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Towards Flow...
When Learning English Becomes Enjoyable

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Dedications

To my amazing **Mother** and **Father** who brought me to this life and made sure my needs are always fulfilled and supported me whatever path I took

To **Amina, Fatima & Abd el Malek** the siblings with whom I share my blood

To **Sarah (Chirdona)**, my life companion

To my **grandmother**, the white-hearted old lady

To all my **family members** who cared for my well-being especially my **aunts** and **uncles** from my **mother's side**

To all my true friends who shared with me the good and the bad days

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Abstract

The present study aims at discovering the factors and variables that lead to render learning experiences enjoyable and flow-producing. In order to attain this aim, a mixed methodological approach has been implemented. It incorporates a qualitative research tool, an online questionnaire and of a qualitative research tool, a semi-structured interview that have been addressed to English as a foreign language (EFL) students and teachers, respectively, who pertain to the department of Ibn Khaldoun, Tiaret. The final interpretations of the obtained results demonstrate that high motivation, positive attitudes, high self-esteems, positive environmental conditions, challenge-skill equilibrium, goal setting and feedback are the factors that lead to flow in learning.

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General Introduction

General Introduction

Education has an undeniable and unquestionable part to play in the quest of improving the well-being of individuals and the quality of their lives. For this, educational psychologists have amassed a huge body of acquired insights in psychology and shed light on efficient ways of enhancing and sweetening the educational process which, in these days, wears a capturing golden crown wholly adorned, not with jewels, but rather, with an abundant quantity of important and user-friendly tips that pertain mainly to the learner's psyche and mind, and that are directed to serve both of the fundamental pillars of the learning enterprise: the teacher and the learner. Stupendous achievements have been made in the field of education as a result of long tremendous quests which have been carried out with the aim of understanding thoroughly what goes on in the mind of the individual learner during the process of learning. Educational psychologists found out not only about ways of simplifying learning and optimizing success, but more importantly, about ways of making learning desirable and enjoyable to all learners, just like any other leisure activity that would capture them to such an extent that they would want to do nothing that would distract them from it. Such a psychological state has been found out by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, the Hungarian-American psychologist who refers to it by the term flow.

When the learner is caught in a state of flow, he never experiences the negative feelings of the mandatory daily trip to school or the toil of preparing a school project only just to avoid some minuses in grades or some teacher's unpleasant and repulsive feedbacks. He rather gets to experience the most exciting and encouraging feelings towards going to school, greeting the teacher and sitting down so passionately waiting for the lesson to begin, and once it does, he gets entirely involved in its tasks. He invests his utter concentration powers on that particular math equation, biological phenomenon, language item or whatever might be the activity that he is dealing with to the point that he becomes part of it, which leads him to free his mind from all other issues and matters that may distract it, and from all possible thoughts that may cross it. The only thing that matters for him at that particular time is getting the whatever-might-be problem solved.

Getting to see different kinds of learners fully immersed in the lectures and activities they are exposed to in the course of learning without a single momentary drop of concentration or a shift to any irrelevant thing triggers one's curiosity to raise questions about this intriguing psychological phenomenon referred to as flow. To find out about the secrets behind this undivided concentration, and about the drives that push those learners to learn in such a particular manner is likely to revolutionize learning as well as teaching methodologies. On the other hand, one finds himself intrigued by another puzzle. Why do not all learners get to experience flow in learning? Why do some learners remain untouched by this absorbing state, and thus do not benefit from the opportunities it opens up for guaranteed success? Are there ways of elevating learners to experience such riveting state of mind and benefit from its yields? Learners who miss flow in learning are often bound to disinterest and boredom. The luckiest of this category are those who acquiesce to go about learning assignments with a mere want to get acceptable grades, or avoid negative feedback from significant people around them. An observer can attain a striking conclusion about the two categories of learners: those caught by flow are entirely involved in their tasks, and experience abundant pulses of joy that keep them fully engrossed while the others hardly do their tasks or simply flee them completely.

The attainment of flow in learning exceeds the teacher's or even the surrounding environment's mere heed to prettify the learner's affect before, during, and after learning. What is felt in flow is not just mere satisfaction after others' positive feedback; it is something far greater. It is longing to learn; it is an excessive desire to grab a certain task or activity, and solve it for its own sake, not for the grade which seems to be the case of many learners, neither for striving to achieve a better future that could guarantee a living, nor for pleasing a tough father who is obsessed by the sight of his kids leaving home for their constant boring trips to school. In other words, the path to flow is void of any biological or societal whispers, and from any interference from the outside, be it any kind of backup that could be given from some significant people around, or even the want to get some materialistic things that ordinary men shed their blood and put their sweat to get to. Thus, to attain flow, it appears that some changes must take place both in the deepest layers of the learner's mind, more specifically, in his view of learning, and subsequently in the way he approaches the learning activities, which obviously play a major role in manipulating his power of attention.

The present research work is conducted in pursuit of the conditions and factors which are expected to lead learners to flow. It aims at exploring ways through which learning English can be rendered desirable and enjoyable, and hence optimal. It also attempts to come to find out about the factors that are likely to make some English language learners experience flow in the midst of their endeavours to master the language. On the other hand, it tries to troubleshoot the problems which impede learners' ways towards flow.

The research work at hand, entitled: "Towards Flow... When learning becomes enjoyable" addresses the research problem of how can flow be pursued and experienced in EFL learning. It sets out to explore the essence of flow, its ingredients, and the ways to help learners to acquire it. The aim out of this is to devise a set of tips on learner instruction for educators to help them optimize the learning environment, and thus let learners mount to optimal states of mind and experience learning as an engrossing activity.

Thus, in the light of the research problem, three research questions are put forth for investigation:

- 1- What factors are there standing behind studious students of EFL experiencing flow while they learn English?
- 2- What factors are there to prevent uninterested and average EFL students from experiencing flow?
- 3- How can uninterested and average EFL students be driven to attain and experience flow?

As stated above, to get to attain a way on which students can stride successfully towards flow requires adequate answers to the two previous questions. To this end, the following hypotheses are suggested as possible answers:

- 1- Intrinsic motivation, high self-esteem, adequate learning skills, positive attitude, positive learning environment are factors which help generate flow.
- 2- Demotivation, low self-esteem, inadequate learning skill, negative attitude, insecure learning environment are factors likely to thwart learners' way towards flow.
- 3- Uninterested and average EFL students can be driven towards flow by developing self-motivation, promoting their self-esteem and assuring a positive learning atmosphere.

These three hypotheses combine to make one broad hypothesis suggested as a tentative explanation of the research problem. It states that flow-caught learners have found their way to flow when they experienced optimal psychological states such as motivation, self-esteem and positive attitude in highly enhancing learning environments, which uninterested and average learners did not. Fostering such positive feelings and providing for encouraging learning settings are likely to drive the second category to reach the first.

In order to address the aforementioned research questions, and get to find convincing accurate, and valid answers to them, the current research relies on the adaption of a mixed methodological approach that joins together a qualitative and a quantitative search tools. For the first, a semi structured interview has been planned to be conducted with university English-as-a-foreign-language (EFL) teachers. It aims at obtaining professional views regarding what seems to them to be, on the one hand, the situations and drives that push students towards flow, and on the other, the situations and drives that hinder learners' way towards flow. For the last, a questionnaire has been structured to be handed to EFL students. It aims at investigating their various thoughts and visions concerning learning English so as to come near the factors responsible for flow as well as the factors responsible for disinterest and boredom.

Chapter One

Chapter One

Learning and Flow

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1.1 Introduction

Pursuing happiness is inherent in the human individual. People seek out happiness via different means that vary according to the different ways they conceive of it. Some people attach their feeling of happiness to perishable materialistic things, and would soon lose it once these things are over; others rather find happiness in the lofty morals that make of the very daily-life experience an abundant source of satisfaction. Happiness is said to depend on our own ways to construe the quality of the experience we actually live, the quantity of the feelings of satisfaction and delight it yields, and the intensity with which it captures the individual in such a way that he would want to pursue it slavishly even without any promise of a materialistic reward.

Learning is one of the most frequent experiences that life offers men in their lifespans. At the early stages of life, children are so captured by the love of discovery and learning about how everything in their environment works. However, as they grow up, they may be exposed to negative experiences that squash their want for discovery, and thus drive them uninterested, apathetic and detached. Learning in such cases, grows forced and not deliberate. Some of learners would no longer want to pursue it. The quality of their learning experience deteriorates, and no longer provides the happiness it once did leaving no room to experience satisfaction and mirth. This, of course, represents no general case, because other fortunate children continue to experience flow that the learning experience provides during their adulthood and even during the rest of their lives.

Flow in learning is a psychological phenomenon that does not date from remote history. It is a very recent discovery that has brought about upheavals in experts', practitioners', and learners' conceptions about learning. Historically, learning has been approached from various perspectives. Successive theories have given it different meanings, and elaborated on it in different ways. Behaviourism, cognitivism, and constructivism followed up one another to provide more and more extended views of learning before they got rounded up and furthered by humanism which extended psychologists' concern to the consideration of the affective construct of the human learner. This evolution is actually the gist of the following section.

1.2 Learning

Despite the different elaborations made on the issue of learning, there seems to be a general consensus among opposing theorists on, at least, three fundamental criteria that mostly characterize learning; these are change, permanence in addition to experience. (Schunk, 2012) These three criteria are brought together to constitute a definition of learning that would apply to different perspectives from which it could be approached. This definition is Woolfolk's (2016) who says, **“Learning occurs when experience (including practice) causes a relatively permanent change in an individual’s knowledge, behaviour, or potential for behaviour.”** (Woolfolk, 2016, p. 278)

The first criterion, the change in knowledge or behaviour, suggests that the consequence of learning is to show in an ability in the individual learner to either know, or do something in a different manner from the usual. Hence, to form a judgment that learning has occurred, the educator has to rely on the learner's overt behaviours such as actions or words. However, this does not deny that there is a great chance for learning to take place even without being manifested in behaviours.

To avoid the fallacy of qualifying all changes as learning, the second criterion, permanence, implies that only changes that endure over a relatively long period of time are considered as learning. It is not accurate to say that learning has taken place in the case of a learner who returns to think, or do something the same way before he was taught, by experience or practice, to do it otherwise. Yet, in the human world, absolute permanence cannot be attained. Everything that humans learn is threatened to sink in oblivion whether in the short or the long term. Thus, changes that result from learning must be relatively permanent.

Furthermore, the change must be brought about by experience or practice, which is the last criterion used in defining learning. Different theorists agree that natural changes such as biological or physiological changes caused by maturation, and even some psychological changes caused by fear or comfort do not qualify as learning, whereas only changes caused by the interaction of the learner with the environment are considered as learning. As an example, a job seeker who sits to pass his very first job interview does not learn to be anxious, yet he becomes so, due to an internal psychological change that often vanishes right after the first exchange of utterances during the interview.

The bottom line from what proceeded states that learning, in the broadest sense, is a relatively enduring change in behaviour or knowledge caused by experience. However, to say that this basic definition is able to sum up the vague phenomenon of learning is quite inadequate. What it does is merely gathering what seemed most agreeable. Actually, no learning definition has managed to earn the approval of all psychologists and philosophers. Moreover, different definition of learning that belong to different groups of scholars have appeared throughout history with each new opposing the proceeding one, or at least forming its basis on the eldest's inadequacies. The very oldest of them finds its roots in the times of Plato and his disciple, Aristotle.

1.2.1 Learning in the Different Theories

According to (Schunk, 2012), the groundwork of the study of learning was purely philosophical, and dates back to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries where ancient philosophers started to question about the nature of knowledge, and how do people acquire it. As a result, two opposing streams emerged; the first was rationalism that was first thought out by Plato in the Greek epoch, and which refers to “...**the idea that knowledge derives from reason without recourse to the senses.**” (Schunk, 2012; p. 05) Plato theorized that knowledge is innate, and the phenomenon of learning is a result of what happens when people sense the components of the world, then think and reflect on them with mind and reason. The second was Aristotle's empiricism. Neo-empiricists adhered to the idea that “**The laws of nature cannot be discovered through sensory impressions, but rather through reason as the mind takes in data from the environment.**” (Schunk, 2012; p. 06) In other words, humans are born a tabula rasa, and knowledge is inferred from the outer world experience where objects or ideas stimulate the formation of some mental patterns. These two ancient thoughts were the very roots from which modern psychological views of learning have sprung.

Although it was limited, the shift to a psychological study of learning marked its beginnings at the end of the nineteenth century with the rise of two psychological schools of thought; structuralism and functionalism. Structuralists pioneered by Wundt, Ebbinghaus and Titchener established an experimental method of introspection; a scientific method that investigates the separated elements of the phenomena (including learning) that occur in the

mind and consciousness based on the observation of controlled stimulus and measured response (Schunk, 2012). On the other hand, functionalists such as William James and Dewey refuted introspection, and the idea of breaking down the phenomena that occur in the mind and consciousness into elements. Rather, they believed that the study has to be holistic, and they focused on the internal mental processes and thinking (Schunk, 2012). In the midst of this conflict thrived behaviourism as a new powerful force in psychology.

Behaviourism appeared on the surface in the beginnings of the twentieth century to lift psychology as a science that deals with the observable measurable human behaviour using an experimental method. The father founder of behaviourism Watson (1924) accused the methods of structuralism and functionalism to be unscientific. (in Schunk, 2012) Introspection was seen to be subjective and unreliable, and the functionalist understanding was far from the palpable reality. Consequently, the learning phenomenon was studied based on its environmental antecedents and consequences, and was explained in the later conditioning theories of Pavlov and Skinner. The Behaviouristic learning theory dominated for decades undermining the early philosophical focus on the mind before this later got freshened after the second world war marking the birth certificate of cognitivism.

Cognitivism gave way to a new era of research on learning that finds its roots into Aristotle's empiricism. It emerged standing against the behaviouristic theory which gave all of the concern to the observable behaviour in order to account for the psychological phenomenon of learning, and marginalized the role of the mind. In cognitivism, learning is **"...an information processing activity in which knowledge is cognitively represented as symbolic representations serving as guides for action."** (Schunk, 2012; p. 159) Newly learned knowledge is the consequence of mental operations that help attend to, and reflect on an object from the real world. Like behaviourism, this theory emphasized the environmental events, and claimed they have a crucial interference in learning providing no regard to the human factors which was the deficiency that formed the pillars of another view that values learner-centered learning known as constructivism.

Constructivism knew light in the few recent decades. Holders of this view blame the proceeding views for their absolute objectivism in the conception of reality. They stress that **"Knowledge is not imposed from outside people, but rather formed inside them."** (Schunk, 2012; p. 274) Knowledge that is in the real world is subjective; different learners construct different mental images about it. They share common agreement that cognitivism accounts for only a limited proportion of learning, because it illuminates from the cognitive process human factors and social interferences which are regarded fundamental in the construction of knowledge. Meanwhile, constructivists theories also have various perspectives. Most common of them is marked by the works of Piaget (1973) and Vygotsky (1978). The advent of this theory made an end to the traditional explanations of learning that undervalued human factors, and was the spot through which another theory, humanism, was launched.

Humanism emerged to refute learning depicted in ancient philosophical understanding, in cognitivism as well as in behaviourism as it is all dehumanized. This view emphasizes that learning is not just about absorbing the content of outer experience with the mind, nor is it restricted to temporary formal settings. Instead, It addresses people's **"...capabilities and potentialities as they make choices and seek control over their lives."**

(Schunk, 2012; p. 351) In humanism, learning is a lifelong process through which learners develop, and become more complex. The human factors claimed by constructivists got furthered to include the person as a whole. A highlighted primacy states that the learner is not merely a learner, but a whole person with emotions, body and mind who learns by interacting in a social experience.

1.2.1.1 Learning in Behaviourism

The behaviouristic theory views learning “...as a change in the rate... or form of behaviour or response, which occurs primarily as a function of environmental factors.” (Schunk, 2012; p. 21) The central concern of this theory is the observable behaviour of the learner: its form and its rate. In this view, learning occurs when the learner exhibits the successful acquisition of an intended pattern of behaviour as prescriptively described by the educator and with the wanted consistency. The behaviourists claim that a newly acquired behaviour is the consequence of an association that is established between the learner’s response, and a certain stimulus received from the environment.

The stimulus-response association is well illustrated in the so-called conditioning theories such as Pavlov’s classical conditioning and Skinner’s operant conditioning. Pavlov’s classical conditioning focuses on the provision of the right stimulus to elicit the right response from the learner. The educator conditions the learner to produce the wanted response after a certain stimulus. Skinner’s operant conditioning rather focuses on reinforcement of the target association once it is established. Reinforcement is done through reward and punishment. The right stimulus-response association is rewarded to get firmer and firmer. The wrong one is, conversely, punished to get deleted.

The behaviourists focus exclusively on the learner’s overt behaviour as an obvious object of study. They claim that it is actually observable, measurable, and manipulable. However, this claim does not deny the existence of mental processes that operate at the level of the human learner. Watson (1991) one of the earliest behavioural psychologists, admits that the mental processes, mentalisms he calls them, do exist and states that they are metaphysical that can’t be rigorously seen and studied (in Woolfolk, 2016) which paved the way to the following theory which took up this mental reserve and elaborated on it.

1.2.1.2 Learning in Cognitivism

The Cognitivists rejected the behaviourists’ belief which stressed that only behaviours themselves are learnt shedding the light on the necessity to consider knowledge and mental skills as important objects of learning. (Stevenson in Shuell, 1986) They made a shift of concern towards “**the acquisition of knowledge and skills, the formation of mental structures, and the processing of information and beliefs.**” (Schunk, 2012; p. 22) For them, it is knowledge and skills that learners acquire via the formation of mental structures, and it is this knowledge which is responsible for making a change in behaviour possible. Contrary to the behaviouristic methods, the educator does not give a certain stimulus to elicit a wanted response or behaviour from the passive learner, but rather gives a piece of information that is processed by the active learner and later, not necessarily, manifested in his behaviour. Learning in this view occurs when a change in knowledge, skills or beliefs takes place in the mind as a result of an internal system, known as cognition, best described in the dual memory model of information processing theory.

