| **RESEARCH ARTICLE**

The Satisfaction of the Learners' Linguistic Needs in terms of Acceleration: The Case of the Moroccan University English Learners in non-English Departments

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| **ABSTRACT**

The learning of English as a foreign language in a context where English is considered a third or fourth language leads to many difficulties for these learners, both socially and academically. This study aims to investigate the field of English language learning in such a way as to find and implement adequate teaching strategies with which teachers can accelerate the pace of learning of their learners, thereby allowing them to develop quickly their linguistic performance. The study is based on mixed-methods dimensions where a survey was conducted among 444 non-English department students in the Faculty of Legal, Economic, and Social Sciences, Cadi Ayyad University, Marrakech, Morocco. The participants are composed of two groups: undergraduates and master students. The findings of the research reveal some of the linguistic issues the learners face in terms of acquiring the English language by taking into consideration important factors such as time, energy, resources, and proficiency. In order to find a concrete solution to the problem of learning in terms of its accelerating mode, we opted for the adoption of a teaching model that should be comprehensive and instructional in such a way as to improve the language learning of students within limited periods. Through the discussion of the results after taking two experimental tests and the implementation of the Comprehensive Instructional Model of Language Learning (CIMLL) among the master students, we came to a conclusion that revealed the extent to which the majority of these students were conscious about the utility of learning the English language. It then became a requirement for them to succeed in their academic studies in terms of research and the development of their linguistic skills. Based on the existing literature, few studies seriously investigate the issue of acceleration and the sustainability of students' learning of English, especially since there is no clear-cut model of teaching that adopts this technique.

1. Introduction

The fact of accelerating the students' learning and improving their linguistic performance becomes one of the fundamental requirements of any educational reform worldwide. Hence, the primary goal of this paper is the investigation of the issue of acceleration in learning the English language by taking the example of Moroccan university learners in non-English departments as a case study in such a way as to decipher the difficulties they encounter in their linguistic, academic realm and try to find adequate strategies to overcome them. It is a research-based study that aims to find new teaching and learning strategies that can help teachers accelerate the English language learning of their learners in a short span of time. The research is based on both qualitative and quantitative dimensions in such a way as to highlight the important results, which were obtained through the survey that was conducted among university students in different disciplines. We also adopted a placement test among the master students and the implementation of the Comprehensive Instructional Model of Language Learning (CIMLL) (Boughoulid, 2023a). The results are supported by the literature in this field that revealed important factors that could pave the way towards the acceleration of the learners' language learning in a teaching context.

However, in the discussion, we tried to explore how these factors can be adapted and tailored in order to establish a fast-paced teaching and learning model that should be comprehensive and instructional, and that can successfully contribute in the satisfaction of these learners' linguistic needs by taking into consideration the optimization of time, energy, resources and proficiency. The new model for accelerating learning should also integrate the three learning components that should be strong in terms of instruction in order to improve the learners' academic and conversational English. These learning components should include the richness and variety of the input, the teachers' building of competency with their students, and the preparation of communicative and dialogic opportunities where students are supposed to be successfully engaged, motivated and encouraged in order to express their ideas and feelings in an anxiety-free atmosphere (Boughoulid, 2023a). In fact, in this teaching context, teachers and practitioners in the domain of education should appreciate their English language learners as being susceptible students who are eager to meet their teachers' expectations in terms of their linguistic acquisition and performance in spite of the challenges they might face to meet their language requirement within ideal time frames. Most of these difficulties have to do especially with their acquisition of English as a foreign language with their academic grade levels.

2. Literature Review
According to Mohr (2004), language learning acceleration in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom is described in terms of its instruction as being "fast paced, integrated, engaging, and enriching, rather than remedial, linear, passive, or inordinately patient" (p. 19). Hence, in order to engage students in the process of learning, teachers are required to provide them with effective, efficient, and practical learning opportunities where they would be able to express themselves freely. The teachers' emphasis should be on some fundamental skills such as reading and writing in such a way as to prepare students for effective use of the English language with a focus on their strengths that should be reinforced and weaknesses that should be remediated. Adequate and rich input is highly recommended in this case in order to boost the students' linguistic repertoire, especially on the basis of the acquired vocabulary and grammar skills. Schmitt (2008) stated that in order for a student to speak fluently in English, he or she needs to acquire between 8000 to 9000 word families to achieve fluency in reading and as many as 5000 to 7000 families for an excellent oral exchange, which leads to the understanding of about 98% to 99% of the written words. We then need to acknowledge the development of the existing learning approaches to satisfy the learners' needs and help them develop new learning strategies because the reliance on the teachers' efforts and experience will not be enough to fulfill the learners' requirements. It is a learning gap that should be realized through the adoption of techniques-based instruction that could guarantee acceleration in terms of the learning of the English language such as vocabulary learning, communication, and recursion.

