit me as I am an auditory learner'*. From the student's words, we can clearly understand how it is important to take into account the learners' learning styles; he puts an emphasizes on the fact that when his teachers in 'Assalas private school' take his LS which is the auditory one into consideration, his interests as well as his/her marks increased.

Furthermore, the learners were convinced that the use of several LS increased the effectiveness of teaching-learning process. Indeed, another student argued that: *"our teachers used a variety of activities with different styles in order to fit us"*. For instance, in Assalas private school, a teacher of literature tended to use videos and pictures as well as texts so as to reach all the learners' modes. Likewise, this student was persuaded that this was very essential in EFL classrooms as it motivated them; as a result, they became active participants. For example, one of the teachers used debates as well as drawings so as to fit both auditory and tactile learners during his/her classes.

During our investigation, we had encountered some answers where students were more concerned with the fact that the employment of LS proves that teachers in Assalas private school respect their preferences. To illustrate, learners stated that: *'the fact that teachers in our*

*school utilized various styles is considered as a proof that they care for what really interest us'.*

They explained that the instructors encouraged them to use ways that suit them more; they also saw this step as an opportunity to discover other styles due to the fact that each student applied his/her own style. For instance, students were allowed to use their mobile phones in order to record their teachers' voices during the English classes and this was an opportunity for auditory learners, as it permits them to listen to what had been studied instead of taking notes.

## **2. Discussion of the Findings of the Classroom Observations**

### **2.1 Teachers' Awareness about the Different Learning Styles that Exist in EFL Classes**

The results obtained from classroom observations have created an opportunity to reflect about the learning styles in EFL classes. Actually, we have observed important things during classroom observations which were undertaken in English courses. It was remarkable that teachers were comfortable and not distracted with our presence. According to Brown (2003), students' learning styles and achievements are increased when teaching and learning styles match. The items provided in the checklist of the classroom observations have obtained sufficient evidence to show that teachers are aware of the students' different learning styles.

From our observation sessions, we noticed that all teachers employed several strategies to explain new information. First of all, teachers elicited the previous lesson through asking a number of questions or simply by giving a summary and making relation between the previous and the recent topic when it is possible. Then, they introduced the topic by explaining the title, giving valid information about the writer if it is a literary text, novel or short story or introducing the painter if they are dealing with paintings and guess the topic of the lesson. In addition to that teachers clarified difficult or new words and gave learners the right pronunciation and spelling of the words to improve their pronunciation and to develop their vocabulary. Teachers explained the subject orally and discussed it by asking questions to which the learners will

respond through their notes taking. Before the class ended, teachers asked their learners to recapitulate what had been done and asked them if they learned something new, in order to check their understanding and make sure that they got the right meaning of the topic.

Moreover, we observed that teachers took into account the individual differences. So, all of them use different teaching styles in order to meet their learners' interests. Apparently, they were aware of the importance of implementing LS during EFL classes. For example, a teacher in Assalas School said that most of the first year students are auditory type of learners, so they enhanced learners' speaking skills as he invited them to discuss and debate in several topics to make them practice the language. Through many observations and according to the students' answers, we conclude that he was right; they are almost auditory learners, and native-like speakers. Besides, the teacher who was more concerned with literary texts made use of pictures, films, paintings in order to make the ideas clear. However, we paid attention to the fact that teachers do not really consider the kinesthetic learning style, and when we asked them about it, they argued that a classroom is not a place where students can perform, do or experience things; and it is quite difficult to use this type of learning in EFL classes because kinesthetic learners need to move and transform the written or spoken information into movements and gestures, a fact that is not allowed in a classroom. Teachers affirmed that since primary school they form their students to be auditory, visual or reading/writing type of learners and they neglect the kinesthetic one.