This model suggests that the learner is an active information processor. Learning, or encoding, starts with sensing, attending to, and then selecting a specific stimulus from the learner's area of perception. This stimulus transforms into the form of input, a relatively identical mental image of the stimulus filtered from the environment, and enters the working memory for comparison with similar items already existing in the long-term memory. After comparison, new information, that matches the real stimulus gets organised, encoded and transmitted back to the long-term memory for organisation and storage, and later, up to the requirements of the learner's situation, he may either end up deciding to manifest it in his behaviour, or keep it as unobservable acquired mental skill.

The cognitivist understanding has served well in providing a model of how learning occurs in the mind responding to a stimulus from the environment; however, it turned a blind eye to the learner's personal and social factors which could influence his learning. Therefore, cognitivism, just like behaviourism, considers reality absolute, and that learning is no more than snapshotting the real world steadfastly into the mind. This gave way to the rise of constructivism to take up the lead as a new learning theory that unprecedentedly extended the activeness of the learner, and allowed him the possibility to subject reality to his own conceptualization.

1.2.1.3 Learning in Constructivism

The nature of learning in constructivism is noticeably characterised by subjectivism as opposed to the objectivism that characterises behaviourism or cognitivism. A central belief of constructivists lies in the words of Piaget (1964): **“Knowledge is not a copy of reality. To know an object...is not simply... to make an internal copy or image of it. To know an object is... to modify, to transform the object”** (Piaget, 1964; p. 176) Based on his personal and social experience, each individual learner has a subjective vision of knowledge in the real world that he learns and constructs meaning accordingly. In other words, when confronting new objects in reality, individuals try to make sense of them either by comparing them to the similar existing corresponding units of knowledge, or by engendering new explanations to account for them. (Brooks, J. G., & Brooks, 1999)

Well known constructivist perspectives include Piaget's model of cognitive development and Vygotsky's social constructivism. The cognitive development model indicates that knowledge is constructed through a process of assimilation which is based on the individual's experience, and which refers to the integration of reality in a mental cognitive structure. (Piaget, 1964) On the other hand, social constructivism suggests that the social context in which learning occurs interferes in shaping the cognitive structures of reality. For example, the educator, as one component of this context, participates in easing the grasp of structures which may seem complex for learners.

The constructivist view marks the beginnings of a sharp change in the conception of learning, as it puts more focus on the learner and learner-centred type of learning. It made an end to the era of the absolute objectivity of outer stimuli opening room to more freedom of choice to the individual learner. However, the accounts of learning provided by its common perspectives are still inadequate to capture the complexity of the human learner. This allowed another group of psychologists called humanists to come to the fore and give expanded explanation of human learning.

1.2.1.4 Learning in Humanism

Humanists define learning as:

“... the combination of processes whereby the whole person, body...and mind... is in a social situation and constructs an experience which is then transformed cognitively, emotively or practically... and integrated into the individual’s own biography.”

(Jarvis, 2008; p. 14)

The humanists claim that the nature of the person must be taken into consideration in order to understand any human phenomenon including learning. In their view, Learning is not only about some isolated cognitive processes or some acquired behaviours, but rather about a lifelong process that bears on the person as a whole in order to help him achieve his full potential, and become self-actualised. Wholeness implies attending to all components that constitute a person’s experience including physical, cognitive and affective states. This last has earned most of the concern in humanism, unlike in behaviourism and cognitivism, because, for humanists, it plays a crucial role in human learning.

The affective state of a person refers to **“...emotional and attitudinal engagement with the subject matter.” (Baker, 2012; p. 163)** Learning is the sort of experience that usually starts when the learner perceives a stimulus from the environment. This stimulus evokes some feelings in him which could either be positive or negative. Positive feelings promote learning while negative feelings could barricade the way to learning_ or in some cases, could also transform into positive charges that push towards learning. For example, in Algeria, the French language owns a bad reputation in some regions. This makes learners from those regions blind their sights, and deafen themselves in order not to learn this language in schools. For them, it is associated with negative ideas that generate negative feelings inside them. Hence, it could be deduced that feelings and emotions are strongly tied to learning, and in fact, positive ones do condition learning. In addition, a person’s affective state can also be impacted by his internal needs. The achievement of those needs can create a positive affective state in him. and enhance his learning.

Abraham Maslow, one of the pioneers of the humanistic theory, believes that **“...people are inherently good, are free to act, and possess unlimited potential for learning, growth, and development... and act to fulfil needs.” (Madsen & Wilson, 2012; p. 1472)** He managed to create a hierarchy of five essential needs that humans seek in life. The lowest part of this hierarchy represents basic needs which are what humans seek in life in order to keep their survival. They include physiological needs, such as food and water and safety needs. Once these two are met, humans seek social needs; that is the feeling of belongingness to a society where they can love, and be loved; then, the need of self-esteem which implies that humans need to feel confident and respected by other members of their society. On top of the hierarchy resides self-actualisation as the highest ordered need.

Humanism has woven an entirely different vision into the fabric of learning starting from the threads of behaviourism, cognitivism and constructivism. Learning, in humanism, is no longer just the old-school act of acquiring and mastering conditioned responses, nor the act of an active processing of information per se; however, learning is, rather, a holistic

endeavour to improve the learner's body and mind in order to help him achieve his well-being and maximise his development and growth.

1.2.2 Distinctive Considerations of the Humanistic Notion of Learning

Behaviourism and cognitivism were made distinct with their traditional explanations of learning that attempt to improve single separated parts of the human learner, either the observable behaviour or the mental processes. As opposed to them, the novel humanistic stance is made distinct with its holistic vision of learning that considers the learner as a whole, physical, cognitive, and affective organism. It seeks to self-actualize the individual. Hence, holism, self-actualization in addition to affect are three distinctive considerations that belong to the humanistic notion of learning.

1.2.2.1 Holism

Holism is considered as one of the fundamental distinctive features of the humanistic perspectives on learning. According to McMillan, Stanga & L. Van Sell (2018): **“Holism loosely means including the whole being, mind, body, and soul, taking into account that something is more than a sum of the parts.”** The focal points in holism are two assumptions (Procacci, 2013). The first states that the whole is more than just the sum of the parts. Explanation of any phenomenon should be connected to all parts that constitute that phenomenon. The second states that the act of breaking down phenomena especially complex ones, such as learning, into small parts does not account for them fully for that much information about them may be lost. These two assumptions contributed greatly in directing the humanistic explanation of learning.

The humanists conceive the human being as a system of interconnected parts upon which lies his continuous normal functioning in life. One entity of this whole system breaking down, and falling out of service would hamper the entire system. In light of this, the phenomenon of human learning is strongly shaped, and influenced by an established connection between the person's physical, cognitive and emotional states together which are, on the other hand, to be fulfilled and developed, which is the core essence of learning. Any attempt to explain learning that excludes any of the constituents of the human learner or any component of the learning experience including the learning setting and the significant people present at it will certainly lack important knowledge about it, and fall short of its purpose.

In order to understand the concept of life, it is required to look at it holistically; that is to take its properties including living organisms, objects and nature into consideration as they are interconnected. The humanistic notion of learning has a similar perspective. To understand learning, it is a must to have a holistic overview of the features that combine the human learner, the body and the mind including thoughts and feelings.

1.2.2.2 Self-actualization

The views of learning that preceded humanism namely behaviourism, cognitivism and social constructivism emphasized behaviours, knowledge, and self-constructed thoughts, respectively, and had very little to say about the learner's needs as a person. By the advent of the humanist Abraham Maslow, those needs came up to be considered and classified into his hierarchy. Self-actualization is at the top of this hierarchy as the ultimate need of humans in life.

Self-actualization refers to **“...the desire to become more and more what one is, to**

become everything that one is capable of becoming.” (Maslow, 1943; p. 382) It is a lifelong tendency towards the betterment of the self and for the self. Self-actualized people often aspire to be the best version possible of themselves through the lifelong learning activities they pursue. Following this line of thought, learning is conceived of as an opportunity for self-actualization. Learners learn for the sake of perfecting their development and internal growth. They learn simply because learning contributes to the making of their ultimate happiness. However, it must be noted that seeking self-actualization requires the fulfilment of all the lower layer needs that appear on Maslow’s hierarchy; an individual must be physically good and well-fed, he must feel safe, he must feel the relationships with the significant people around him, and be filled with high self-esteem. Only then can concern be levied to self-actualisation.

Self-actualization makes a gap between humanism and the proceeding theories. It was unheard of in the times of behaviourism and cognitivism. Holders of those views did by no means strive to increase the learner’s desire towards learning and towards self-actualization. All what mattered was the acquisition of behaviour or a mental pattern while in humanism, priority is given to learners’ ability to cope with the difficulties of life and render them self-actualized.

1.2.2.3 Affect

As it may have been made out clear by now, the humanistic theory devotes much of the concern primarily to the learner’s affective state. This concern of humanism has endued it with a third distinctive consideration which is affect. That is, in a general sense, the emotional state of the learner during the process of learning. Down to various contexts and perspectives, many scholars would think that the terms affect, emotion, mood or feeling imply various roads to the same direction, and that they are often utilised interchangeably to refer to one’s affective experience. On the other side, many others would think that affect is an umbrella term that covers emotions, feelings and moods.

According to Frijda & Scherer (2009), the term affect is used to refer to **“...a mental state that is characterized by an emotional feeling as compared with rational thinking.” (Frijda & Scherer, 2009; para. 01)** Affect is an emotional reaction towards the components of an experienced event including persons or objects. This reaction is evaluative; it could be of a positive or a negative valence. In terms of this latter, positive reactions refer to pleasant mental states such as happiness or excitement, while negative reactions refer to unpleasant states such as stress or anxiety. The reaction could also be accompanied with some bodily responses such as an increase in the heart rate. For most psychologists, affect covers the terms emotions, moods, feelings and attitudes which are distinguished following several items among them origin, intensity, duration, bodily effects, behavioural change and rapidity of change. (Schere 2005 in Frijda & Scherer, 2009)

The term emotion is one of the vaguest affective states that does not find consensus among psychologists regarding its definition. Nevertheless, Schere (2005) proposes a system where he joins five distinctive features that pertain uniquely to emotions (in Frijda & Scherer, 2009). First, emotions are specific to specific events. Each event brings about a specific emotional reaction in the individual. Second, they are based on the appraisal of the features and motives that combine an event or an object. Third, they have an impact on the subsystems of the human body such as the digestive or respiratory system. Fourth, they may vanish rapidly. Last one is that emotions influence the behaviour. Examples of emotional states consist of fear, anger, happiness or excitement.

At some point in their lives, many people would find themselves experiencing apathy

or happiness for quite a long period of time. They may spend a week or two unable to recognise why they feel happy, or apathetic. Some may just react to these either by smiling all day long, or by imprisoning themselves in some dark corner. This is the case of an affective experience termed mood. Mood is distinct from emotion in the sense that it comes unjustified with no antecedent cause unlike emotion which is triggered by an event, and in that it endures for a longer period of time than emotions which fade away relatively quickly. Also, in terms of intensity, moods are generally thought to be less intensive than emotions save for some cases such as depression which is regarded as intensive. (Frijda & Scherer, 2009)

Another common affective experience is the experience of feelings. While many psychologists would conceive feelings and emotions as means to the same end, Carl Rogers thinks otherwise. He defines feelings as “...**an emotionally tinged experience, together with its personal meaning.**” (Rogers, 1959; p. 198) Based on this perspective, a feeling is that subjective emotional experience that is integrated with its cognitive interpretation regarding an event, an object or a person. In other words, a feeling is an emotion added to a piece of mental information about it. Furthermore, a feeling is an experience that is based on each person’s inclination. What someone may feel about an event, a person or an object would differ from what another would think of the same event, person or object. For instance, students of the same class may hold different feelings towards their instructor. Some of them may find him admirable while others may find that he is unworthy of their love.

The terminological differences between the terms affect, mood, feeling and emotion are not held of that high regard to many humanistic psychologists, because what they focus on instead is the affective state as a whole., and what earns their attention more is the valence feature. That is to understand what makes some learners feel positive about their education, and some others feel negative about it. Only through this, it shall be possible to pursue the ultimate purpose of humanism which is the well-being of individuals.

1.2.3 Affect in Learning

After World War two, there happened to be a revolutionary psychological turn in the study of learning towards the mental processes, or cognition, that went deeper than the former behaviouristic approach in their explanation of learning. Conation which refers to how we get to know and act, became strongly explained in terms of the mental processes. However, beginning from the year 1980, interest towards the study of affect started to grow to add more clarification on the issue of conation. Psychology now realises how important it is to consider the affective function in conation. Therefore, psychologists became more interested in investigating the manner affect along-side with the mental processes collaborate to end up unifying in conation. This collaboration is characterised by a reciprocal influence. One from the side of cognition on affect, and the second from the side of affect on cognition.

Following Linnenbrink and Pintrich (2004), affect influences the cognitive processes of storing in and retrieving information from the long-term memory. This idea originated in the works of a cognitive psychologist named Gordon Bower (2004). He managed to provide proof through his associative network theory which states that people in positive moods tend to recall stored information that is congruent with their mood. That is to say that positive moods help evoke happy memories whereas negative moods evoke sad memories. For instance, a grandfather who gets amused by gathering his children and grandchildren around his dinner table after a long time since their last visit has more chance to stimulate his memory to retrieve funny tales about his past to make his children laugh about them.

Krashen’s affective filter theory (1982) could in its turn be referred to in order to

demonstrate that affect has an influence on cognition. He argues that affect is a precursor to cognition, and that the comprehensibility of outer stimuli, unimportant how enormous it might be, is insufficient on its own. His model proposes that new input gets filtered by an imaginative filter in the mind called the affective filter. Down to this latter's status, a decision could be made whether to carry on processing new input or abort the process. As he puts in his words:

"Those whose attitudes are not optimal for second language acquisition will not only tend to seek less input, but they will also have a high or strong Affective Filter--even if they understand the message, the input will not reach the part of the brain responsible for language acquisition... Those with attitudes more conducive to second language acquisition will not only seek and obtain more input, they will also have a lower or weaker filter"

(Krashen, 1982: p. 31)

Simply, a raised, or closed, affective filter -- often as a result of unwanted negative emotions caused by the input--thwarts the processing of input, whereas lowered, or opened, affective filter -- often because of positive emotions caused by the input -- allows it. An example of this could be seen in the case of a student at whom the whole class just laughed after he asked his instructor to clear up some confusion somewhere in task. The class thought that his question was trivial; however, their laughter drove the student embarrassed and anxious. His affective filter suddenly raised and therefore his process of cognition was doomed.

On the other hand, cognition from its side has an influence on affect. This claim is sustained by what is known as cognitive appraisal theories and is clearly illustrated by Scherer (2001). He states that **"The organism constantly evaluates all this information (or the knowledge about facts that it represents) with respect to its implications for well-being. (Scherer, 2001; p. 369)** The result of this cognitive process is knowledge which gets stored in the long-term memory. This is the point where the appraisal process starts. That new stored knowledge gets appraised by the organism in terms of its implication on his well-being, and consequently generates emotions. Emotions generated by an organism in a situation may differ from those generated by another organism in the same situation. Appraisals differ from one organism to another depending on each one's needs, cognitive processing and subjective interpretation.

To conclude, the human brain is a combination of three parts; cognition, affect and conation. Back in the day, as it was thought that the study of affect is an impossible mission, the emphasis was put on the cognitive part of the learner as the part that engenders conation. The learner was someone who merely receives, analyses and encodes information from his educator, then manifests it later in his behaviour. Yet, time has given life to the importance of affect once again, and has proved that the cognitive part of learning is not the whole business that happens, but just a part of it. Rather, learning involves affect as well, being a strong determinant in conation and in a person's experience of learning by and large.

1.2.3.1 Affective Traits

The late emphasis on affect can also be noticed in Benjamin Bloom's first original taxonomy of educational objectives in the year 1956. Despite his acknowledgment of affect and considering it one of three learning domains alongside with the cognitive and the psychomotor, it was not sufficiently went through and kept buried until the publication of the

second handbook, Affective Domain, in the year 1964. Following Baker (2012), the traits of this latter domain represent in feelings, values, enthusiasms, motivations and attitudes. Needless to say, all of these traits vary from one learner to another in terms of valence, intensity and strength. This coming section shall shed the spotlight on motivation and attitudes. Motivation, in brief, could be an intrinsic, an extrinsic, an integrative or an instrumental-sourced will generated in order to act in a certain manner. For attitudes, they are those emotional interpretations of outside events, objects, persons. However, those attitudes towards the self shall become known as self-esteem.

1.2.3.1.1 Motivation

The question of motivation has urged a great number of psychologists to enroll in its quest with the aim of understanding what circumstances and variables lead to what behaviours and actions. Some findings obtained as a result of this quest suggest that there exist some **“...processes that give behaviour its energy and direction.”** (Reeve, 2005; p. 08) These processes fall under two categories. The first is the category of the internal processes which cover a person’s inner motives that refer to his needs and drives. The second is the category of external processes. They refer to the influences of the environment, the culture and the society with which a person is being in contact. The two different categories have been put in a dichotomy of motivation: the intrinsic and the extrinsic.

1.2.3.1.1.1 Intrinsic versus extrinsic motivation

In the self-determination theory, Ryan and Deci (2000) make a distinction between the two types of motivation relying on the reasons and goals that prompt actions. According to them, intrinsic motivation refers to a pure desire to pursue a certain activity for its own sake. The person who is intrinsically motivated willingly chooses to engage in a specific course of action as it may lead him to experience the feelings of joy and satisfaction. On the other hand, extrinsic motivation implies a desire to perform in a specific manner or engage in some task to obtain some external reward. For instance, intrinsically motivated professional athletes strive to ameliorate their performance, because high performance is what they long to achieve regardless of what may ensue as a result; however, some extrinsically motivated athletes may spend countless hours enhancing their performance just for the sake of bettering their reputation on newspapers.

1.2.3.1.1.2 Integrative versus instrumental motivation

In the socio-educational model, Gardner and MacIntyre (1991) draw a distinction between the concepts of motivation and orientation; namely between a motive and a reason, respectively. They suggest that, in second language learning, motivation refers to the spark that ignites the efforts to learn the language while orientation refers to the reasons for studying that language. These reasons fall under two headings; integrative and instrumental. Integrative reasons indicate an attempt to build positive interests and attitudes towards the people and culture of the target language for the sake of integration in the target-language speech community; whereas, instrumental reasons arise from a desire to exploit the mastery of the language in other purposes. In this situation, language is not learned for its sake but for the sake of other advantages.