However, English language learners should acquire an average number of words that is required for anyone in such a way as to use English as a native speaker or for academic purposes. This requirement will not take place unless the teachers develop what Schmitt (2008) calls a recursive approach to vocabulary learning, with repetition and drilling as important keywords that help in the fulfillment and development of their linguistic potentials. Hence, the adoption of a unique approach will not satisfy the learners' requirements. For instance, the use of some well-known teaching methodologies such as the Total Physical Response (TPR), the Communicative Approach, the Audiolingual Methodology, or even the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) model will not accelerate the learners' performance in terms of language learning if they are not properly adapted in such a way as to meet the learners' linguistic needs. If we take these methodologies in terms of the three psychologically motivated principles that include input, competency building and communicative acts, we could notice that they did not manage to integrate them properly. In the case of the TPR, we find that the communicative acts are completely missing. In the Communicative Approach, both input and competency building are missing as well. For the Audiolingual Methodology, we notice the missing of the input as an important component that prepare students for better learning (Boughoulid, 2022a). Concerning the SIOP model, though it is research-based and addresses the academic needs of English language learners (Echevarria, 2017), we found that on the basis of the three learning components, it seems that they are defined in general terms, which makes them less comprehensive (Boughoulid, 2022b). The adequate solution then is to develop a new model of teaching and learning that should be comprehensive and instructional and that should use all these components without missing out on anyone of them in such a way as to accelerate the learners' learning of English.

A recent study, carried out by Boughoulid (2023b), investigates the level of the development of English language learners in their vocabulary learning through the implementation of the Comprehensive Instructional Model of Language Learning (CIMLL) which supports the learners' vocabulary recognition abilities and which integrates the three learning components, input, competency building, and communicative acts. This study indicates the learners' progress in terms of vocabulary learning that goes beyond four words per classroom hour/session and which is considered as one of the best scores in comparison to the results obtained through other studies by scholars such as Barnard (1961), Milton and Meara (1998), and Milton (2007). The investigation is based on two different experiments and adopted various evaluations that include both pre- and post-placement tests because it is based on the CIMLL which is a language-learning model that is comprehensive and instructional that helps learners engage in different dialogic and communicative contexts that are well designed for learning a language.

On the other hand, everyone can notice the widespread of various learning programs that claim that they can resolve the problem of language learning among learners in terms of its acceleration through the adoption of effective learning and teaching strategies, which is not always the case. In fact, "Accelerated learning programs are one of the fastest growing transformations in higher education" (Wlodkowski, 2003, p. 5), which pushes learners to take language courses and get legal certificates for graduation in a short span of time, but this reality questions the rigorous aspect of the training in terms of teaching and learning. For instance, the Center for the Study of Accelerated Learning at Regis University, Denver, USA, documented that there are at least 250 colleges or universities that provide accelerated learning programs using non-traditional teaching techniques, especially for working adults (Boyd, 2004). According to McKeon (1995), the accelerated learning idea was based on Lozanov's teaching approach referred to as "Suggestopedia" where he was able to work on the students' previous experiences by urging them to use their brains' abilities in a well-prepared teaching and learning environment.

It is so crucial, then that teachers assess the work they require of their students on a regular basis in order to afford as many learning opportunities as possible. Such opportunities also encourage them to merely interact with their classmates using the inherent content acquired at the input stage where vocabulary in content is presented and then built at the building competency stage through the adoption of various practices in the process of learning such as repetition, self-support, drilling, and the use of visual resources for reinforcement. With some theories of second-language acquisition in terms of the provision of a comprehensible input, as it stated by Krashen (1987), such practices help students overcome their low expectations in relation to their communicative aspect and encourage them to be learners that are more active and creative, and not passive observers. In fact, in such ESL classes, the English learners should get most of the language practices and the teachers should keep the situation under control through observation, assistance, mentoring, and correction with maximal student engagement in such a way as to promote their oral performance, which can contribute to making English an accelerated language within these classes. Thus, by taking their varying learning preferences into account, these English learners need to adopt some characteristics to facilitate their learning and develop a variety of skills, attitudes, and techniques to be successful, productive learners. Their teachers should scaffold and promote their success by encouraging them, helping them to make great efforts and achieve their linguistic expectations because these learners can understand and decipher far more words, phrases, and expressions than they can actually strive to produce within academic and non-academic contexts before they develop oral and written language fluency and accuracy (Diaz & Flores, 2001).