During the classroom observation, we noticed that teachers used various teaching techniques. They prepared some activities where students had to work in pairs or in groups, as to raise their communicative approach and to make them capable to interact with others, to share their ideas, to exchange knowledge. It was a chance for them to express their points of view and voice out their opinions. Learners may benefit from this type of activities by receiving valuable feedback and useful advices. Lawrence, (1993) mentioned that matching TS with LS

is vital during the lessons and the mismatch may lead to serious problems for both teachers and students. Therefore, planning lessons according to the learners' needs is very important and create a good climate inside the classroom. Teachers also organized individual activities where learners had to work alone so as to assess their abilities and to evaluate their skills and make them more confident and teach them how to be responsible and rely on themselves.

From various observations we remarked the use of different materials too, mainly, textbooks when the learners were dealing with literature or reading and writing sessions. Authentic materials like: videos, recordings and films which are essential for learning EFL because they motivate learners to communicate and to use the right language in particular contexts. Teachers stated that the use of authentic materials is much better than textbooks, using such materials students will be exposed to use English as it is employed by natives and be prepared for real communication. It is difficult but it is vital for learning a foreign language.

After several observations, we remarked that instructors used different kinds of languages: instructional, and explanatory. Besides, they asked a lot of questions. In Assalas Private School, instructors let students control the atmosphere of the classroom, which means they feel free to ask anything at anytime; they are welcomed to give their different points of view and this created debates between learners about different interesting subjects. Therefore, teachers used instructions when necessary and the explanatory language in order to explain new things. In addition, learners used language actively for meaningful communication.

As a result, the interaction between students and teachers is increased. We perceived an environment dissimilar from the usual one, where teachers take control and students are just spoon feed. We discerned that learners were at ease, they were active learners who enjoyed EFL classes. The last point is the thing that we appreciated more. In brief, teachers encouraged



and motivated their learners to carry out an effective interaction using the FL. Mistakes were tolerated, and they were corrected later on by teachers.

Due to the fact that there is a few number of students in this private school and that are no misbehaving students, the relations between learners and teachers is a cool down one. Everyone felt at ease and free to express whatever he/she wants. We can say that there were no such demotivating factors. There was respect between students-students and teacher- students; they were like a small family. We also outlined that learners help each other; for example, if someone answered a specific question and he/she made a mistake, the classmates will try to correct him/her and help him/her to find the right answer. They do not make fun of him/her. When the teacher explained the lesson, we looked around to find that everyone is listening to what he/she said and noise was rarely noticed.

Thus, on the basis of the findings gathered in the classroom observations, we come to the conclusion that teachers mainly used different learning styles, including the auditory, visual and reading/ writing ones. But, the Kinesthetic LS is rarely used. They mentioned that they took into consideration learning styles while preparing lessons and they tried to meet all the students needs by using several manners such as reading articles, texts or stories out loud, to explain the essential and interesting points orally then to write them in the blackboard sometimes. They use drawings, pictures or they bring with them data show to watch films or videos about particular subject. All this give the opportunity for students to practise activities effectively, to study easier and better.

To sum up, LS have great positive impact on students' learning in EFL classrooms. They help learners to grasp and memorize information rapidly. The students become more interested in studying English; they are more dynamic and excited to participate in classes. In fact, it is found from the data obtained that learning styles made change when they were

implemented during teaching. They gave learners a rich environment where they found themselves. LS facilitate the teaching-learning process and they make the learning process more beneficial for both teachers and learners.

### Conclusion

This chapter has dealt with the interpretation and analysis of the data gathered in this research. The discussion chapter has shown that the two research instruments present solid and valid arguments which support the hypotheses asked from the very beginning in the general introduction and responded to the research questions. The results obtained have demonstrated that teachers in Assalas Private School are aware of the existence of different learning styles and they also implement them during their EFL classes. As we remarked the use of several tools such as pictures, videos, recording in teaching EFL. Therefore, we have disproved the first hypothesis which says that reading /writing is learners' preferable learning style. However, we have confirmed the second and third ones, which state that teachers are aware of the existence of different learning styles and they implement them in EFL classes.

This dissertation has investigated the students' learning styles and their implications for learning English as a foreign language. Dealing with such a topic has helped us to recognize the importance of learning styles for both teachers and learners. Then, a conclusion has been made to answer the research questions of our study. Next, recommendations for further research have been suggested.