1.2.3.1.2 Attitudes

According to Zimbardo and Leippe (1991), an attitude is an **“...evaluative disposition towards some object... along a continuum of like-to-dislike or favourable-to-**

unfavourable.” (Zimbardo and Leippe, 1991; p. 31) People often have a tendency to think about and evaluate objects, persons and events either in a positive or in a negative way. This evaluation consists of behavioural, cognitive and affective factors combined together. For instance, a learner’s attitude towards his colleagues may come as a result of a certain previously performed action with or in front of them added to a cognitive and an affective interpretation of the action and the colleagues who were present in that situation where the action took place.

1.2.3.1.3 Self-esteem

Alongside with a person being able to have feelings and evaluate objects, persons and events that surround him, he often does make estimations about himself. This is what is referred to as self-esteem. For Rosenberg (1965), self-esteem means a “**...positive or negative attitude toward a particular object, namely, the self.**” (Rosenberg, 1965; p. 30) There are two distinct levels of self-esteem. The first is high self-esteem where a person feels satisfied about himself and his worth while being aware of his imperfections and limitations. The second is low self-esteem where a person is in a state of self-dissatisfaction not appreciating his worth. Applying this definition in a learning setting leads to the conception of two categories of learners. The first category involves learners with high self-esteem. These learners tend to have confidence in themselves and contentment with their current worth within the learning environment. Conversely, the second category consists of those learners who are always doubting their capacities and their worth in the eyes of their colleagues and teachers.

1.3 Flow

In their report made on the seventieth occasion of the world health day, the World’s Health Organisation (WHO) chose to honour, among other nurses, the Algerian nurse, Karima Azzoug, for her efforts for humanity especially as she is a member of the first-line defence against the coronavirus pandemic. What is striking is that while this pandemic has rendered many people in awe, the nurse declares that she still would never attempt to exchange her work for anything on earth, because it represents her complete happiness despite the dangers and everyday problems of the work place. She has managed throughout the twenty-five years of service to transform everyday challenges into optimal flow experiences that create feelings of never-ending happiness. Azzoug’s testimony bears sound evidence of what is really durable happiness as opposed to temporary states of mirth. The feelings of happiness ensuing from perishable materials often vanish once those materials are over, whereas true and constant feelings of happiness are those that ensue from experience, and that provide abundant surges of contentment, satisfaction, and happiness and, in return, keep the individual fully engrossed and unwilling to quit it. Such state is actually what people refer to it as flow.

Similarly; however, in a learning context, the extent to which a learner can manage to either enjoy or despise his learning experience with all the challenges it represents decides largely about whether he would be in a happy or in an apathetic state of mind during and at the end of the that experience. Optimal or peak learning experience --namely one which is marked by flow-- is the kind of experience that generates happy feelings in the learner during learning and leaves him with a strong desire to pursue his learning again and again. Were it for many or at least for once in their lifespans, almost all learners on earth have witnessed some flow experience when all what they wanted to do is to cling to that experience_

providing that its conditions shall be recreated in the future_ for the rest of their lives, because it once led them towards the feeling of enormous exhilaration.

This flow experience was first discovered in the year 1975 by the positive psychologist Csikszentmihalyi who became known as the father founder of flow theory. He first introduced the theory as being the secret of happiness based on the concept of flow which in his words refers to as:

“... the state in which people are so involved in an activity that nothing else seems to matter; the experience itself is so enjoyable that people will do it even at great cost, for the sheer sake of doing it.”

(Csikszentmihalyi, 2008; p. 04)

According to Csikszentmihalyi's (2008) famous book under the title of “Flow”, the flow experience takes place during the moments when an individual is being occupied with a certain life activity. At the moments it occurs, all attentional powers are invested on nothing else but on that particular activity at hand. Outer distractions and personal problems fade away from consciousness. Feelings of hunger, thirst or fatigue, socialization and safety needs are all dropped, and utterly discarded from awareness. Time literally flies by and hours seem to pass by in minutes. When caught in flow, a person feels a deep sense of enjoyment, and everything related to the activity at his hands seems to be under his absolute control. It is as if the person quits reality, and travels to another realm where optimal feelings about some adored activity constantly pour inside his mind. After the end of this flow experience, the person finds himself in a happy emotional state. He feels more confident and more complex than ever. More importantly, he feels strongly motivated to pursue that activity again not for some reward that he could get because of it, but rather for the pleasure and joy he felt while engaged in it.

1.3.1 Flow in learning

Learning is one of the most common life activities where flow is very often experienced. According to Csikszentmihalyi (2014), flow producing activities are those with extreme concentration levels. Hence, in educational settings, flow occurs once the concentrated learner gets wholly involved in a certain lesson or a learning activity. A flow-caught learner may seem ostensibly passive, but is actually fully absorbed by the task. He is processing, commenting on and arranging in his mind with extreme joy every detail of every piece of information that happens to cross his mind either from the teacher or from some other involved peer. When others of his colleagues are constantly checking the time waiting for the session to reach its end, he, instead, is wishing that time never ends in order not to interrupt the joy he is feeling and the mental work he is performing. When dealing with some activity, he can think of nothing except the challenge presented in that activity. He never listens to external voices from his environment nor to internal voices of hunger or thirst. Every act of exhalation and inhalation is accompanied with an exciting thought about the next step in the direction of finding a solution to the learning challenge, and once this is accomplished, he ends up developing stronger skills and remains yearning for more intricate challenges.

1.3.1.1 Flow and Affect

There is a strong relation between this deep concentration state which isolates the learner from reality and positive affect. This is in the sense that the state of flow is the result

of a person's simultaneous cognitive and affective involvement in a certain task. (Dewey 1913 in Csikszentmihalyi & Rathunde, 2014) The result of this involvement is extreme concentration on the goal that is accompanied with a sense of commitment and enjoyment. Flow cannot be attained in an experience that is devoid of a synchrony between cognitive powers and positive affect. This conclusion would make one description for flow-caught learners and one account for the other learners who do not experience flow. For example, a flow-caught foreign language learner is one who has managed to establish a positive affective state towards that foreign language, and, at the same time, has managed to extremely concentrate on a certain learning challenge to attain a certain goal. On the other hand, a language learner who does not experience flow is unable to strike a synchrony between positive affect and extreme focus. This latter account for those learners unable to experience flow is compatible with Maslow's (1971) argument about peak experiences **"... peak experience contains two components—an emotional one of ecstasy and an intellectual one of illumination. Both need to be present simultaneously"** (Maslow 1971 in Csikszentmihalyi & Rathunde, 2014; p. 27) Hence, in this way, it would be unarguable that flow indeed requires a merging of positive affect and cognition.

1.3.1.2 Flow and Motivation

A learning experience that generates feelings of flow is that which is pursued for its own sake and for the sake of the joy it yields. It is one which the learner feels like he cannot manage to do without as he conceives it as his source of complete happiness, and one in which no external rewards are awaited or expected to be achieved once it reaches its end. The description of this learning experience brings back the notions of intrinsic and integrative motivation. Hence, reaching this far would allow it to form a deduction that the kind of motivation that leads to create feelings of flow is well the intrinsic kind rather than the extrinsic, and is the integrative kind rather than the instrumental. This is sustained by the model of autotelic learning _ that learning which is desired for its own sake rather than for the sake of it being merely a means to some end_ developed by Csikszentmihalyi (2014) about which he argues **"... any intentional, intrinsically motivated, and autotelic activity must lead to learning... that approximates most closely the state of happiness."** (Csikszentmihalyi, 2014; p. 154) However, there are some exceptional moments when these kinds of motivation are not sacredly required. Flow is not always limited to those learners who are intrinsically motivated to learn. There is also a chance that it may sometimes happen to the extrinsically motivated learner to experience flow if certain conditions are met. For example, some university learners may have chosen to enroll in higher studies, not because they like to learn, but because they want to double their chances of work; however, they may also enjoy it and even get engrossed in their learning journey.

1.3.1.3 Flow and Attitude

Another deduction that could be made relates to attitudes. Attitudes were previously defined as evaluations of persons or objects on a like-dislike or, in other words, on a positive-negative scale. On the other hand, the learning experience in which flow occurs is one that is desired and pursued for its own joy. Having recourse to some amount of logos, it could be argued that it cannot be, almost in any way possible, for a learner to experience flow in a learning experience about which he has previously formed negative evaluations, unless it happened that he managed in some way to alter his negative attitude into a positive one. Additionally, since attitudes could be evaluations of persons, it could also be argued that

positive attitudes towards the people in the learning environment should also be an area of the ground on which flow would have a chance to be generated during learning. For example, it is almost impossible for a learner to engage in a state of flow during a lesson explained by some teacher to whom he holds feelings of discomfort, or in a type of learning activity that is not in accordance with his preferences. This deduction finds its corresponding one in the literature of research on flow and learning. The leader of flow theory Csikszentmihalyi (2014) speaks of attitudes being a powerful force in what he calls a psychic state of entropy_ a state where stimuli from outer environment does not earn the person's inner attention and love. In his words, **"...a classroom as a social system is in a state of entropy when the information provided by the teacher does not match the students' expectations, or vice versa."**(Csikszentmihalyi, 2014; p. 157) In sum, if happiness is meant to be sought out of learning, a presence of some sort of inward order_ i.e. positive and favourable attitudes towards outward stimuli be it a person or an object_ must be strongly marked.

1.3.1.4 Flow and Self-esteem

A reader who has followed this far must at this particular point be wondering about what sort of relationship remains between the learner's self-esteem and feeling of flow. Actually, a third deduction could be made in relation to this matter. A first step towards this deduction is to review once again a definition of self-esteem. Self-esteem has been defined in this paper as a high or a low attitude towards the self. Now, what needs to be understood is in which level of self-esteem, high or low, flow feelings have more likelihood to develop in the learner. The answer lies in the high level of self-esteem, because the attainment of flow requires the type of learner who trusts and believes that he has the ability to overcome a specific learning challenge, and that constitutes a far-reaching condition for learners with low self-esteem as they are unconfident about their skills, and are always afraid to fail which is what would weaken their chances to experience flow. This deduction comes in agreement with Csikszentmihalyi's announcement in which he declares that **"...a person who devoted most of his or her psychic energy to introspection would not have enough attention left to relate adaptively to the environment."** (Csikszentmihalyi, 2014; p. 157) This would fit the case of those helpless low-self-esteemed learners that spend their learning time gazing at some prominent peers who perhaps have earned their teacher's undivided attention by continuously manifesting themselves in the learning setting, which is what has a strong likelihood to lead those unfortunate seekers of knowledge to doubt their potential; and hence, confiscate their chances of experiencing flow. If this entire talk is to be said in one sentence it would be that the occurrence of flow is to a large extent limited to learners with high self-esteem.

To conclude, the attainment of this feeling of flow would resolve major problems such as uninterest, boredom or even stress and anxiety of some of today's learners by altering their various negative affective states to positive flow feelings that promote learning. It is unlikely to happen that the learner who gets to experience flow once and strives to maintain its continuity and occurrence in future times would someday quit learning, simply for the reason that a drastic motivational growth occurs in him during the times when he is caught by flow. Of course, this motivational growth is generally intrinsic rather than extrinsic. Even if it happens that there exist some external rewards that could be achieved as a consequence of successful learning and education, their effects are of a futile influence compared to the effects of the gigantic desire to go for learning and for the pleasure that could be attained

because of it. In such case, learning does not only become desired and enjoyable, but would also become lifelong and take place in the different contexts of life increasing the chances of happiness.

1.3.2 Characteristics of Flow-Caught Learners

As soon as he made his first observations about the phenomenon of flow, the Hungarian-American psychologist Csikszentmihalyi led an investigation on thousands of creative and successful people with different occupations and from different regions around the globe. Data were collected based on questionnaires, interviews as well as on the results of a method he himself had developed called the experience sampling method (ESM). In the ESM, investigators would give the participants electronic pagers that make signals eight times a day, so that basically, the signals would coincide with various activities such as work or learning. Whenever these pagers make their signals, the participants ought to describe how they feel about the task they face. As a consequence, Csikszentmihalyi's efforts (2008) culminated in an exhaustive account of the characteristics that describe the flow experience.

1.3.2.1 One-Pointedness of The Mind

According to (Csikszentmihalyi, 2008),

“The optimal state of inner experience is one in which there is *order in consciousness*. This happens when psychic energy—or attention—is invested in realistic goals, and when skills match the opportunities for action.”

(Csikszentmihalyi, 2008; p. 06)

The first characteristic of flow that people report is the one-pointedness of the mind. When experiencing flow, a person's attention is utterly invested on the activity at hand. His body and mind are in extreme togetherness and solely connected to that activity to the point that the person feels as if that activity is the only thing that matters. Irrelevant thoughts to the activity cannot find even the tiniest hole to penetrate into the person's consciousness or even a fraction of a second to cross his mind. In a learning setting, a learner who is in flow during a lesson does not just sit with his body facing his teacher while his attention is in a voyage through the realms of the cosmos. He does never think of scrolling down on his social media accounts while facing a learning activity; he rather feels a strong magnetic tension between him and the activity or the lesson that leaves no room in his attention for outer distractions that may cause other learners to drift away.

1.3.2.2 Feeling of Ecstasy

The second characteristic describes the moments of high concentration at which **“...people begin to feel the condition that often is described as ecstatic.”**(Csikszentmihalyi, 2014; p. 134). Ecstatic feelings catch a person during the moments where he is in his utmost engagement in some activity that he becomes unaware of what is going on around him. They do not occur during routine activities such as driving the car or talking to people, for this kind of activities does not necessitate high concentration levels. However, they may occur to the passionate novice driver or to the person who just moved to another neighbourhood and is very excited to get to know some new people. In both situations, the person would experience ecstasy as he invests all of his attention. In learning, however, the types of experience that lift a learner to an ecstatic state of mind is very well one in which he totally forgets about his self, his existence in the real world, and of course, one where he feels deep enjoyment. Note that,

to end up feeling this deep enjoyment, learning has to be unusual, exciting, and reasonably challenging. Neuter learning tasks are unlikely to effect flow.

1.3.2.3 Clear Goal Design

The third reported characteristic represents in designing a clear goal which, from its side, is the secret in which lies the attainment of deep concentration and ecstatic states. People who get caught up by flow would always have designed a straight path to reach a specific end. This path stands for the number of immediate goals that need to be achieved in order to attain the ultimate end as the father founder of flow asserts **“The point is to break that goal into doable, clear steps that you can pay attention to and focus on...”** (Csikszentmihalyi, 2014; p. 135) People in flow know the direction and end of each stride they take in the chase of the ultimate goal. Likewise, a flow-caught learner knows very well the purpose of the lesson or task he is working on. In the educational system adopted by Algeria, third year high school learners of mathematics are almost everyday faced with mathematical tasks they need to solve in their journey to succeed in the national exam. A common task asks to draw a graph for some given function. The skilful learner would know that there must be some groundwork constituting in several steps. He would also know the order and the consequence as well as how to perform in each step which is a top secret to his deep concentration and ecstasy during the task and hence to his flow.

1.3.2.4 Feedback

The fourth characteristic of the flow experience is feedback. According to Csikszentmihalyi (2008), **“unless a person learns... to recognize and gauge feedback in such activities, she will not enjoy them.”** (Csikszentmihalyi, 2008; p. 55) People in flow states constantly contemplate the work they have done so far in some task in order to know how well they are doing. They constantly provide themselves with constructive feedback with each stride they stride in the direction of the ultimate goal. Feedback aids in keeping their minds busy processing information brought to it and hinders a person from being distracted by other matters. An ambitious artist facing his canvas would pause from one time to another to gaze deeply at work from all angles so that he would guess, through constant feedback, what colour should be added or what piece needs to be omitted and so on and so forth. Likewise, a flow-caught learner would continuously self-assess how well he is managing to understand a certain lesson or to ready a certain assignment. For example, master students who are to graduate are often required to submit dissertations. Those lucky of them who are be caught by flow continuously check the quality of each word they type. They always react to their performances in an endeavour to produce the best product possible.

1.3.2.5 Feeling of Mastery

The fifth characteristic is of a feeling of mastery over the faced challenge. The enjoyable flow experiences **“...allow people to exercise a sense of control over their actions.”** (Csikszentmihalyi, 2008; p. 49) The activity a person faces seems to be under his absolute control. It is not that the activity is in itself easy, but he is equipped with enough skill that is in balance with the given challenge. For instance, rock climbing would seem to lots of people to be impossible to do especially when they recognise that it does not take more than one wrong step to lose their lives. However, it is in this danger where some professional rock climbers find their extreme joy. Despite how dangerous the goal could be, they never feel anxious or stressful to the point they quit, because they have enough skill that is in an

equilibrium with their mission. In educational contexts, learners who experience flow are those who have enough skill to deal with learning activities.

1.3.2.6 Alteration of Time

The sixth characteristic represents in people sensing that “...the sense of the duration of time is altered; hours pass by in minutes, and minutes can stretch out to seem like hours.” (Csikszentmihalyi, 2008; p. 49) As stated, this characteristic varies sometimes in manner as vary the nature and requirements of the encountered challenge, but generally, for most flow-caught learners working on their flow-producing tasks, time may seem to pass at the speed of light. Whereas, occasionally, for others also caught by flow while doing a certain different flow-producing task, it may seem to have taken longer than what it really has taken. It is always important to remember that this phenomenon in both manners is exactly what happens when those learners are skilled enough that they invest all of their attention and focus on a relatively suitable challenge that does neither transcend nor seem to be greatly below their current competence and provide themselves with feedback along the way. In order to better grasp this seemingly contradicted characteristic, two different examples shall be presented to the reader of these lines. First is, once again, the example of third year high school learners of mathematics who are asked to make a graph for a certain function which is an objective that cannot in anyway possible be attained unless a somehow-long series of steps is performed beforehand. He who is to find flow in this task may at the end feel like he has performed this whole series of steps in a matter of minutes while in fact it took him around one hour give or take. Second is the example of a Russian ballet dancer, Natalia Osipova, pirouetting on an icy ground. Obviously, a pirouette does not last much longer than a fraction of a second. However, due to its many required steps from adjusting the back position, standing on the toes, arranging the arms position and then executing the turn, it seems to have taken much longer than a second.