Learners can then make accelerated progress in language learning if teachers take the responsibility to provide clear, effective, efficient, and comprehensive instructional strategies that benefit all learners academically by incorporating accelerated learning rather than counteracting practices. It is extremely urgent that teachers adopt a clear-cut teaching and learning model that contributes appropriate instruction to make English an accelerated language for their learners.

3. Methodology
3.1. Background
The present study is realized among students in a non-English department at the Faculty of Legal, Economy and Social Sciences, Cadi Ayyad University, Marrakech, Morocco. The participants are composed of two different groups: the undergraduate students with a total number of 379, and the master students with a total number of 65, which makes the total of both groups 444 student. This number of participants includes 21 employees, 12 of whom are at the undergraduate level. Their levels of English vary from beginning to advanced with an advantage of the students at the master program whose level is higher than the average. Concerning their age, most of the undergraduate students are less than twenty years. For the master students, most of their ages vary between 21 and 25 years. Hence, both groups study English for two hours per a week. The content they study includes different texts most of which are related to their field of study such as management, economics, bodies of law, audit, and accountancy. They are also exposed to some sessions in which they are supposed to prepare and present topics of their choice in front of their classmates as a part of a public speaking activity. It was an opportunity for all students to express their ideas about their favourite themes using English as a means of communication. The teaching content also consists of some sessions, which are related to the studying of different grammatical issues such as the use of tenses, articles, functions, etc.

3.2. The research design
I tried to conduct the present study on the basis of mixed methods that was both quantitative and qualitative due to its richness in terms of different statistics which were extracted from the conducted research. The special attention was completely directed towards the satisfaction of the participants' linguistic needs in terms of the acceleration of their learning of the English language. In this case, the focus was on two different options on the basis of the conducted survey, (1) whether these learners prefer to learn English proficiently in a long time frame or (2) they prefer to learn basic English in a short period of time.

In fact, the majority of the students in both groups provided concrete and straightforward answers most of which revealed the extent to which they were keen to learn English and develop their performance in terms of its academic and professional realm.