This work has included three chapters: the review of literature consisting of the definition of the key concepts. The second chapter has concerned the practical part, describing the research instruments and the data collection. The third chapter has aimed at analysing and interpreting the main results. The dissertation has been conducted with first year students in Assalas Private School and has been based on the learning styles' model suggested by VARK. It has aimed at whether confirming or rejecting the hypotheses that if reading/writing is the preferred way for learning, if teachers are aware about the existence of learning styles and whether there is implications of learning styles in EFL classes.

The analysis of learners' questionnaire has revealed that students are conscious that they differ in the way they learn. Besides, they have believed that the learning styles are of a huge importance as they have influenced the learning-teaching process positively. Moreover, the main results have showed that first year students are more auditory rather than reading/writing type of learners. Therefore, depending on this conclusion we have attempted to disconfirm the first hypothesis which says that 'reading/ writing is the most preferable learning style.'

In response towards whether learning styles have implications for learning EFL, learners have confirmed that teachers imply different tools such as: pictures, recordings, videos, and so on. So, the second hypothesis has been 100% confirmed by them as well as through our observations themselves. In fact, teachers in Assalas Private School have tried to address all

types of learners through the use of various learning styles in EFL classes. First year students see that LS have an influence on EFL classes and taking them into account by teachers transform the learning process from good to better and become satisfactory and more efficient. From their answers, we have concluded that LS are very important while learning a FL; it makes the learning process easier, faster and successful. LS help both teachers and students, discovering their way of learning and memorizing new information facilitates the understanding of new topics.

The last hypothesis has been also confirmed, teachers are aware of the different learning styles that exist in EFL classes. Therefore, they have used different ways in order to explain the lessons and to interpret them, in order to allow to all students to learn better. In Assalas Private School, English teachers are conscious of the individual differences; this is the reason why most learners have said that they like the combination of teaching-learning styles. Based on our observations of teachers TS, we have found that they have used different techniques while explaining new topics and this has made the learner more relaxed, less anxious because he/she knows that the teacher will explain in a way that will help him to get the idea and the right meaning of the subject presented or discussed. Also, the study has showed that by knowing students' learning styles teachers are able to prepare and plan teaching and learning sessions, this will make the teachers more creative. Being aware about the students' diversity makes the teacher more sensitive toward the students' needs and they come up with several materials such as videos, recordings and films in order to make the lesson more meaningful to the students.

In brief, our hypotheses are checked and tested, so we can say that they are valid and reliable because the results has revealed the positive opinions of the questionnaires as well as the classroom observations about the significance and importance of learning styles for both teachers and learners. Therefore, we think that we have reached the aim of our research, because

the research question we have set at the beginning which is: What is the most preferable learning style used by learners? , and the second one: do learning styles have implications on learning English as a foreign language? , finally are teachers aware of the different learning styles that exist in the EFL classes? If yes, explain how? Shows clearly that both teachers and learners are not only aware about the existence of several learning styles, but they also give them a huge importance and use them during EFL classes in order to enhance the learning-teaching process.

Finally, from our work we have concluded that the use of learning styles is advantageous for the learning-teaching process. On the one hand, it increases students' motivation, makes the lessons more interesting and it induces effective learning. On the other hand, it helps teachers to understand the individual learning styles and to be aware of how to combine learning and teaching styles so as to affect students' achievements and satisfactions positively. In reality, through the use of learning styles teachers are not just in the classroom to give information, but they play different roles in order to keep their learners motivated.

### **Suggestions for Future Research**

This study is conducted to inform the students in Assalas Private School about the different learning styles and help them to find out their preferable one. By doing so, learners will be able to develop a range of new strategies and techniques in learning. Moreover, they will have a sense of responsibility toward their studies and they will be able to improve their English and succeed in their exams. This research will be beneficial for English teachers and it will give them the opportunity to know more about learning styles and how to match them with teaching styles. As it will make them conscious about the individual differences that exist inside the EFL classes, so, they have to use different teaching materials in order to meet the students' needs. Further work should build upon this research by investigating other different models of

learning styles, as each model is looking at learners from a different perspective. Future research should investigate learning styles in different topics and other domains.