In short, once caught in flow, a learner unconsciously turns his back on outer or inner stimuli as his mind is fully pointed towards the task at his hands. He is caught in ecstatic feelings of extreme pleasure and happiness totally forgetting about the sad memories stored in his memory. He would not feel the time passing by and would spend hours without even thinking of his basic needs such as hunger or thirst. A learner in flow is the one to whom a learning challenge seems like an opponent that should be prepared to with a clear goal, reflected on his current status with constant feedback and stood against with the suitable level of skill.

1.3.3 Conditions of Flow

The experience of learning is known to be affectively unstable as different learners continue to wander across the different emotional states going from boredom to anxiety to the ideal state of flow. However, now that flow has turned out to be an efficient affective state, many learners would want to experience it as it has been described by many people as ecstatic, and many educators on their turn would desire to make their learners experience flow. To serve this purpose, Csikszentmihalyi (2008) identified three essential conditions that must be present for the sake of attaining flow. According to him, the learner who desires to make his learning enjoyable must, first, underline a clear goal and divide it into a number of immediate goals, second, provide himself with feedback during learning, and third, he must have enough skill as required by the learning activity.

1.3.3.1 Setting Goals

As does the journey of a thousand miles begin with a step, the path towards the accomplishment of flow during a learning experience starts with setting a clear goal. **“The reason it is possible to achieve such complete involvement in a flow experience is that goals are usually clear, and feedback immediate.”** (Csikszentmihalyi, 2008; p. 54) A goal aids in putting a crystal-clear image in the mind of the learner about the challenges he may confront during learning. A goal must be somehow feasible, not very complex nor trivial for that a complex goal may engender fear, stress or may even lead the learner to abandon the learning challenge, and for that a trivial goal would generate boredom as it is likely to seem very much below the learner’s capacities; hence, it would also lead the learner to quit. A goal must also be broken into a number of immediate goals. These immediate goals inform the learner on which ground he is standing and to which direction he is heading as well as on how far he is from reaching the ultimate goal. They also extremely consume his attention so that no other inner or outer stimuli could distract him. Goals need to be constantly updated in order to grant the reoccurrence of flow experiences, because it is almost impossible to keep on enjoying the same activity with the same goal every day.

1.3.3.2 Feedback

The second condition Csikszentmihalyi (2008) speaks about is feedback. In his words, **“You have to get feedback immediately. That is the feedback of enjoying what you’re doing, of saying.”** (Csikszentmihalyi, 2014; p. 143) Feedback is that momentary self-assessment that should keep on happening to inform the learner how well he is doing about the learning challenge. Feedback is as vital as the goal in maintaining the stream of attention and keeping its focus reflecting on each performed action. It aids the learner to increase his learning pace by quickly overcoming the encountered learning challenges or by rapidly understanding the newly met pieces of knowledge. Feedback also offers guidance so that the learner keeps the track of the learning goal and prevents himself from going astray and far from the target. Moreover, reoccurring feedback provides the learner with a striking air of self-confidence and assurance and makes him feel as the master of his own actions. In addition to all of these, the constant feedback serves as strong moral support and motivation provider. In the absence of feedback, sufficient room shall be created in the mind of the learner to recall irrelevant memories or to think about irrelevant issues which would distract him, slow him down and drift him away from flow feelings

1.3.3.3 Sufficient Skills

The third condition consists in a balance between the learner’s skills and the learning challenge. To better understand this condition, Csikszentmihalyi (2008) makes a relation between challenges and skills being parameters represented on a bi-dimensional shape. To attain a state of flow, a learner must, at his first learning opportunity, choose a challenge that is relatively within his mental potential for **“...enjoyment comes at a very specific point: whenever the opportunities for action perceived by the individual are equal to his or her capabilities.”** (Csikszentmihalyi, 2008; p. 52) A challenge that is not too difficult nor too easy, rather, one which somehow allows the learner to control the stream of actions; however; in order to attain flow in the next learning opportunity, both challenges and skills need to be updated to higher levels; otherwise, the learning experience would lose its joy. This challenge-skill relationship is what would, in one way, account for the common states of uninterest or anxiety. Uninterest or boredom are the result of an incompatibility between the

challenges and the skills. More exactly, they are the result of a learner engaged in some task that does not require him to invest his full attention and potential. On the other hand, anxiety and stress are also the consequence of an imbalance between the challenges and skills; however, this time it is the skills that are inadequate compared to the encountered challenge.

In a nutshell, learning that is characterized by the occurrence of flow feelings seems to be fruitful for both success in educational careers as well as for stable and positive psychic states that ensue the well-being of the learner in life. In order to experience flow in learning, three conditions must mark their presence. The first of these conditions is that there must be a goal that is clear and that is broken down into clear immediate goals. The second condition is that there should be feedback provided after every course of action in order to evaluate it, perpetuate it, or redress it. The last condition is that there should be an equilibrium between the learner's abilities and the learning challenge. If these conditions are continually provided and sustained by varying the components of the learning experience each time it is approached, learning will day by day continue to provide the expected flow feeling.

1.3.4 Barriers to Flow

A prominent characteristic of life is multifariousness. Objects, animals, people and all other creatures and species living in the air, on earth or in the sea line up in multifarious categories with each category having its own unique features be they, the features, positive or negative. In a learning context, not much difference from the outer world is marked. Learners are split to many categories according to many variables. The feeling of flow is a variable that makes two categories of learners; those lucky who are overwhelmed by this feeling during learning and those unlucky who get defeated by apathy. The first category has been more or less amply described above. That is why this section shall be concerned with the second category. However, the concern shall be to review some of the salient barriers that push learners away from flow, mainly from enjoying a state of heightened concentration.

1.3.4.1 Amotivation

Following Csikszentmihalyi, the first of the obstacles in one's way towards flow is the lack of motivation. He thinks that **“the problem is affective, emotional, motivational, and not intellectual, not cognitive.”** (Csikszentmihalyi, 2014; p. 130) Learners who do not experience flow in learning are in the first place not motivated to learn neither extrinsically nor extrinsically. It is not that they do not possess the mental requirements that enable them to learn; rather, they do not possess the will without which, they would not bear any attendance to the information they are exposed to no matter how trivial it can be. This is the case of many learners who hold distorted assumption and attitudes towards learning and find it a waste of time, and the case of many others who, unfortunately, are victims of the unavailability of inner or environmental moral and psychological support.

1.3.4.2 Absence of Amore Fate

The second barrier that thwarts one's advance towards flow is the absence of “amor fate” or the love of fate. The early views of optimal experiences that belong to Friedrich Nietzsche, Abraham Maslow, and Carl Rogers **“...depicted the love of fate as a deeply rewarding synchrony between self and environment.”** (Csikszentmihalyi & Rathunde, 2014; p. 22) The contemporary flow theory of optimal experiences continues with the same tradition of thought. In a state of flow **“...a person loses self-consciousness; the vulnerable ego disappears.”** (Csikszentmihalyi & Rathunde, 2014; p. 24) A flow-caught learner loves

what he has and what he does, in the first place, so he does it attentively and lovingly turning a blind eye to his ego and to his self. In contrast, the uninterested learner may not be satisfied with who he is or with what he has. This dissatisfaction may be one reason behind triggering negative emotional states in those learners which may prevent a synchrony between the positive affect and cognition from being established. For instance, some of these learners may spend nearly all the time contemplating their colleagues and teachers and making unwanted comparisons that weaken their self-esteem and keep their minds busy away from the subject matter of learning.

1.3.4.3 Unawareness

In the words of Csikszentmihalyi, **“Optimal experience is thus something that we *MAKE* happen.” (Csikszentmihalyi, 2008; p. 03)** A third barrier in the way towards flow lies in the learners’ ignorance of the way to make flow states happen. They have not yet been made aware (either by themselves or by other significant people in the learning setting) of the three conditions that engender flow feelings mostly the goal, the feedback and the adequate skill. Whenever they face a learning challenge, they may not know where to start and where to go. They may not possess enough knowledge that enables them to decide about the objective that needs to be attained out of the challenge nor the stations that need to go through in that journey. Assuming that the goal is clear, they may not exploit their utter focus by providing feedback after each committed step. On top of that, they may not possess the skill required by the learning challenge so they simply desperately quit the learning task.

Barriers to learning in general and to flow in particular impact similarly on learners by reducing levels of involvement, engagement, enthusiasm, satisfaction, and happiness. The main barriers discussed in this section and referred to redundantly throughout this whole review could be summarized in a lack of motivation, of positive affect, of positive attitudes towards the learning experience and its components, of high self-esteem and of adequate skill when approaching a demanding challenge.

1.4 Conclusion

Once upon a time in a place called Nepal located in the Himalayas, now a south Asian country, lived a king who had an extreme sense of gentleness towards his prince son. It was not the type of gentleness that is pictured in the mind once the word is heard, but one that made him build a strong fortress with sky-reaching walls, never to protect his people from the wars that would come, but to prohibit the young prince from seeing the miserable people outside. The king believed that he should provide everything there is to his child in order to make him happy. Although he had everything undreamed of for the people outside, the prince, with his piled emotions of boredom, craved nothing more than a freedom that would allow him to go venture outside those walls believing he would be happy afterwards. One night he sneaks out of the fortress and sees, for the first time in his life, people suffering, dying and living in their miseries. He returns to his father’s royal palace with a daring decision to leave and start a new life. The prince’s decision was similar to his king father’s when he decided to provide everything for him. The only difference is that the father saw happiness in the worldly materials while the child saw it in suffering. After years of agony and misery, the prince resorts to a tree where he remains stone-like, bored and confused thinking about what is it that should be done to grant eternal happiness. Soon afterwards, he comes to realise that happiness comes from neither wealth nor torture, but instead from constant problem solving. This prince is now known as Gautama Buddha. Buddha’s superstition, regardless of it being real or fictitious, comes to teach humanity that happiness is dependent on the quality of experience and

that the experience that is empty from relatively suitable challenging opportunities is likely to lead to boredom or in severe cases to even suicide, whereas the one that incorporates suitable challenges is likely to lead to the feeling of flow.

In many places around the globe, the experience of learning is not much different from what the king father would do for his son. Nations with their educational systems strain to furnish their learners with the multifarious most advanced technological means that are expected to ease the learning process and even to invite learners to learn. Yet, this creed has, apparently in an unwanted manner, given birth to a category of learners who wish to do as prince Buddha did i.e. to flee away. This category of learners loves the summit but hates to climb despite having everything undreamed of just a few decades ago right at their immediate disposal. They dislike to journey through that relatively permanent change that defines the concept of learning, and consider it a boring change. However, what this section has told so far which is gathered from the literature of research on learning is that this boring change could be altered into a more efficient optimal change that is stuffed with pleasure and joy. A change whence learners develop states of flow so that nothing else would seem to matter to them. Of course, certain parameters must be there in order to attain this flow state. These go from the positive affective traits such as motivations, attitudes and self-esteems to the very conditions responsible for flow and that include goals and feedbacks as well as adequate skills. This would grant not only fruitful learning, but also, repeatedly-generated opportunities of happiness which would in its turn enhance the quality of the learners' lives.

Chapter Two

Chapter Two

Field Work

2.1 Introduction

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2.3.1.1 Questionnaire in Details

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2.3.2 Teacher-addressed Interview

2.3.2.1 Interview in Details

2.3.2.2 Interview Sample

2.3.2.3 Interview Results

2.3.2.4 Preliminary Readings in the Interview Results

2.4 Conclusion

2.1 Introduction

Learning is one of the most common life activities that consume a great proportion of an individual's time in his lifespan as it begins at an early age, when he is five or six, and accompanies him at least to his twenties or thirties. What is likely to seem obvious to many people is that learners, owing to disparity between individuals, their conditions, and their situations, seem to not experience learning in the same manner. To some of them, learning is regarded as a source of extreme joy and happiness that once experienced; nothing else would matter beside it. The extreme joy experienced by this category of learners constitutes an affective state that is psychologically referred to as the optimal state of flow. Paradoxically, other unfortunate learners may never have had the opportunity to experience such an optimal state, and learning to them seems to be nothing more than a boring and inescapable journey.

2.2 Aim of the Study

It has been averred that it is very important for a learner who really seeks to improve the quality of his learning experiences by rendering them flow-producing to be acquainted with the factors that lead him towards the attainment of flow. In this vein, the general aim of this section is to discover those factors and deploy them benefit both types of learners --those who already find flow in the midst of their learning experiences and wish to maintain it as well as those who find boredom and are currently uninterested in learning. To get to this aim, answers to three main questions must be put clear. The first question investigates the types of learners who already find flow in their learning. It aims at finding the factors which lie behind that feeling; the second question is addressed to the types of learners who do not find flow in their learning experiences in order to find out about the reasons behind that. The last question is a summative one. Answers to this question could help alter boring learning experiences into enjoyable ones.

2.3 Methodology

Flow is a subjective feeling that was discovered based on the subjective accounts of thousands of various people around the globe through survey. Likewise, in order to get to the aim of this research, the phenomenon is to be investigated through questionnaires and interviews designed respectively for students of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and teachers in the department of foreign languages at the University of Ibn Khaldoun, Tiaret. This dual use of a questionnaire and an interview is believed to be likely to approach accuracy and grant reliable conclusions about the theme under study.

2.3.1 Student-addressed Questionnaire

The questionnaire embodies mostly close-ended questions meant to elicit succinct answers expected to serve the quantitative approach of study. It consists of two parts. In the first part, the respondents are asked to fill in with personal information about themselves; the second part; however, is the core part as it investigates the extent to which the suggested hypotheses are valid. It includes thirteen multiple-choice questions. This dominant use of closed-ended questions rather than open-ended questions is due to some already experienced and clearly noticeable disinterest that many respondents feel whenever they are asked to bring answers of their own. Moreover, limiting respondents with choices seemed to be a useful way to keep their train of their thoughts as near to the topic as possible and block any way to irrelevant ideas.

2.3.1.1 Questionnaire in Details

The hypotheses put forth as tentative answers to the research questions anticipate that the factors that are responsible for an enjoyable learning experience are intrinsic motivation, positive attitudes, high self-esteem, adequate learning skills in addition to the positive learning environment. They also suggest that a boring learning experience is the result of demotivation, low self-esteem, inadequate learning skill, negative attitude, and insecure learning environment. The questionnaire was designed to elicit from the respondents what may confirm or infirm the truth of these hypotheses. Therefore, the second part of the questionnaire includes two questions for each of the suspected factors.

The first question of the second part of the questionnaire is a multiple-choice question that asked the respondents to describe their learning experiences by choosing one of three offered choices; enjoyable, unenthusiastic or boring. The aim of this question is to arrange respondents in two groups so that at the end of the questionnaire, it would be made clear about the factors that appear to be linked to each group i.e. those who would report that their learning experiences are boring and unenthusiastic in addition to the others who would report that their experiences are enjoyable.

The second question asked the respondents to mention the reasons behind their enrolment in high studies in English as a foreign language. Love of English, love of English-speaking community and a job opportunity are the three options that accompanied the question as they were reckoned to be most redundant among students of English. Moreover, more freedom was given to respondents to mention any other reason that suits their case. The aim of this question was to see the type of motivation, intrinsic or extrinsic, that pushed the respondents to opt for EFL studies. As it may be clear, the first option, love of English, is a sign of intrinsic motivation while love of English speaking community and a job opportunity are signs of extrinsic motivation.

The third question in the second part is kind of a follow-up to the second. It is a dichotomous question that asks the respondents directly to tell whether their motives have a hand to play in rendering their learning experiences enjoyable by answering with yes or with no. The aim behind this question is to check if intrinsic motivation alongside with demotivation are anyhow related to producing flow and boredom, respectively.

The fourth and fifth questions of the second part of the questionnaire are asked explicitly to see how positive and negative attitudes impact on learning. The first asks if positive attitudes render learning enjoyable while the second asks if negative attitudes are responsible for boredom. Note that both questions are yes-no questions.

The sixth and eighth questions are asked to check if the effects of both positive self-esteem and positive learning environment are positive on learning and contribute to making the learning experience enjoyable. The given choices are yes and no. Whereas, the seventh and ninth questions are asked to see whether low self-esteem and negative learning environments are responsible for an unenthusiastic or a boring learning experience. The four questions are also dichotomous with yes and no options.

The eleventh question asks the respondents to describe how they feel about the learning challenges they encounter in learning. It is a multiple-choice question where the respondents are asked to say whether they fear the learning challenges, enjoy them, or hold no

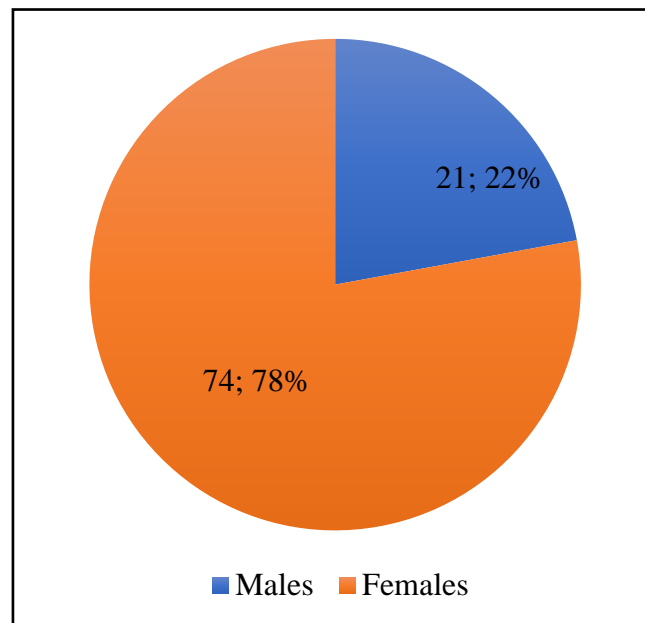
impression of them. The aim behind this question is to check how adequate skills affect the quality of learning.

The question that follows, the twelfth, is a dichotomous yes/no question that asks the respondents to tell whether they have ever enjoyed a learning challenge while their attention was distracted to other matters outside the scope of that challenge. Its aim is to check for the importance of attention in producing flow states.