4. Results and Discussion

On the basis of the statistics that concern the comparison of the participants' sexes in the two groups, it is absolutely significant to mention that they are almost identical in percentage as it is indicated in figures 1 and 2 where the difference is limited to 1%. Hence, the difference in terms of age is of paramount importance since we are dealing with two different categories of students. The first category is related to the undergraduate students most of whom are under the age of twenty years with a representation of 82%. In fact, it is due to the fact that this category of students has just started their first year at the university. It is composed of three groups of management and one group of public law (Figure 3). The second category concerns the master students who represent both the first and second year of the master program of Accounting, Control and Audit (ACA). Hence, 79% of these students are levelled between 21 and 25 years (Figure 4). In fact, the difference between the two categories of students in terms of age was obvious due to the distinctions that could be noticed on the basis of their age, level, experience, discipline, and maturation.
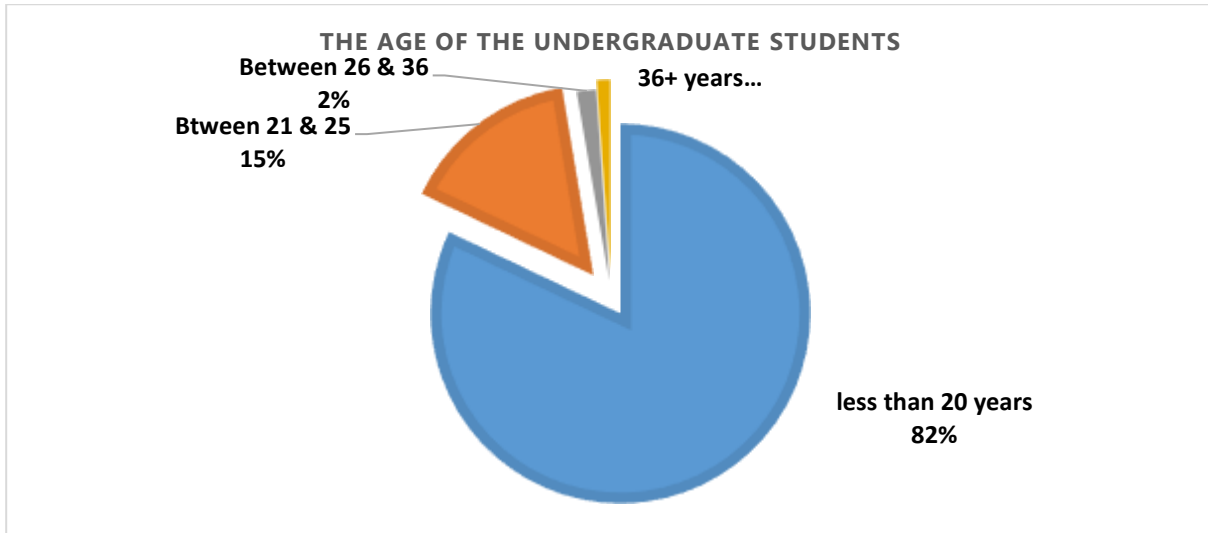
Figure 1: The sex of the undergraduate students
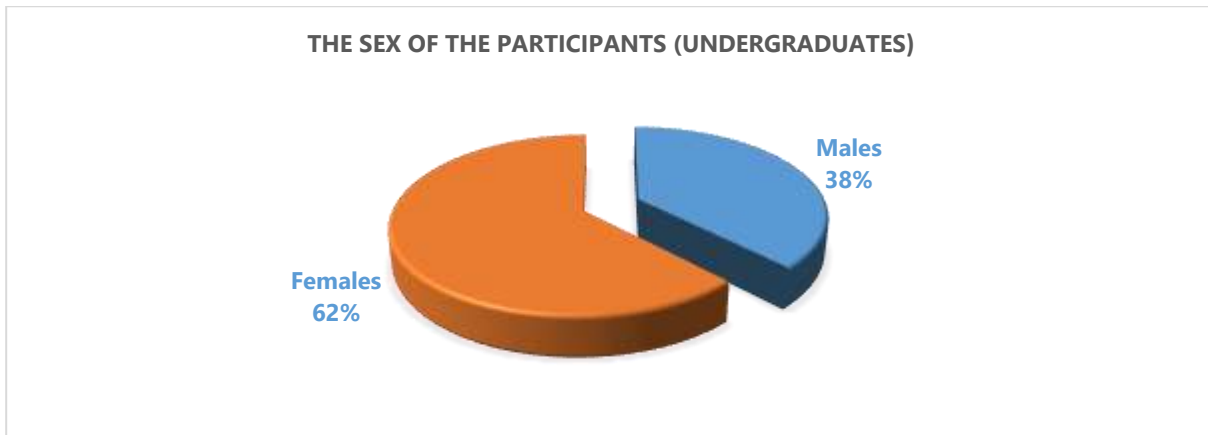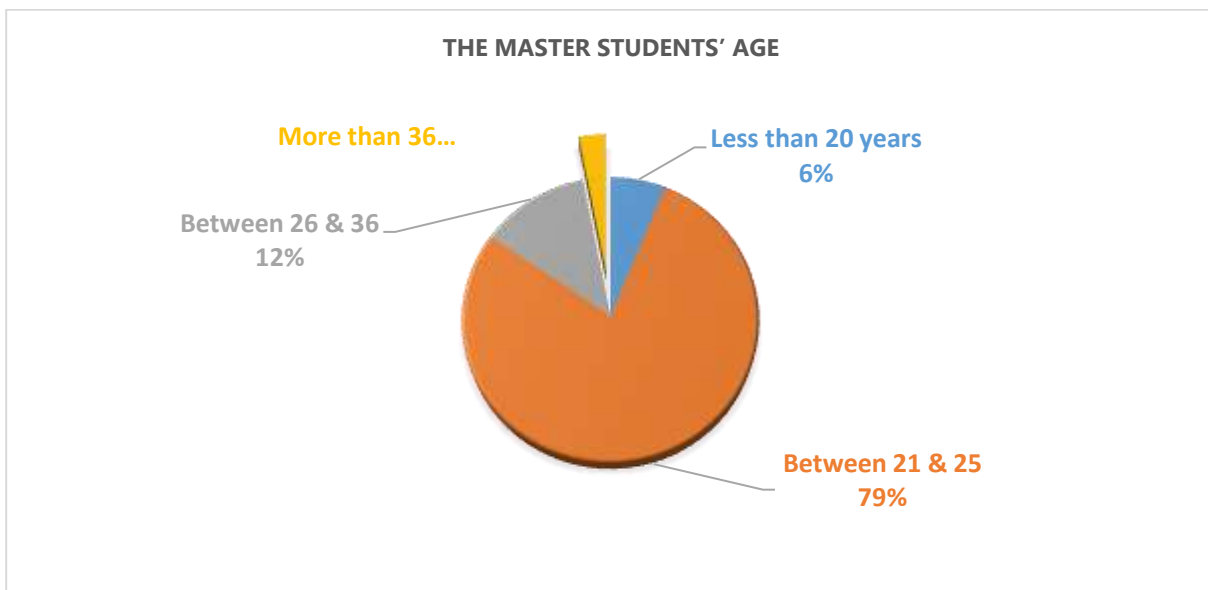