### **Recommendations and Application**

This work can only be considered as significant and of value if some of the recommendations and suggestions are implemented and result in improvements in the educational practise.

- 1) To identify the reasons behind the negligence or the ignorance of the Kinesthetic Learning Styles in EFL classes;
- 2) To investigate the use of learning styles in the scientific fields;
- 3) To explore the different learning styles according to gender.

## **Students' Questionnaire**

Dear Students,

The following questionnaire is part of a research which seeks to investigate the preferable Learning Styles used by EFL learners, and their implications for learning English in Assalas Private School. In order to achieve this academic purpose, you are kindly requested to answer the questions bellow. We ensure the anonymity and confidentiality of your answers.

*Thank you very much for your contribution!*

### **Section One:** Personal Information

1. How long have you been studying English? .....
2. How do you perceive your level in English?
  - a. Very good
  - b. Good
  - c. Average
  - d. Bad

- **Choose the answer which best suits you and circle the letter(s) next to it.**

### **Section two:** Students' Preferable Learning Styles

5. How do you enjoy learning English?
  - a. When seeing things like : pictures, graphs, maps, and so on
  - b. When listening to recordings
  - c. When taking notes
  - d. When moving ' role playing '
6. Do you prefer a teacher who uses?
  - a. Questions and answer, talk or group discussion?
  - b. Demonstrations or practical sessions ?
  - c. Diagrams, charts or graphs ?
  - d. Handouts, books or readings ?
7. The best way for you to study for an exam is:
  - a. To read your notes
  - b. Have someone who asks you questions that you will answer out loud
  - c. Make up graphs, index cards that you can review
  - d. To get someone to show you, then you will figure it out on your own
- 8 .What kind of materials you like to read?

- a. Magazines
- b. Novels
- c. A book with crosswords puzzles
- d. A book with CDs

9. How do you memorize things better?

- a. When you write them down
- b. When you listen
- c. When you visualise words in your mind
- d. When you perform them

10. You are not sure about the spelling of two words. You:

- a. Write both words on a paper and choose one
- b. Think about how each word sounds and chooses one
- c. Look for it in a dictionary
- d. See the words in your mind and choose by the way they look

11. What do you do in order to relax during your free time?

- a. Reading
- b. Listen to music
- c. Drawing
- d. Walking

12. On which basis have you chosen your own learning style?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

**Section three:** The Implications of Students' Learning Styles for their Learning of English

13. Is it helpful to know your learning style? If yes, in which way this may benefit you?

.....

.....

.....

.....

14. How the uses of your preferable learning style influence the learning of EFL?

- a. It improves the rate and quality of your learning
- b. It make the process of learning more efficient, easier and faster



c. Or, do you believe that there is no link between the two

✓ If you choose the last one, develop your answer in the following lines:

.....  
.....  
.....

15. How do you learn English when your teacher takes your learning style into account?

.....  
.....  
.....

## Teachers' Classroom Observations

|  | YES | NO | COMMENTS |
|--|-----|----|----------|
| <p>1. Do teachers use different strategies to explain new information?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Eliciting previous lessons</li> <li>b. Introducing the topic</li> <li>c. Explanation of difficult words</li> </ul> <p>2. Do teachers take into account the different learning styles that exist in the classroom?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Visual</li> <li>b. Auditory</li> <li>c. Reading/Writing</li> <li>d. Kinesthetic</li> </ul> <p>3. Do teachers use various teaching activities?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Group works</li> <li>b. Pair works</li> <li>c. Individual work</li> </ul> <p>4. What are the materials used by teachers?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Textbooks</li> <li>b. Authentic</li> </ul> <p>5. The kind of language used by teachers :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Instructional</li> <li>b. Explanatory</li> <li>c. The use of questions</li> </ul> <p>6. Is there any interaction between teachers-students and students- students?</p> <p>7. Are there any demotivating factors during English classes?</p> |     |    |          |

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