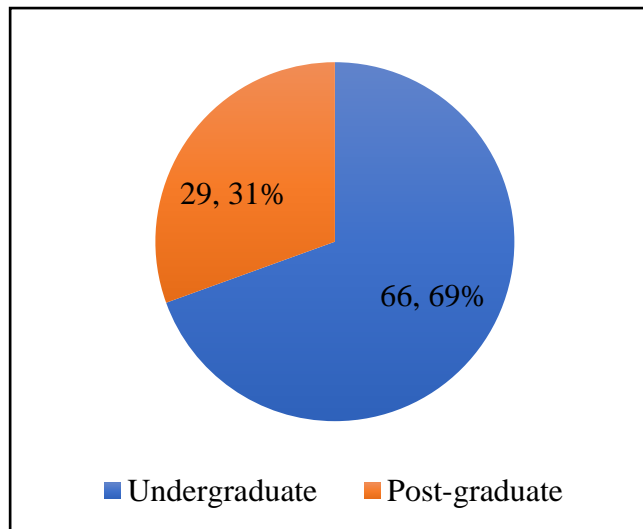
The last two questions are exclusively about flow. The first of them is a yes/no question that asked the respondents implicitly whether they have, at a certain time during learning, experienced a moment when learning felt to be a great source of joy and pleasure to the point that they wanted to pursue it forever. This question is important because it leads to discover the factors that are responsible for flow. The second is a this-or-that closed ended question that is addressed to the respondents who have already experienced such an optimal state to describe the feelings they had at those moments by choosing between engrossed and indifferent.

2.3.1.2 Questionnaire Sample

The students sampled for the study were assured full anonymity for their answers, but it was made sure they belong to the English-language section of the department of foreign languages at the university of Ibn Khaldoun, Tiaret. The final number of respondents that was gathered during a week was ninety-five (95) respondent composed of seventy-four (74) females and twenty-one (21) males (see pie-chart.1). Sixty-six (66) of them say they are pursuing their undergraduate studies while twenty-nine (29) report that they are presently pursuing post-graduate studies (see pie-chart.2).



Pie-chart 4 Students Gender



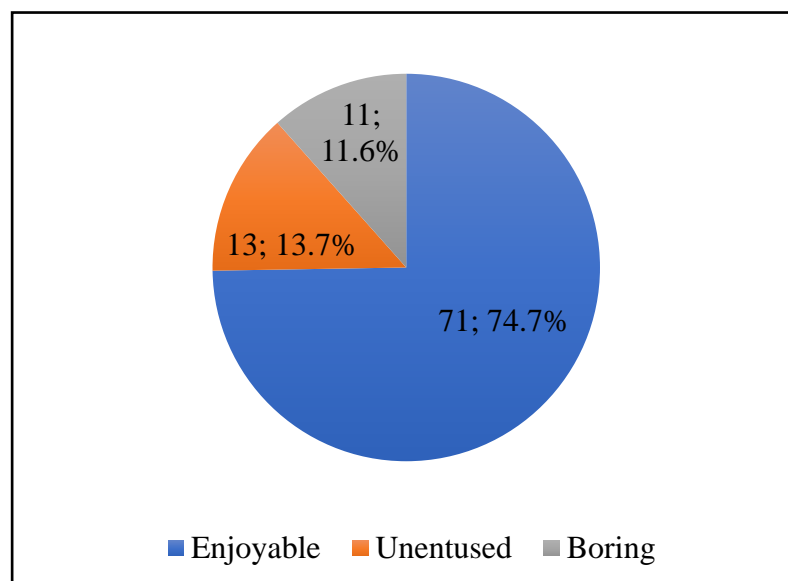
Pie-chart 5 Students Levels

2.3.1.3 Pilot Study

In an attempt to verify how much accessible and comprehensible are the questions to the respondents gathered for this research, the questionnaire was sent to seven respondents before it was sent to the rest of sample population. After they went through the whole questionnaire, the seven respondents declared that it was clear and empty from any kind of ambiguities. Thus, no changes needed to occur.

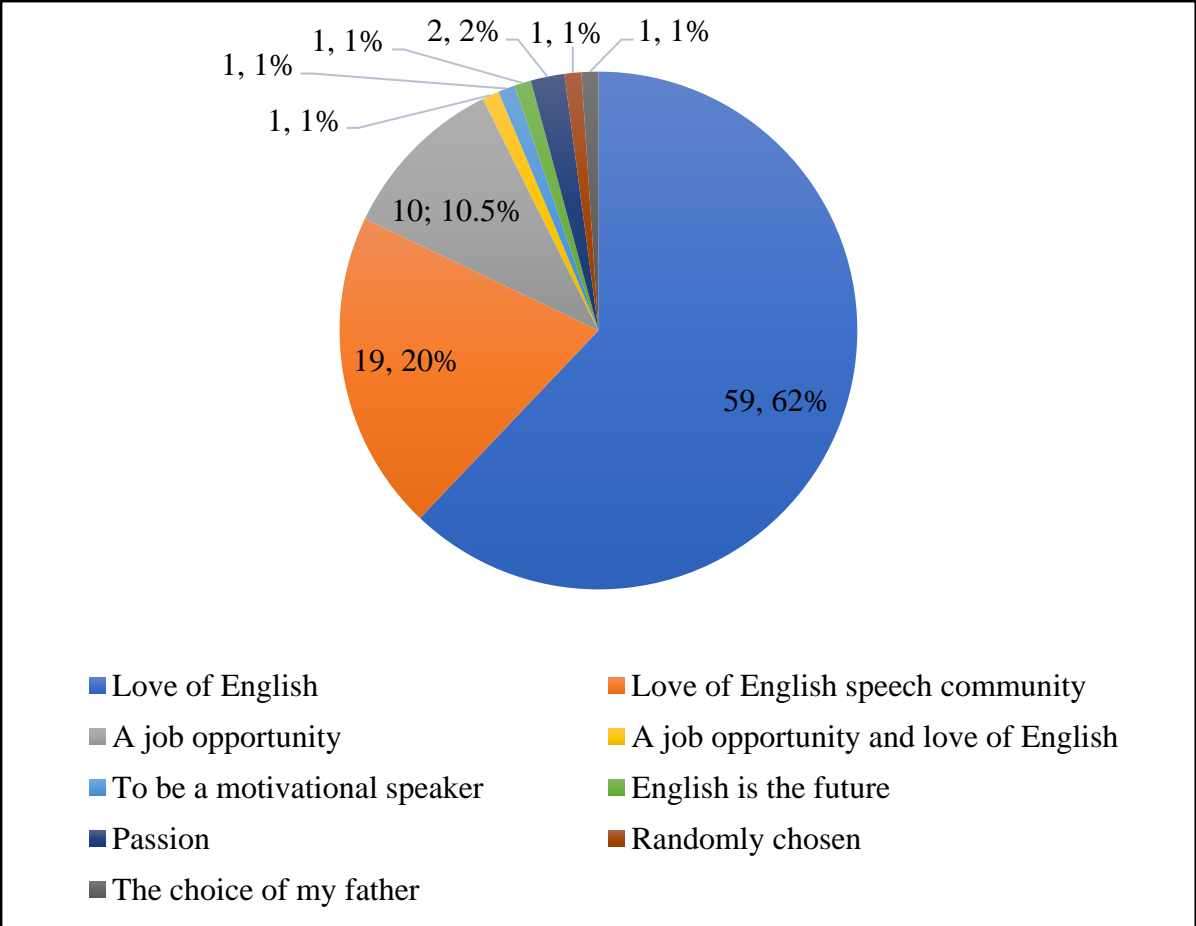
2.3.1.4 Questionnaire Results

The results of the first question of the second part showed that seventy-one (71) respondents represented in seventy four percent (74.7%) of the whole sample population reported that their English language learning experiences are enjoyable, and thirteen point seven percent (13.7%) represented in 13 others said that their learning experiences are unenthusiastic while the rest that constitute of 11 respondents i.e. the last eleven point six percent (11.6%) described their learning as boring. These findings are summarized in the pie-chart below.



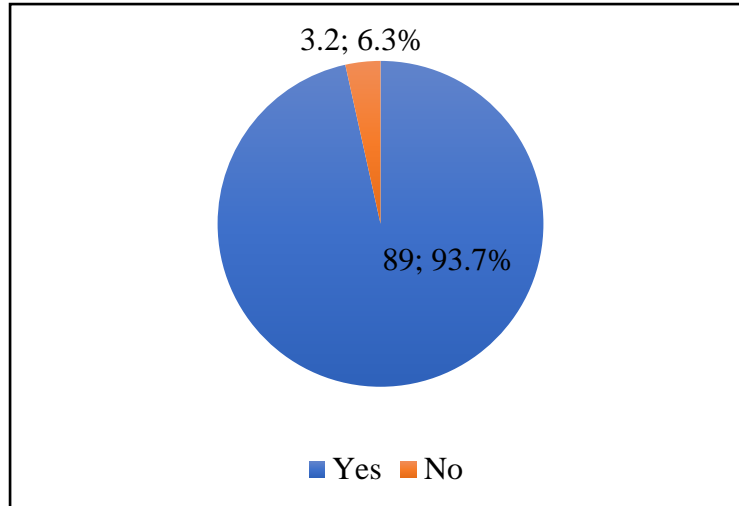
Pie-chart 6 Students Descriptions of Their Learning Experiences

When asked about the reasons behind their enrolment in English studies, fifty-nine (59) students represented in sixty two percent (62.1%) of the whole samples population said that they chose to study English out of love of the language; nineteen of them constituting twenty percent (20%) said the reason was love for the English speech community; ten (10) other respondents who make ten percent of the total number (10.5%) reported that they chose to enrol in EFL because they believe English language would yield them a great job opportunity; The seven (7) last respondents mention other different reasons. These answers varied from “randomly chosen”, to “the choice of my father”, to “English is the future”, to “passion” and “to be a motivational speaker”. The results are shaped in the pie-chart below.



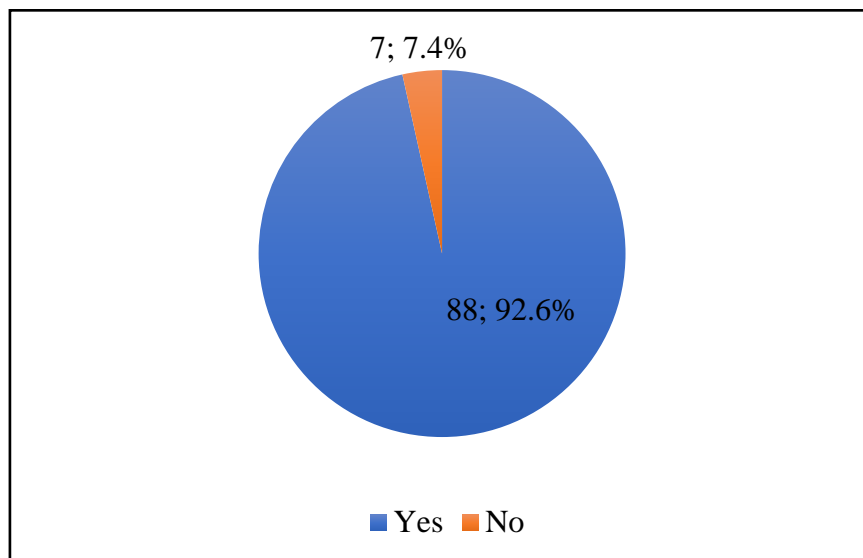
Pie-chart.4: Students’ Motives Behind Learning

Results of third question of the second part of the questionnaire that asks whether the reason behind the enrolment in EFL studies contributes any how to make the learning experience enjoyable revealed strong agreement to the answer “yes” as eighty-nine (89) that make ninety-three percent (93.7%) respondents said yes while the minority that is composed of only six respondents i.e. what adds up to six percent (6.3%) responded with “no”. Results are represented in the pie-chart below.



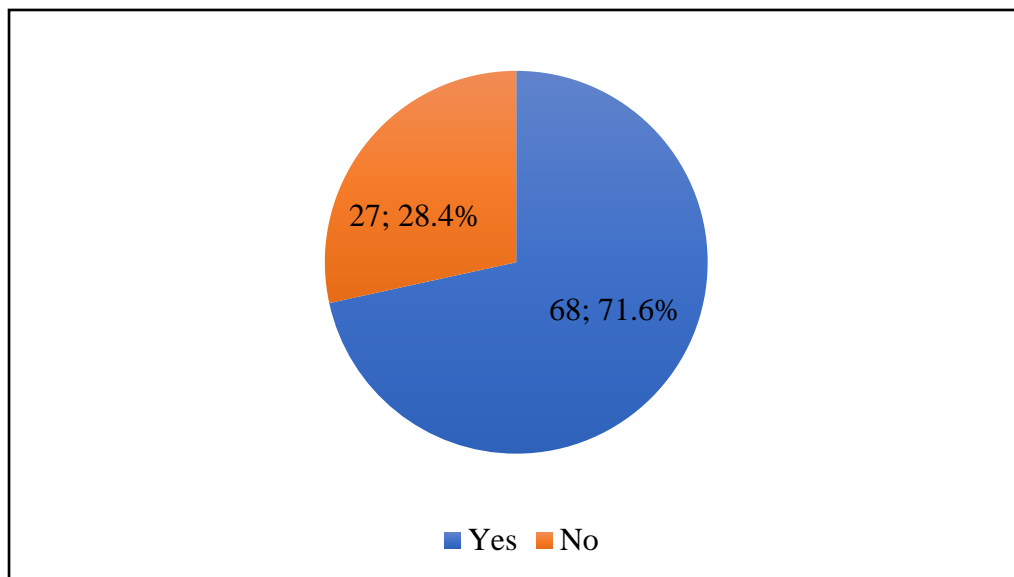
Pie-chart.5: Students Thoughts of the Impact of Motives on the Quality of Learning

Results of the fourth question that asks if positive attitudes contribute to make up an enjoyable learning experience showed a major agreement with the idea that positive attitudes stand up behind enjoyable learning as eighty-eight (88) respondents that make ninety two percent (92.6%) of the whole sample population said yes, whereas only seven (7) who make the rest seven percent (7.4%) responded with no. Better illustration lies in the following pie-chart.



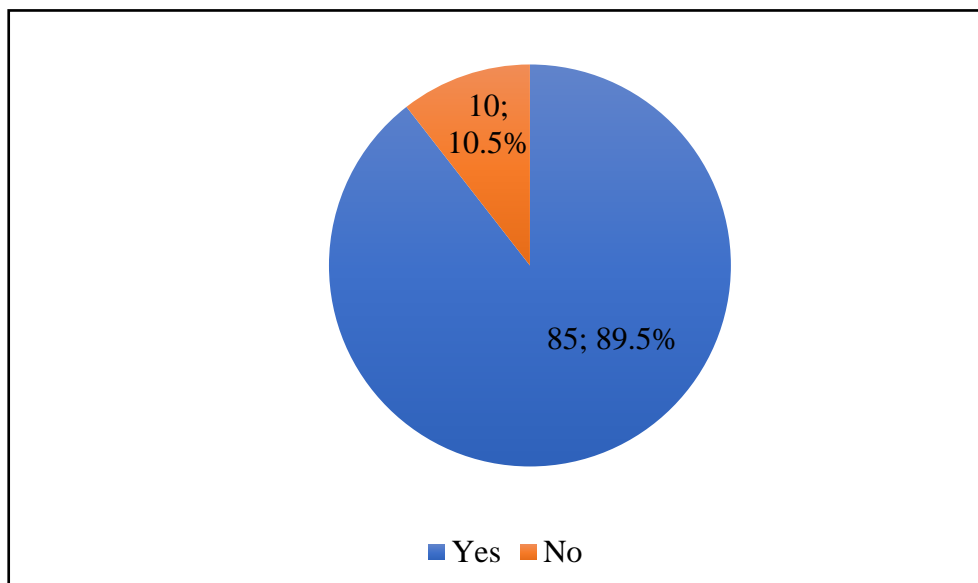
Pie-chart.6: Students Thoughts of the Impact of Positive Attitudes on the Quality of Learning

Results of the fifth question that asks whether negative attitudes are reason behind a boring learning experience exhibited strong agreement amongst respondents on the yes choice. Sixty-eight (68) students that make seventy-one percent (71.6%) of the sample population answered with yes while the rest of twenty-seven (27) who make twenty-eight percent (28.4%) answered with no. the findings are summarized in the pie-chart below.



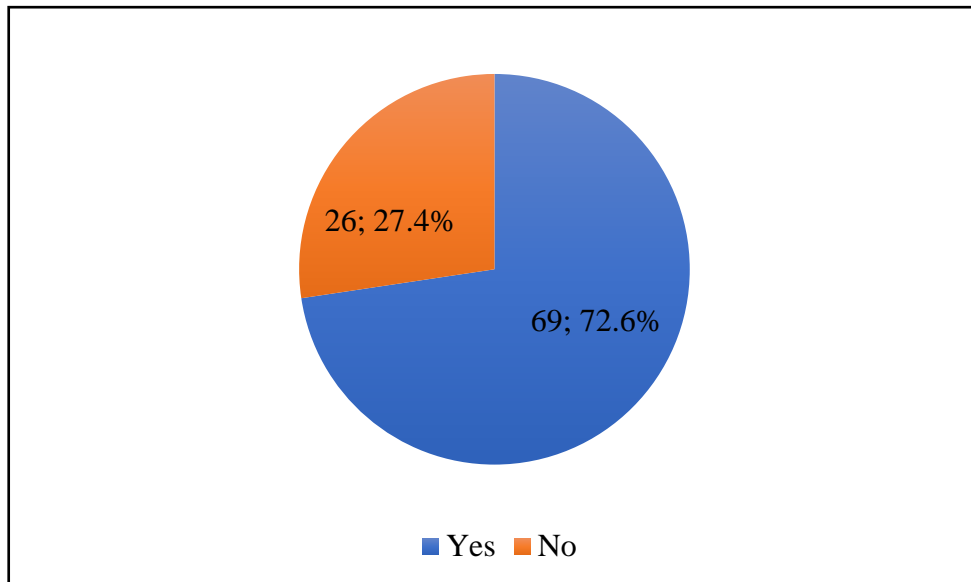
Pie-chart.7: Students Beliefs of the Impact of Negative Attitudes on the Quality of Learning

For the sixth question, results reveal that a dominant majority represented in eighty-five (85) respondents who make up eighty-nine and half percent (89.5%) of the sample population agreed on the idea that high self-esteem contributes to rendering the learning experience enjoyable, whereas the rest of them i.e. ten (10) students that make the rest ten and a half percent (10.5%) thought that positive self-esteem had nothing to do with an enjoyable learning experience. Results are summarized in the pie-chart below.