Figure 2: The sex of the master students
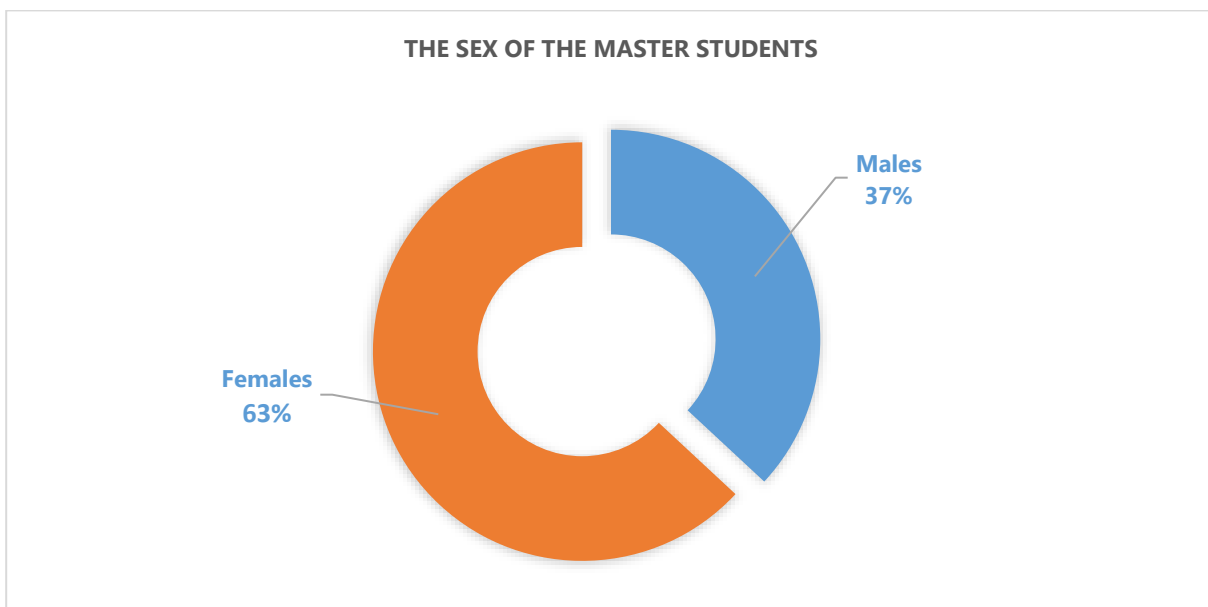
**Figure 3:** The age of the undergraduate students

**Figure 4:** The master students' differences in terms of age

However, the statistics also show that the number of employees in the master program of Accounting, Control and Audit (ACA) was significant in comparison to the one of the undergraduate students. As a matter of fact, we found that the total number of the first category was only 65 students, which includes 9 employees with a representation of 3% (Figure 5), and the total number of the second category was 379 students that includes 12 employees with a representation of 14% (Figure 6). In terms of a percentage, the number of the employees in the master's program is higher than the number of undergraduate employees. Hence, the number of accepted employees in the master's program is always restricted in terms of access in either open or limited polarization. According to the requirements adopted by the administration in the master's program, the percentage of the students that is supposed to be accepted should not go beyond 20%. Hence, in most of the master programs at Cadi Ayyad University, Marrakech, the number of accepted students in each class is limited to between 30 to 40 students. In some cases and for different reasons, some master classes usually end up having less than 30 students, especially in their second year of study.