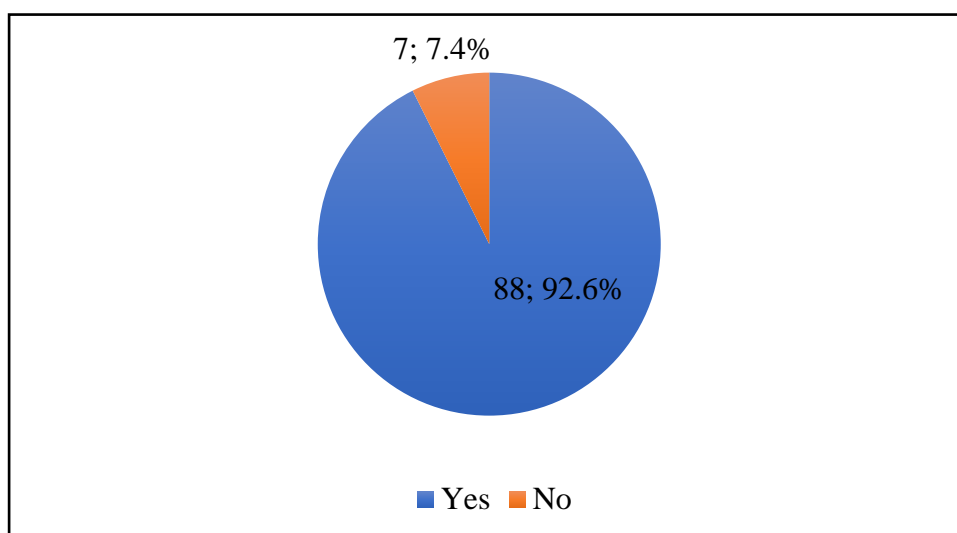
Pie-chart.8: Students Thoughts of the Impact of High Self-esteem on the Quality of Learning

Results of the seventh question that asks whether low self-esteem is anyhow responsible for a boring learning experience exhibited that sixty-nine (69) respondents i.e. seventy-two percent (72.6%) of the whole sample population said that it is responsible while the rest of the respondents i.e. twenty-six (26) students who constitute twenty-seven percent (27.4%) of the whole population expressed their disagreement. The results are illustrated in the following pie-chart



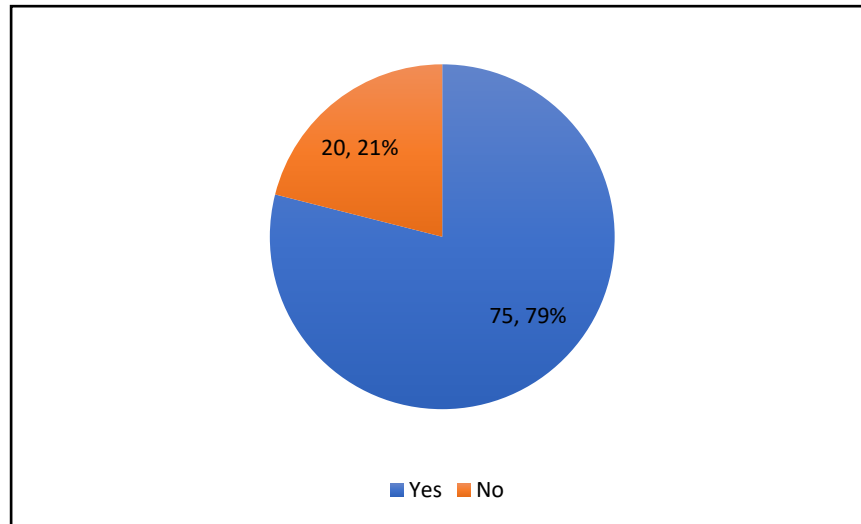
Pie-chart.9: Students Beliefs of the Impact of Low Self-esteem on the Quality of Learning

Results of the eighth question of the second part of the questionnaire that asks if secure and favourable environmental conditions are essential to an enjoyable learning experience revealed that the majority of respondents i.e. eighty-eight (88) student who equal ninety-two percent (92.6%) of the whole sample population are in accordance with the idea that the positive environment plays a part in making learning enjoyable while the rest of only seven (7) students i.e. seven percent (7.4%) showed their contrast with the same idea. Findings are shaped in the following pie-chart.



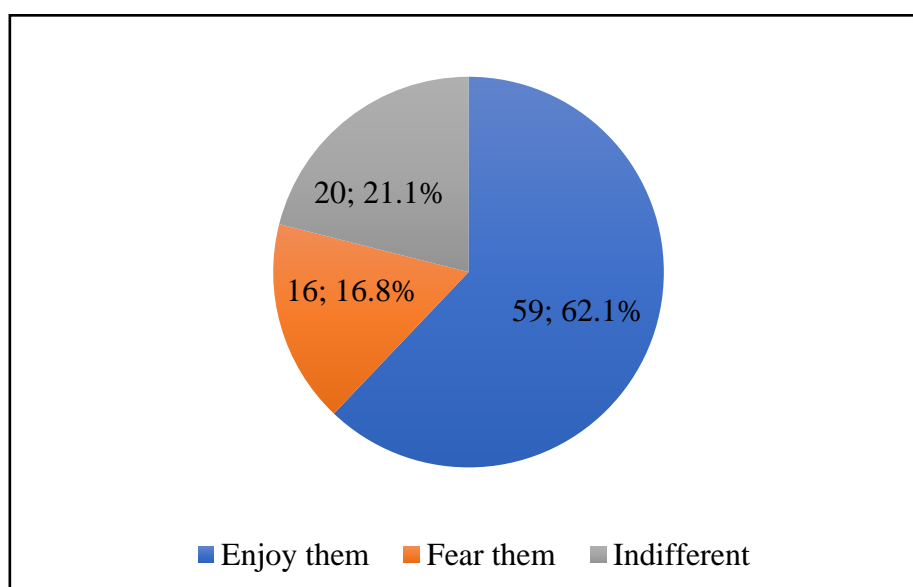
Pie-chart.10: Students Beliefs of the Impact of Positive Environment on the Quality of Learning

Results of the ninth question that asks whether unsecure and unfavourable environmental conditions aid in rendering one’s learning experience boring revealed that the majority of respondents represented in seventy-five (75) students i.e. a percentage of (79%) see that unfavourable environments can make boredom during learning, whereas the rest of only twenty (20) respondents who equal (21%) see otherwise i.e. they see that unfavourable conditions do not render learning experiences boring. Results are shaped in pie-chart.11



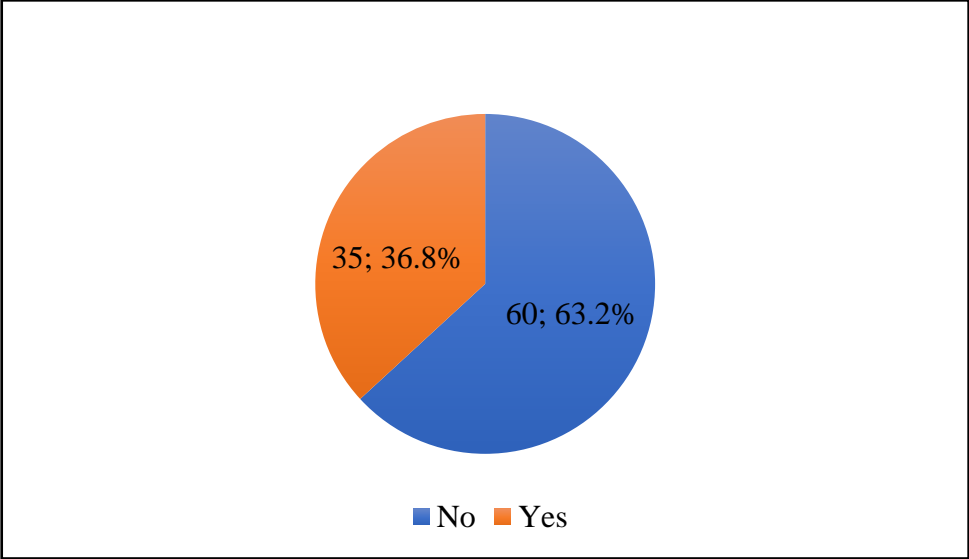
Pie-chart.11: Students Beliefs of the Impact of Negative Environment on the Quality of Learning

The results obtained from the ninth question that asks the respondents to describe their feelings towards the learning challenges they face showed that fifty-nine (59) students who make sixty-two percent (62.1%) of the sample population say that they enjoy the learning challenges, sixteen (16) who add up to nearly seventeen percent (16.8%) others said that they fear the learning challenges, and the remaining twenty students (20) i.e. twenty-one percent (21.1%) of the total number of respondents report that they feel indifferent. These results make the following pie-chart.



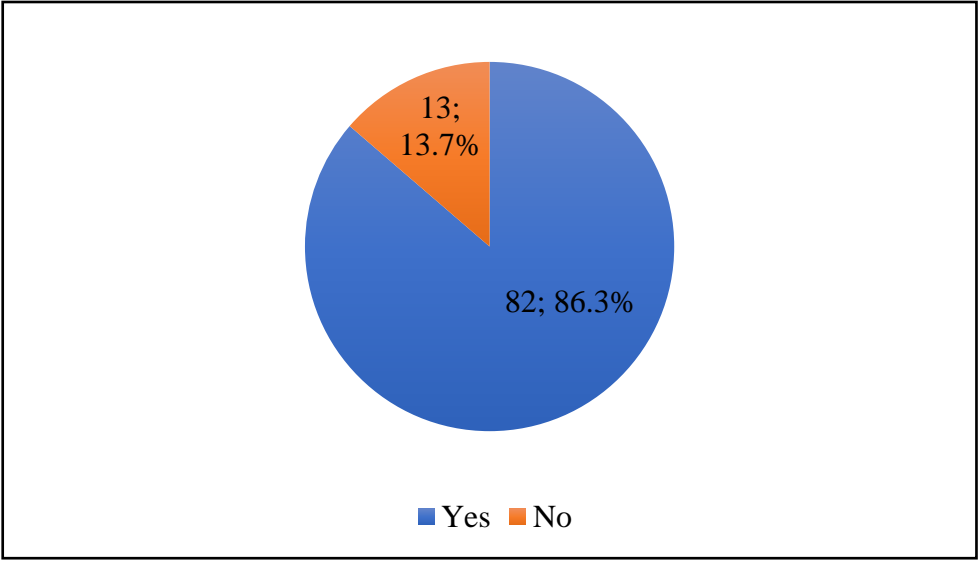
Pie-chart.12: Students Feelings about Learning Challenges

Results of the tenth question that inquires about the role of attention in rendering learning enjoyable revealed that a total of sixty (60) respondents who make sixty-three percent (63.2%) of the whole sample report that they never enjoy a learning activity while their attention is distracted, on the other hand, the remaining thirty-five (35) i.e. nearly thirty-seven percent (36.8%) say that they can enjoy learning while attending to other matters at the same time. The results are summarized in the pie-chart below.



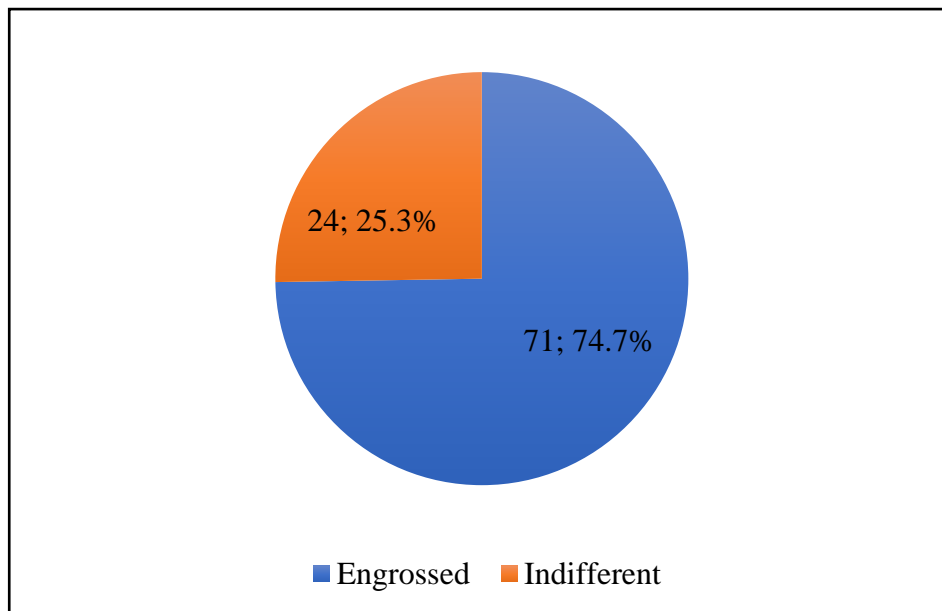
Pie-chart.13: Students Testimonies about the Role of Attention

Results of the twelfth question that asks the respondents to tell whether they happen to experience joy in learning to the point that they want to pursue it forever, exhibited a majority of respondents i.e. eighty-two (82) students who add up to eighty-six percent (86.3%) saying yes, and only thirteen (13) students represented by nearly fourteen percent (13.7%) saying no. Findings of this question are put in the next pie-chart.



Pie-chart.14: Students Thought about the Times When Learning is Enjoyable

Results of the last question of this questionnaire that asks the respondents to describe their feelings during the moments when learning becomes enjoyable showed that seventy-one (71) respondents who make nearly seventy five percent (74.7%) of the sample report that they feel engrossed; however, twenty-four (24) respondent i.e. twenty-five percent (25.3%) say that they feel indifferent. The results are in the next pie-chart.



Pie-chart.15: Students Feelings during Enjoyable Learning

2.3.1.5 Preliminary Readings in the Questionnaire Results

The first glance at the results of the questionnaire suggests that they are enlightening as to students' quantifiable trends vis-à-vis flow. They seem to allow for an informed verification of the validity of the assumptions laid as tentative solutions to the research problem. Even though it is too early to announce such statement, a bird's eye view on these results points out that the first two suggested hypotheses appear to some extent to be working. In this very section, the results of each question will be looked at and discussed in details in relation to the factor addressed in each of the hypotheses and in light of experts' findings.

To begin with, results of the second question of the second part of the questionnaire summarized in pie-chart.4 need to be dwelt on as to pave the way to understand the results of the question that follows. Those results indicate that the fifty-nine (59) student represented in sixty two percent (62.1%) of the whole sample are intrinsically motivated as they say that they chose to study English out of love of the language. The same goes for two other respondents who say they chose to study English out of passion. However, the rest of respondents who have their various reasons, and who constitute about 36% in total of the whole sample population are extrinsically motivated. What is attractive regarding this later extrinsically motivated group of respondents is that their extrinsic motivation is not costly as it is not linked to materialistic or financial resources.

Going back to the hypotheses, it has been hypothesized that learners' intrinsic motivation contributes highly to producing flow feelings during learning experiences. Results of the second question illustrated in pie-chart.5 show that the dominant majority of the

respondents i.e. a percentage of 93.7% think that motivation is important to make learning enjoyable. This dominant majority comprises those respondents who claim to be intrinsically motivated, and who constitute 62.1% of the sample population. Hence; so far, it could be deduced that intrinsic motivation is one important factor towards the enjoyable and flow-producing learning. However, it also encompasses those who are extrinsically motivated, which also implies that even extrinsic motivation is important and able to render learning enjoyable. The bottom line says that motivation with its both types the intrinsic and extrinsic is important to generate flow.

Then, it was hypothesised that positive attitudes condition enjoyable learning experiences while negative attitudes render learning experiences boring. Results of the third question that appear on pie-chart.5 show that 92.6% of the respondents which include both those who enjoy learning and those who find it boring think that positive attitudes impact on learning positively by rendering it enjoyable whereas results of the question that follows evidence that negative attitudes make learning experiences boring as nearly 72% of the total number of respondents adhere to this idea. If this is meant to imply anything, it would imply that the hypotheses, up to this point, seem to a good extent to be valid.

For what concerns the impact of high self-esteem, the collected data summarized in pie-chart.8 and in pie-chart.9 reveal that a majority of 89.5% of the total number of respondents (once again, a percentage that includes learners who enjoy learning and learners who are bored of it) believe that high self-esteem is important to enjoy learning; whereas, for low self-esteem, findings in pie-chart.10 show that a good 72.6% of the respondents who associate it to a boring learning experience. However, for the sake of fairness, the 27.4% percentage that represents the remaining number of respondents_ despite being a small number compared to those who opposed them_ needs to go through further investigations as to dig deeper into this matter and find out why they do not think that low self-esteem is responsible for boredom. But in general, these findings seem to go in total agreement with the suggested hypotheses.

It was also hypothesised that secure and favourable learning environments are mandatory to experience flow in learning. At this point of the research, this is confirmed in the findings of the questionnaire illustrated in pie-chart 10 that show that 92.6% of the respondents confirm the suggestion. Also, in relation to the suggestion that insecure and unfavourable learning environment that is suspected as a source of boredom, it was confirmed, as results in pie-chart 11 show that a good 62.1% i.e. more than half of the respondents say that unfavourable environments could create boredom.

The suggested hypotheses also anticipate that adequate learning skills constitute another factor responsible for flow and enjoyment of learning. Results illustrated in pie-chart 12 show that a percentage of sixty-one (61.2%) that includes fifty nine 59 students_ who all report in the beginning that their learning experiences are enjoyable_ say that they enjoy the learning challenges, which could be explained as a result of their adequate learning skill that help them face learning challenges boldly; whereas, answers of the remaining percentage of thirty-eight (38.2%) that includes thirty-five (35) students who either say that they fear or feel indifferent towards the learning challenges could be explained in terms of inadequacy of their learning skills to face learning challenges. This last percentage includes fourteen (14) students who report in the beginning that their learning experience is boring or unenthusiastic. This

comes to ascertain that adequate skills seem to be responsible for enjoyment and flow in leaning; whereas, inadequate skills could be a cause behind fear and disinterest.

Furthermore, the results illustrated in pie-chart 12 point out to another factor that obviously upheld by respondents. It is attention. Attention is evidenced to optimize enjoyment of learning. More than half of the respondents i.e. 63.3% declare that they have never enjoyed a learning challenge while their attention distracted. On the other hand, the remaining percentage of 27.7% respondents say they enjoy a learning challenge despite not being so focused on it. This case evokes a derivative issue that calls for further investigation in order to find out about how they do not need to completely focus to enjoy learning.

Finally, for what belongs to the readings that can be made about the yields of the last two questions of the questionnaire, the results in pie-chart.13 and those in pie-chart.14 show that 86.3% of the respondents have, at least for once, enjoyed a learning challenge, whereas only 13.7% said that they have never experienced such joy. Among those 86.3%, nearly 75% of them appear to have experienced flow as they report in the final question that they felt engrossed during those moments when that challenge became enjoyable.

Preliminary readings in the questionnaire results reveal a general consensus among those respondents who report that their learning experiences are enjoyable and those who report them to be boring or unenthusiastic. Consensus is on the importance of all of motivation, positive attitudes, high self-esteem and the secure learning environment in rendering learning enjoyable. The dominant proportion of these respondents also agree to a good extent that negative attitudes, low self-esteem and unsecure environments create a boring learning atmosphere. What is noticeable about the rest of the findings, more precisely, the findings about learners' feelings towards the challenges they face represented in pie-chart.12 is that 14 students of those who report that their learning is boring say that they fear the learning challenges or feel indifferent, while all the fifty nine (59) respondents who say that their learning is enjoyable report that they enjoy learning challenges. This hints at the fact that enjoyable and flow-producing learning necessitates a balance between the amenability of the faced challenge and the adequacy of the learning skill.

2.3.2 Teacher-addressed Interview

The second investigation tool resorted to in this research is a mail-interview addressed to university teachers at the department of foreign languages. It is of a semi-structured type that aims at giving the teachers who accepted to participate in this research work full freedom to express their complete thoughts about the questions. These questions were designed to elicit one only answer; either an agreement with the ideas they, the questions, discussed, or a disagreement. It encompassed seventeen (17) questions that were precluded by a first question that asked the interviewees to tell a little bit about their teaching experiences. The rest of the questions; however, are directly about the research topic.

2.3.2.1 Interview in Details

The interview questions are designed in such a way that they would elicit from the respondents pertinent and adequate data that would contribute to a solution of the main research problem. They are meant to check the extent to which the suggested hypotheses are valid. This section exposes the questions of the interview in some details.

The second question of this interview asks the teachers to tell whether they think that affect is necessary to a learner's success. The aim of this question is to decide about the importance of affect in successful learning.

The third question asks the teachers to mention the affective aspects_ such as motivations, attitudes and self-esteem_ they think are the most important to heed in a learning context. The aim behind this question is to discover which affective aspects impact on learning.

The fourth question inquires about the role of motivation in learning. This question aims at finding out whether motivation is crucial to learning or not. Whereas, the fifth question asked the teachers to specify which type of motivation is more important than the other, the extrinsic or the intrinsic.

The sixth question of the interview asks the teachers to give their opinions about the impact of attitudes on learners. The aim behind this question is to see how much important attitudes are in learning.

The seventh question asks the teachers to tell whether a learner's self-esteem is as much important in learning as attitudes and motivations. Clearly, the aim of this question is to determine the degree of importance of self-esteem in learning.

The question that follows asks the teachers to sketch out the distinctive features of a highly motivated learner with positive attitudes and high self-esteem. The aim behind this question is to check the impact of those affective aspects as combined together on learners.

The ninth question asks the interviewees explicitly to express their thoughts regarding the impact of the psychological state of flow on learning. The aim of this question is to see the effect of flow on learner's educational career.

The tenth question asks the teachers to tell whether they think that amotivation, low self-esteem and negative attitudes prevent learners from experiencing flow anyhow. The aim of this question is to determine whether those affective aspects are factors responsible for boredom.

The eleventh question asks the teachers to tell whether they think that positive affect is mandatory to an enjoyable learning experience. The aim of this question is to discover the importance of affect in creating joy out of learning.

The twelfth question asks the teachers to tell how important it is to have a clear plan with a clear goal before embarking on any learning challenge. The aim of this question is to check out how effective goal-setting is in successful learning.

The thirteenth question asks the teachers to express their thoughts regarding the importance of goal-setting in making learning experiences enjoyable. The aim of this question is to know whether goal-setting is mandatory to enjoy learning.

The fourteenth question of the interview asks the teachers to size up the role of feedback in making learning enjoyable. The aim of this question is to see how important continuous feedback is in flow-full learning.

The fifteenth question asks the teachers about the impact of continuous feedback on a learner's attention. The aim of this question is to know whether continuous feedback helps keep a learner's attention fully on a learning challenge.

The sixteenth question asks the teachers to tell whether a balance between a learner's skills and the learning challenges he happens to encounter is necessary for enjoyable learning. The aim of this question is to see the impact of this balance on learning.

The seventeenth question, which is the last question in the interview, asks the teachers to tell whether the imbalance between the learning challenges and learners' skills could be a cause behind a boring learning experience. The aim of this question is to find out how this imbalance is associated to boredom.

2.3.2.2 Interview Sample

The teachers who have been contacted and sent the interview questions through their e-mail addresses currently pertain to the university of Ibn Khaldoun, Tiaret except one of them who used to teach at Ibn Khaldoun until last year when she moved to the university of Mostaganem. The first of them is a well-reputed teacher at the university of Ibn Khaldoun, Tiaret, who holds a doctoral degree, and has a long experience in the educational domain that goes for forty-two years long. The second of them currently pursues her doctoral studies. Her university teaching experience adds up to seven years long. The third is also a doctoral student who has been teaching for nine years. The fourth of them has a teaching experience of six years at the university of Tiaret. The fifth of them is now a teacher at the university of Mostaganem, and whose been teaching at the university for ten years. The last teacher is also a doctoral student whose university teaching experience adds up to three years.

2.3.2.3 Interview Results

Results of the second question of the interview that asks the teachers about the importance of affect in a learner's success reveals an agreement between all the six teachers on the idea that affect is crucial to a learner's success. Here is what one of them had to say about it: **“In fact, learner's affect is the main drive for success, not only in education or learning, but also in every single aspect of our daily life.”**

However, answers to the third question vary between the teachers in arranging the affective aspects that they think affect learners directly. The first teacher reckons that learners attitudes towards the environment and his self-esteems are the most important as he states that **“Learning success relies much on ordered classroom environment availability where the need for a good teacher-learners relationship prevails... on the implementation of the humanistic approach aiming at emphasizing the personal worth of the learner...”**, whereas the second teacher thinks that self-esteem is the most important as he puts in his words **“...his self-esteem plays a crucial role in directing his motives and attitudes when it comes to learning.”** The third and sixth teachers think that attitudes affect learners most directly while the fourth teacher enumerates learner's affective traits in an order of importance, **“Motivation, attitudes, self-esteem and tolerance of ambiguity.”** The fifth teacher says that self-confidence and self-esteem are the most important; then, come attitudes and positive mindset followed by feelings and emotions. After that, comes motivation before reflection on action that precedes perseverance that occupies the final position.

Results of the fourth question about the importance of motivation show that all teachers agree on the idea that motivation is crucial to successful learning. One of them says that **“...motivation provides the drive to endure what the journey of exploring and learning might carry...”** However, five teachers do agree with the belief that motivation on its own is not enough. One of them says states that **“... motivation alone is not enough as it needs to be backed by other affective and cognitive aspects.”**

Answering the fifth question on which type of motivation, the extrinsic or intrinsic, is more important to learners to have, three of the teachers adhere to the idea that intrinsic motivation is more important. One of them says that **“intrinsic motivation should receive more emphasis because external motives whatsoever their nature and power might decrease performance.”** One of the remaining two teachers thinks that both types have equal importance; whereas, the other thinks that they are both important with intrinsic motivation being more linked to boosting learners’ autonomy as she puts in her words **“... both of them important, but to boost learner's autonomy, students need to develop intrinsic motivation rather than waiting change from an outside source...”**

Results of the next question, the sixth, about the effect of attitudes on learners reveal an absolute agreement among all six teachers on the idea that attitudes affect learners and learning. Here is what the second teacher says about them: **“Attitudes are important in starting the learning journey –if positive of course-. As said earlier, they make the learner stand the ups and downs along the way. Nevertheless, if attitudes are negative, a learner needs to keep his mind open for arguments that may change them.”**

About the next question, the seventh, that asks about the effect of self-esteem on learners, teachers seem to share large agreement that self-esteem could impact on learners either positively or negatively. Of course, what all participant teachers favour is the positive impact. Here is what the first teacher says about self-esteem: **“Self-esteem is also considered as an influential factor which impacts either positively or negatively learners’ academic achievements. Higher self-esteem influences learners positively by inciting them to have an energetic role in the learning process. Opposite to that, learners with lower self-esteem take an inactive and passive part inside the classroom.”**

Results of the eighth question that asks the teachers about the difference between highly motivated learners bearing positive attitudes and high self-esteems and their demotivated peers who bear negative attitudes and low self-esteems revealed that learners with such characteristics tend to have the favoured and the most pursued academic performances and achievements. The difference is best summarized in the answer of the fifth teacher who says: **“I think that such students differ from their classmates in a number of ways: They are punctual, front-benchers, hard workers, active, volunteers in answering questions and more tolerant of learning ambiguities. And most importantly, they are more successful than the rest of the class.”**

An unprecedented image of agreement between all the teachers is also plain in their answers to the ninth question about the effect of flow states on learners. They all adhere to the idea that flow states always encourage learning. Here’s what the first teacher says about this: **“It promotes the beings’ state of enjoyment, helps them be more creative, productive and happy. Such an optimal psychological state of flow triggers learners’ persistence**

and endow them the ability to be aware of their progress and adapt their goal-oriented actions accordingly.”

The yields of the next question, the tenth, that elicits the teachers’ views about the impact of demotivation, negative attitudes and low self-esteems on learners show, once again, the teachers’ unanimous agreement that such affective factors are strong barricades that bar learner’s way towards enjoyable learning. Here’s what the third of them says about those factors: **“such aspects keep students stuck in a specific point of the learning process... keep them away from finding new ways to move forward.”** The fourth teacher shares a similar perspective; however, he adds something of value as he reckons: **“...there are some learners who challenge their feelings and their attitudes towards the teacher or the subject and make success, but not joy, in their learning.”**

For the eleventh question that is meant to find out whether positive affect is fundamental to a positive learning experience, four teachers agree that the presence of a positive affect is mandatory to a positive learning experience. Here’s what the second of them says regarding the matter: **“Absolutely, the positive affective state is crucial in positive learning journeys.”** The third teacher; however, thinks that affect is not really necessary to a positive learning journey as he thinks that positive learning experiences could occur even in the absence of a suitable affective state.

Results of the twelfth question regarding the importance of goal-setting before embarking on learning challenges show that all teachers agree that setting goals is a vital practice. Here is what the fourth says: **“There is no doubt that a clear plan and a clear goal are so crucial at the outset of any learning endeavour. Both act as a map guiding the learner’s way.”** The third teacher; however, reckons that setting goals falls on the teacher rather than the learner.

Results of the thirteenth question that is raised to find out whether clear goal setting contributes anyhow to an enjoyable learning experience reveal an agreement between the dominant majority of the participant teachers on the idea that clear goal setting leads to enjoyable learning as it appears clear in the words of the second teacher who says: **“Knowing that the effort spent on attaining a learning goal is properly directed is satisfying. Without planning, the learning process is longer and sometimes ambiguous.”** The third teacher thinks otherwise; he sees that learning could be enjoyable even in the times of the unplanned and unconscious learning.

In the fourteenth question raised to see whether continuous supportive feedback helps keep the learner engrossed in a learning activity, the teachers show good agreement that continuous feedback keeps the learner engrossed in learning. Here is what the first one says about this: **“Ongoing supportive feedbacks remain of utmost importance for learners via which very helpful information are provided allowing learners to better understand what they are actually learning and what necessary changes they are supposed to make in order to attain high-quality performance.”**

Results of the following question, the fifteenth, that asks the teachers to tell whether supportive and continuous feedback has any effect on the learners’ attention exhibit another strong agreement between the teachers on the idea that supportive feedback has a positive impact on learners’ attention. Here is what the first teacher says: **“...I do believe... feedback**

promotes learners' self-regulation; ensuring an interaction between engagement, monitoring and trust. Once these processes are instilled, the learner willingly invests efforts towards searching for feedback information. Doing so, feedback impact is guaranteed and learner's attention and commitment are attracted and gained."

For the sixteenth question that asked whether continuous feedback has anything to do with enjoyable learning, results reveal that the presence of feedback could lead to the enjoyment of learning. The fifth teacher says about this: **"of course, the more feedback is supportive and encouraging; the more their learning is enjoyable."**

Results of the seventeenth question reveal that a match between the challenges and skills is necessary to achieve enjoyment in learning as all teachers agree on this idea. This is best explained in the words of the first teacher who says: **"Striking the right balance in all aspects of life remains the nominal finality, especially when it comes to learning. If a task is too difficult and learners have not the potentials and skills to cope with such challenge, they systematically lose the (envy) will to learn. Conversely, if the task is too easy and requires lower levels of skills, learners might feel bored and weary."**

Results of the between challenges and skills final question of the interview that asks the teachers to tell whether the absence of a match between challenges and skills could cause boredom and anxiety again show agreement among teachers that the absence of a match and a balance between challenges and skills leads to unwanted learning experiences that could include boredom and anxiety. Here is what the second teacher says about this: **"Well, opting for easy material leads to boredom for sure – though in some cases even easy options are difficult for some!!- However, choosing materials slightly above students' capacities definitely causes anxiety at start –not harmful one- but leads to enjoyment later on."**

2.3.2.4 Preliminary Readings in the Interview Results

Results obtained from the teachers who accepted to take part in the interview proved as vital as those obtained from the students. They also contribute in checking the truth of each of the suggested hypotheses. In this section, the suggested hypotheses will for a second time be thoroughly discussed in the light of the findings of the interview.

As a start, what is evident about the results of the second, the third and the eleventh question of this interview is that the teachers share large agreement that a learner positive affect has much to do with his success, despite the marked differences between the teachers as to which affective aspects are the most important. This implies that affect is crucial to enjoyable learning.

About motivation, which is hypothesized to be the first key factor that is capable of affecting the quality of the learning experience, the interviewees agree that the presence of motivation, especially the intrinsic type of motivation, in learners' is likely to lead them to experience joy in learning; whereas, demotivation is reckoned, always by the same teachers, to be a good factor responsible for boredom and disinterest. These conclusions are in good accordance with those results elicited from the respondents of the questionnaire represented in pie-chart.5.

Moreover, it must be mentioned that extrinsic motivation can also lead to enjoyable learning. This last statement agrees with the findings of the questionnaire in pie-chart.5.

Hence, once again, motivation with its both types the extrinsic and the intrinsic_ with the latter being more preferable than the former_ contributes to rendering learning enjoyable.

Similar to motivation, attitudes are suggested in the preliminary hypothesis to play a major role in shaping the quality of the learning experience. Attitudes are believed to make learning enjoyable as much as they could make it boring. This suggestion receives enough welcome and approval from the part of the teachers as they share absolute agreement on the idea that positive attitudes condition enjoyable learning while negative attitudes render learning unwanted and boring. This conclusion goes on very well with that obtained from the students (see pie-chart.6 & pie-chart.7).

The hypothesis included another key factor that can interfere in shaping the quality of learning which is self-esteem. Based on the teachers' large consensus on the belief that high self-esteem does make learning enjoyable while low self-esteem cripples learners' endeavour and squash their will, it could be deduced, that so far, that what is suggested in the hypothesis is valid concerning self-esteem. This, of course, seems to very much get along with the opinions of the majority of students who participated in the questionnaire (see pie-charts.8 & pie-chart.9).

Moreover, readings in the results of the remaining questions of the interview concerning the challenge-skill balance, clear-goal setting and supportive feedback point out to the conclusion that adequate skill, judicious goal-setting and supportive feedback are mandatory to an enjoyable learning experience. This, of course, comes to sustain what was mentioned in the hypothesis regarding the adequate skill.

Preliminary readings in the interview results reveal a consensus of the teachers that an enjoyable and a flow-producing learning journey is one in which necessitates the learner's affective predisposition consist of a blend of positive affective traits such as high level of intrinsic or extrinsic motivation, positive attitudes towards the constituents of the learning experience, a high level of self-esteem, a number of adequate skills to compete against the learning challenges, continuous supportive feedback from the significant people around during learning in addition to the right planning and goal setting. Consensus is also shared regarding the fact that amotivation, negative attitudes, low self-esteems, inadequate skills and absence of planning and feedback are factors that render learning experiences uninteresting and boring.

2.4 Conclusion

It is known to lay people and experts that learning can be either enjoyable or boring. The aim of this research was to discover the factors associated to joy and flow feelings as well as those associated to boredom and disinterest. The dual use of students-addressed questionnaire with the teachers-addressed interview has enabled and eased the discovery of precious facts. As they have been redundantly mentioned in this section, the factors that seem to lead EFL learners to states of flow and enjoyment are motivation with its both types, positive attitudes, high self-esteem, positive environmental conditions, adequate skills compared to the learning challenges, clear goal setting and continuous supportive feedback. Whereas, the factors that cause a learner to enter states of boredom and apathy during learning consist in amotivation, negative attitudes, low self-esteem, negative environmental conditions, unbalance between the skills and challenges, absence of goal setting and supportive feedback. Hence, to alter a learner's boring and uninteresting learning experience into one that is flow-

generating, the learner must alter negative affective states such as amotivation and negative affect into positive affective states, and ensure enough cognitive aspects such as the challenge-skill balance, clear goal-setting and feedback.