On the other hand, I should also mention that among this restricted number of the employees in both groups, the percentage of those who work in the domain of tourism represents only 1% of the whole number of students in each group. In fact, this category

of employees was highlighted in this research due to the fact that the mastery of the English language in the field of tourism in the last decade has become an absolute requirement for them. For instance, after the Covid-19 era, most of them declared that they were expelled from work due to their lack of competitiveness, especially in English, which pushed them to give it more importance in such a way as to improve their linguistic competences. Hence, their requirement was to find a way to learn it as quickly as possible and get a legal certificate, which requires the adoption of adequate teaching methodologies that should take into account two crucial characteristics, time frame and proficiency.

Figure 5: The occupation of the undergraduate students
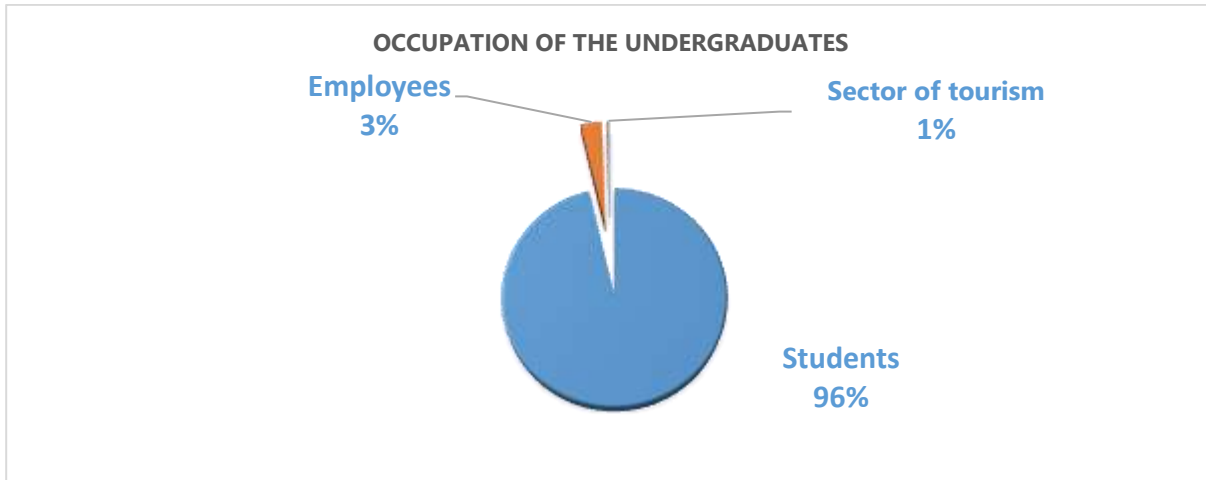
**Figure 6:** The occupation of the students at the master program
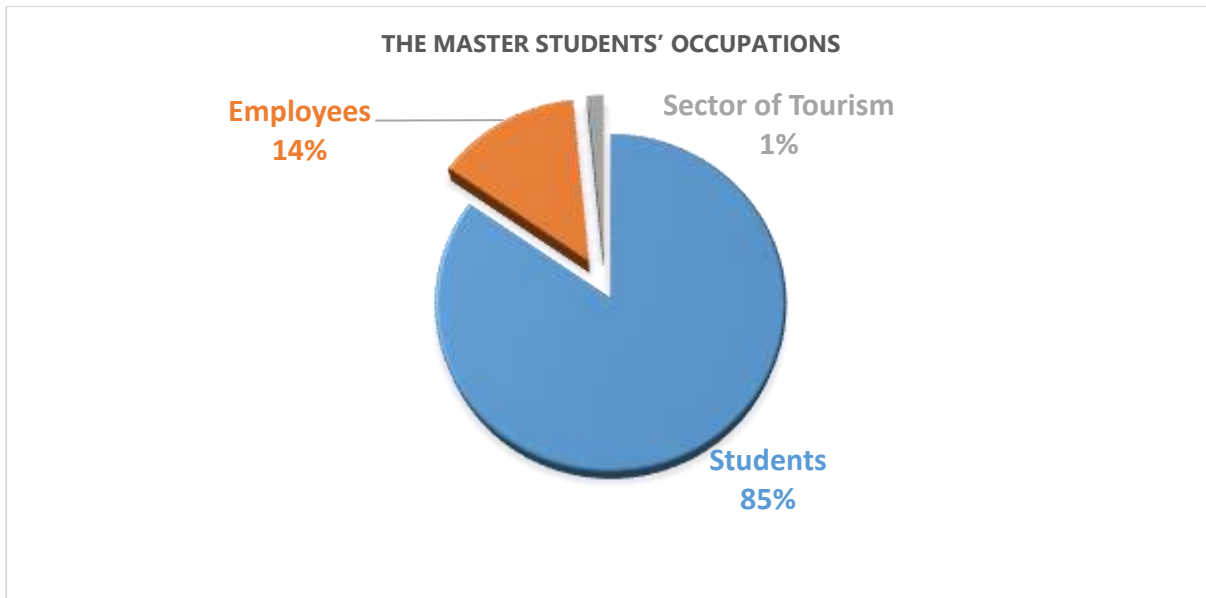
In terms of their English level, as shown in figures 7 and 8, the majority of the students in both groups are categorized as beginners or with an average level with a percentage that varies between 34% and 40% for the undergraduate students and between 46% to 20% for the master students. What is also noteworthy in this study is that the percentage of the students with an advanced level of English in the master program, which is represented by 6%, is higher than the one among the undergraduate students, which is represented by 3%.