Chapter Three

Chapter Three

Recommendations and Practical Suggestions

- 3.1** Introduction
- 3.2** Working on Learner Affect
 - 3.2.1** Empowering Motivational feelings
 - 3.2.1.1** Intrinsic motivational feelings
 - 3.2.1.2** Extrinsic motivational feelings
 - 3.2.2** Ensuring Positive Attitudes
 - 3.2.2.1** Attitudes towards the Content
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 - 3.2.2.3** Attitudes towards the Peers
 - 3.2.2.4** Attitudes towards the Environment
 - 3.2.3** Enhancing Self-Esteem
 - 3.2.3.1** Providing Positive Psychological Support
 - 3.2.3.2** Building Positive Relationships
- 3.3** Enhancing Learners' Skills
 - 3.3.1** Matching Challenges and Skills
 - 3.3.2** Setting Goals
 - 3.3.3** Providing Feedback
- 3.4** Conclusion

3.1 Introduction

Falls in a gigantic blunder he who thinks that the affective part of the learner should be ignored as it is of less significance than the cognitive, for it, as an infinite number of academic studies have demonstrated, shares equal importance to the cognitive part. Learner affect must be approached with much care and must be heeded all throughout the systematic didactical and pedagogical design and practice of instruction. As much as a learner must maintain his grasp over the exposed instructional intellectual material, he must, at the first place, feel good about that material as well as about all the different constituents of the instructional setting around him. That is exactly the aim behind the research work at hand i.e. to find efficient means to render learning an enjoyable experience, or in other words, to render learning a mental flow-producing activity. In this section, based on the interpretations made of the results of this current empirical research work, a number of recommendations and suggestions are laid down for practitioners to take account of the affective construct of the learner and optimise it in order to perfect the quality of learning and help learners attain the state of flow.

3.2 Working on Learner Affect

The affective part of the human learner incorporates a set of affective aspects all of which need to be at its highest level of positivity so as to ensure positive affect that engenders enjoyable learning. Some of the most known affective aspects are motivation, attitudes and self-esteem. One of them gets messed up or ruined, and the learning experience is threatened of becoming boring, unenthusiastic or even repellent in anxiety-causing situations.

3.2.1 Empowering Motivational feelings

Motivation is the will to act in a certain manner. A learner who is to find enjoyment and flow feelings during his learning experiences must be optimally motivated. To reach that required level of motivation, a learner needs to feel boosted by strong motives. The stronger the motives are the stronger the desire to pursue learning is; whereas, the weaker the motives are the weaker the desire to learn becomes. These motives vary from a learner to another and could be either intrinsic or extrinsic.

3.2.1.1 Intrinsic motivational feelings

Even though both types of motivation are likely to lead to flow and enjoyment, the intrinsic type stands with some more strength. Psychologists maintain that it would be very much preferable to make learners want to learn without awaiting external rewards right from the very first moments of their learning experience. Love for learning must penetrate their hearts and minds through contacts and exchanges with the supportive significant people around as well as through encouraging learning environment.

3.2.1.2 Extrinsic motivational feelings

The intrinsic type of motivation, being preferable than the extrinsic type, does not exclude the chances of the latter to generate flow feelings. Enjoyment and flow in learning could be attained through extrinsic motives as well. In fact, extrinsic motivation is one solution to the problems of demotivation to learn which some learners suffer. For example, promising good job opportunities employment can trigger out the curiosity of uninterested learners, attract them, and embolden them to learn enthusiastically.

3.2.2 Ensuring Positive Attitudes

The research has showed that attitudes interfere in shaping the quality of learning. The more positive they are the more enjoyable and admirable learning will be. This finding makes a call for the betterment of learners' attitudes in order to make them enjoy learning. Learners generally have attitudes towards all what constitute the learning experience. This incorporates the content, the teacher, the peers as well as the environment. Each of these constituents must appeal to the learner; otherwise, room for disorders shall open.

3.2.2.1 Attitudes towards the Content

A major constituent that has an influence on the psychological states of learners is the nature and quality of the content. The more it attracts learners and appeals to them the more their chances of the enjoyment of acquiring that content increase. That is why it should suit learners' levels as well as their social beliefs. In the case of young learners, what would attract them best is perhaps a content that incorporates the things they like in their private lives the most. For example, texts that centre around their favourite cartoon character, activities like singing poems, telling stories and offering textbooks full of colours and pictures. In the case of adult learners, what seems to matter most is the ideas introduced in the content, because as they are adults and not children, they may not allow the grasp of new ideas easily. They need to get convinced, especially if they hold previous different perspective about those new ideas. The content also must meet the requirements of the society. It must not try to impose ideas that are known to be refused by learners and even parents of the society.

3.2.2.2 Attitudes towards the Teacher

The teacher is the important piece that plays the part of the controller and manages the learning activity. He plans the lesson, he manages the classroom, and has the most heard voice. Learners form their speculations about him. Some find him good while others find him bad. Results of this study have demonstrated that for the learner to enjoy his learning experience, the teacher must appeal to his expectations. He must find way into his mind and find out about what he likes and dislikes in a teacher so as to get down to his expectations. In such a way, the learner would conceive a positive attitude towards his teacher, trust him and get ready to learn from him happily.

3.2.2.3 Attitudes towards the Peers

Schools and universities make locations where learners spend long time with one another and go in verbal and even non-verbal contacts and exchanges. They form ideas and thoughts about each other. As has the current study revealed, these ideas must be positive in order to be a factor that leads to enjoyment. For this reason, contacts and relationships between learners must be based on a number of positive values and manners such as mutual respect, shared love, fair competition and mutual help and assistance.

3.2.2.4 Attitudes towards the Environment

Respondents of this study have manifested a strong agreement that the more positive the constituents of the environment are the more the likelihood of producing flow out of learning increases. This implies that the school or the university staff, the institution regulations, the classroom conditions, and accompanying services such as the shutter, security, and catering must be at their best image in order to satisfy the learner and provide the warm atmosphere where he can think of nothing else but learning.

3.2.3 Enhancing Self-Esteem

Self-esteem is that specific image that each individual has in his mind about himself. Results of this study have showed that learners with high self-esteem and self-confidence reach enjoyment and flow in learning; whereas, learners with low self-esteems are prone to difficult situations, failures and anxieties. A learner's self-esteem is not fixed. It changes so frequently from time to time that it sometimes reaches its highest levels and in other times it subsides to its lowest levels. This change could be manipulated to the benefit of the learner through psychological support, fair rivalry and positive relationships.

3.2.3.1 Providing Positive Psychological Support

Self-esteem can relatively be kept positive by the individual adult learner himself through the continuous provision of self-encouragement. Simple sentences like "yes, I can do this" become self-assertions and soon do they become convictions, while many, especially young, learners, may need to receive support either from their teacher, from their peers, their parents, or from other significant people around them to get emboldened enough to undertake learning tasks self-confidently and efficiently.

3.2.3.2 Building Positive Relationships

A learner who desires to improve the way he feels about himself has to have some positive social relationships where he feels wanted, loved and esteemed by people around him. being surrounded by positive people who provide support and constructive feedback, and who utter words of wisdom and motivation is well likely to increase self-esteem in the learner; and hence, ameliorate the quality of his learning and lead him to experience flow. This is why it remains wise to avoid people who undermine self-confidence with their negative words and destructive criticism.

3.3 Enhancing Learners' Skills

Ensuring a positive affective state in the learner is a fundamental step towards enjoyment and flow. But as it may seem clear, it is insufficient on its own. Cognition also must be cared for and enhanced. Thanks to the testimonies of informants, this research has been able to come out with a number of practical suggestions concerning the improvement of cognition. To create equilibrium between challenges and skills, to set goals and to provide constant feedback is what needs to be done in order to improve the cognitive part and end up in flow feelings.

3.3.1 Matching Challenges and Skills

A first step towards the improvement of cognitive skills is to make sure that the learning challenge and the learner skill are even. Challenges that surpass or are below the current level of learner's competence must be avoided as they engender either stress or boredom. A teacher must make sure to assign the suitable learning activities to his learners. He must clear their confusions and make things accessible to them of course, not to the point that he gives them solution to the learning tasks, but to the point where he creates some enthusiasm and curiosity in his learners. Learners in their turn must make sure to unstoppably empower their competencies in order to be able to face future learning challenges. This way, learners would enjoy what they do, and would want to pursue it unceasingly.

3.3.2 Setting Goals

The practice of setting plans and goals to attain at the end of learning challenges is another important step a learner must do for the sake of enhancing his cognitive skills and consequently the quality of his learning. The results of this research have showed that this practice provides learners with long-term vision and short-term motivation. It increases their awareness and caution during the times of learning and keeps ambiguities away. The teacher could take the initial step and sensitise his learners about the importance of goal-setting. He could train them to be self-driven and self-motivated to generate their own set of goals.

3.3.3 Providing Feedback

This study asserts that continuous supportive feedback is a cognitive skill that must be present in order to lead to flow and enjoyment in learning. A learner must positively think of and constructively criticise his acts in the direction of the ultimate goal. Every tiny step should be commented on immediately after that it is taken. From their parts, teachers should build confidence in learners and familiarise them with self-feedback techniques such as questioning their own performance and progress.

3.4 Conclusion

The affective state of flow is not just the ordinary stable affective state that perhaps describes the minimum emotional state that is required to be present in a learner in order to grant mere academic success. What is special about flow is its feelings of ecstasy that many people desperately long to feel. It has been thought that the implementation of flow feelings in learning would perhaps cause, hopefully, all learners especially average and uninterested learners to catch that ecstasy out of the experience of learning. This last section has been worded to serve that only purpose. A reader should now be enlightened about what is mostly necessary for the production of flow feelings. Based on the findings of this current research, what is recommended to holistically care for in order to attain flow feelings in learning is, in the first place, the individual learner himself. That implies to care for the affective and cognitive aspects that combine the learner namely his affect in general, motivations, attitudes_ towards mainly everything in the learning setting_, self-esteems, in addition to his mental skills. However, although it has been ensured that hard efforts were made to draw these conclusions, their accuracy remains questionable. Consider it granted that they were delivered to you, dear reader, with absolute honesty and total objectivism with no sign of manipulation. Yet, their first source is well the subjective reports of many learners. Not that any one of them is accused of telling falsehood, but subjective testimonies are often difficult to interpret. Hope remains that this work will not just remain buried on the shelves of libraries. It should be discussed and then benefited from as it is taken from real life context.

General Conclusion

General Conclusion

Success in life or in any kind of the multifarious life activities that humans pursue throughout their lifespans requires enjoyment, for it could be almost in every way impossible to reach success in the midst of hatred or apathy or under states of stress or anxiety. That would account for the reason why educational psychologists would make gigantic efforts to assure that learners are provided convenient learning atmospheres where they can find enjoyment and happiness, and thus where their probabilities of success are increased compared to those of failure. One of those educational psychologists is the Hungarian-American Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi who pioneered flow theory. Flow is a psychological phenomenon that refers to an affective state of deep and endless feelings of exhilaration to the point that nothing else would seem to matter. The learner who enters the state of flow is fortunate. He feels so ecstatic, excited and completely engrossed in the learning experience that he thinks of nothing except learning. Such an affective state is well likely to lead him to success, and more importantly, to what humans seek in life, never-ending happiness.

Based on the findings of this current research one could assert that some affective aspects are required to be kept at their highest levels and positive states in order to lead to enjoyment in learning. The first of these affective aspects is motivation. A learner must be highly motivated to enter flow states. Intrinsic motivation is the ideal type of motivation that is required. However, extrinsic motivation could also lead to flow. Second of the aspects is attitudes. A learner's attitudes must be kept positive towards the constituent of the learning experience including the content, the teacher, the peers as well as the surrounding environment. The third affective aspect is self-esteem. A learner's self-esteem must also be kept high so as to lead to flow. To sum up, these affective aspects are summed up in the umbrella term affect. Hence, the way to flow requires a positive affect in the learner.

Moreover, one could also argue that flow feelings in a learner result from a combination of his adequate mental skills all together with his stable and positive affective states. No matter how stable a learner's affect is, how highly motivated or how confident he is, he is well likely to end up in states of boredom or stress and anxiety unless ensuring the presence of three cognitive factors. The first is a balance between the possessed mental skills and the learning challenge. This balance helps avoid both stressful and apathetic states of mind. The second is clear goal setting and planning that directs the route of learning. The last factor is the supportive continuous feedback which keeps the learner on the right track and which helps keep attentional powers on the learning challenge.

The attainment of flow feelings during learning is in the first place the responsibility of the adult learner himself. It falls on him to enhance his affective states as well as his cognitive skills. The current research with its both theoretical and practical parts has to a certain point provided a recipe to help learners attain flow by means of the worldwide recommended search tools. Needless to recall, this whole work, just like all the other human-made works, is not absolutely accurate and utterly empty from flaws of deficiencies especially that its results are based on the subjective accounts of respondents.

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Appendices

APPENIX 1

Student-addressed questionnaire

Dear Students,

We would be very much pleased to have you as part of our research that aims at discovering the variables that render the learning experience of English enjoyable and flow-producing life activity. Rest assured that your answers shall remain confidential and used only for the purposes of this work. Your collaboration is indeed appreciated.

The Questions

Part one

Please, tick in the box what represents you most.

1. Select your gender.

Male

Female

2. State your level.

Undergraduate

Post graduate

Part two

Please, tick in the box what represents you most.

1. How would you describe the moments of your English learning experience?

Enjoyable Boring Unenthused

2. What would you say are the reasons behind your enrolment in English studies?

Love of the language A job opportunity Love of English speech community

Please, feel free to mention other reasons.

.....

3. Does this reason contribute anyhow to make your learning experience enjoyable?

Yes | No

4. Your attitudes towards learning- if positive- do they play a part in making your learning enjoyable?

Yes | No

5. What if they were negative? Would you feel any negative impact of them on learning?

Yes | No

6. What about your self-esteem? In case it was high, would it contribute to making your learning experience more enjoyable?

Yes | No

7. On the other hand, could you say that low self-esteem is likely to render your learning experience boring?

Yes | No

8. Could you say that secure and favourable environmental conditions can somehow make you enjoy learning?

Yes | No

9. Do you think that insecure and unfavourable environmental conditions make you hate learning?

Yes | No

11. How do you feel about learning challenges?

Yes | No

12. Have you ever enjoyed a learning activity while your attention was distracted?

Yes | No

12. Have you ever enjoyed a learning activity while your attention was distracted?

Yes | No

13. Have you ever experienced a time when some learning activity was so enjoyable that you wished to keep doing in it forever?

Yes | No

14. How do you feel about the moments when learning becomes enjoyable?

Engrossed | Indifferent

Again, have our sincere gratitude for all the time you devoted to take this research endeavour a step closer to its ultimate goal. Should you want a means to question about its results feel free to contact us on the following:

Mohbng95@gmail.com

Appendix 2

Teachers-addressed Interview

Dear teachers;

It is such an honour to approach you requesting your contribution to this work as it is indeed very much needed for its continuation and results. This work falls in the area of educational psychology. Its aim is to discover variables that are likely to cause a learner of English language to experience flow_ that is an optimal psychological state where the activity at a person's hand is extremely enjoyable that it invests all of his attentional powers to the point where he feels that nothing else matters at that time_ in the midst of his learning experience. Your collaboration and time devoted for answering these questions are enormously appreciated.

The Questions:

1. How long have you been teaching?

.....

2. Do you think a learner's affect_ that stands for the sum of affective aspects such as feelings, emotions, motivations, attitudes and self-esteem_ has anything to do with his success?

.....

3. What affective aspects, do you think, affect learners directly?

.....

4. How do you respond to those who claim that motivation is crucial to learning?

.....

5. What type of motivation you think affects learners more: the intrinsic or the extrinsic?

.....

6. How about attitudes? How, do you think, they impact on learning?

.....

7. What about self-esteem? How does it affect learning?

.....

8. How do learners bearing positive attitudes, highly motivated, and holding high self-esteem stand different from their peers?

.....

9. How does such an optimal psychological state of flow affect learning?

.....

7. On the other hand, do you think that demotivation, negative attitudes and low self-esteem hinder them from experiencing joy?

.....

8. You could say that the positive affect is fundamental to a positive learning experience, could you not?

.....

9. How important do you think it is to have a clear plan with a clear goal before beginning any learning challenge?

.....

10. Do you think clear-goal setting contributes anyhow to an enjoyable learning experience?

.....

12. To what extent does continuous supportive feedback help a learner keep engrossed in a learning activity?

.....

14. Do you believe that this will have an impact on the learner's attention?

.....

15. Does it, this continuous feedback, have any relationship with the enjoyable learning?

.....

16. Do you think that a balance between the skill and the challenge is vital to enjoy the learning challenge?

.....

17. Do you think unbalance between the two is likely to cause boredom or anxiety?

.....

Summary

The objective of this study is to study the variables and factors leading to expect states of "flow" in learning experiences. A mixed methodological approach was implemented consisting of a quantitative tool (questionnaire) and another qualitative (interview). The final interpretations of the results obtained demonstrate that the psychic state of "flow" can be achieved when motivation is high, when attitudes are positive, when self-esteem is high, when environmental conditions are positive, when balance between challenge and skill is achieved, when learning objectives are clearly outlined, and when feedback is properly established.

Résumé

L'objectif de cette étude est d'étudier les variables et les facteurs conduisant à attendre des états de "flow" dans les expériences d'apprentissage. Une approche méthodologique mixte a été mise en œuvre composée d'un outil quantitative (questionnaire) et un autre qualitative (interview). Les interprétations finales des résultats obtenus démontrent que l'état psychique de "flow" peut être atteint quand la motivation est élevée, quand les attitudes sont positives, quand l'estime de soi est haute, quand les conditions environnementales sont positives, quand un équilibre entre le défi et compétences est réalisé, quand les objectifs d'apprentissage sont clairement soulignés, et quand une rétroaction est correctement établie.

ملخص

الهدف من هذه الدراسة هو دراسة المتغيرات والعوامل التي تؤدي إلى توقع حالات "الاستمتاع" في تجارب التعلم. لتحقيق هذا الهدف، تم الاعتماد على منهج مختلط يتكون من أداة كمية (استبيان) وأخرى نوعية (مقابلة). توضح التفسيرات النهائية للنتائج التي تم الحصول عليها أن حالات الاستمتاع يمكن تحقيقها عندما يكون الدافع من التعلم قويا، وعندما تكون المواقف إيجابية، عندما يكون تقدير الذات مرتفعًا، عندما تكون الظروف المحيطة إيجابية، عندما يكون التوازن بين التحدي والمهارة، عندما يتم تحديد أهداف التعلم بوضوح، وعندما يتم تحديد الملاحظات بشكل صحيح.

Tiaret University
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