Actually, these results might be related basically to the students' background and experience as well as their exposition to the English language during their long process of learning whether at the high school or at the university. In fact, the learning of

English at the Moroccan universities in non-English departments has started to become an obligation in the last few years for all the categories from the undergraduate students to doctoral students. As a part of the Ministry of High Education new linguistic policy, we have started to witness the teaching of the English language in non-English departments such as the faculties of sciences, the faculties of legal, economic and social science, the faculties of arts and humanities, high education institutions and schools of engineering, management, agriculture, faculties of medicine, etc. It is a necessity that is required by the national and international norms in terms of graduation and employment.

Figure 7: The undergraduate students' English level
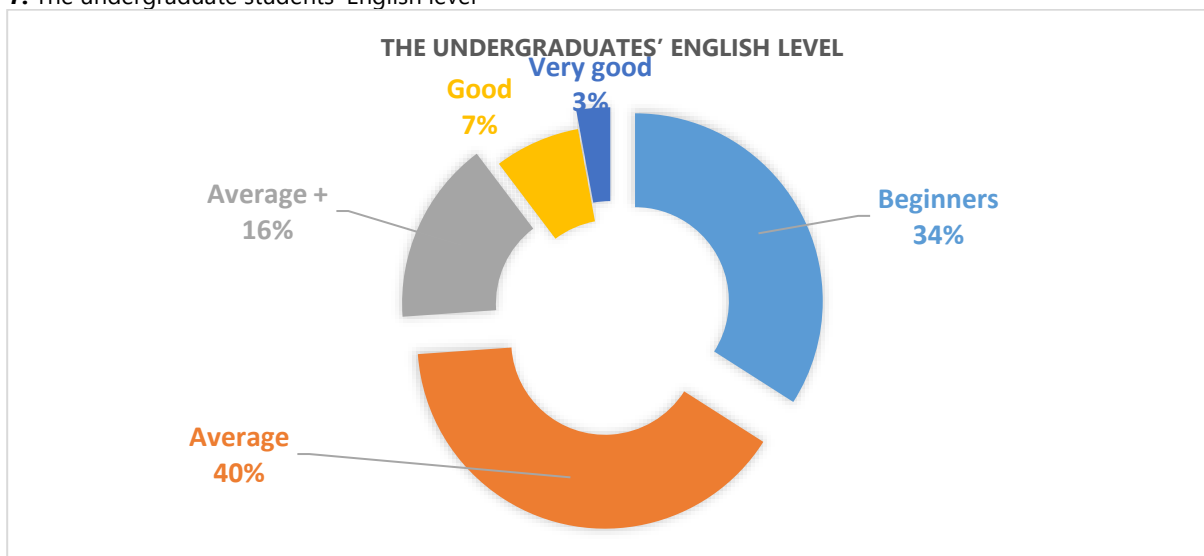
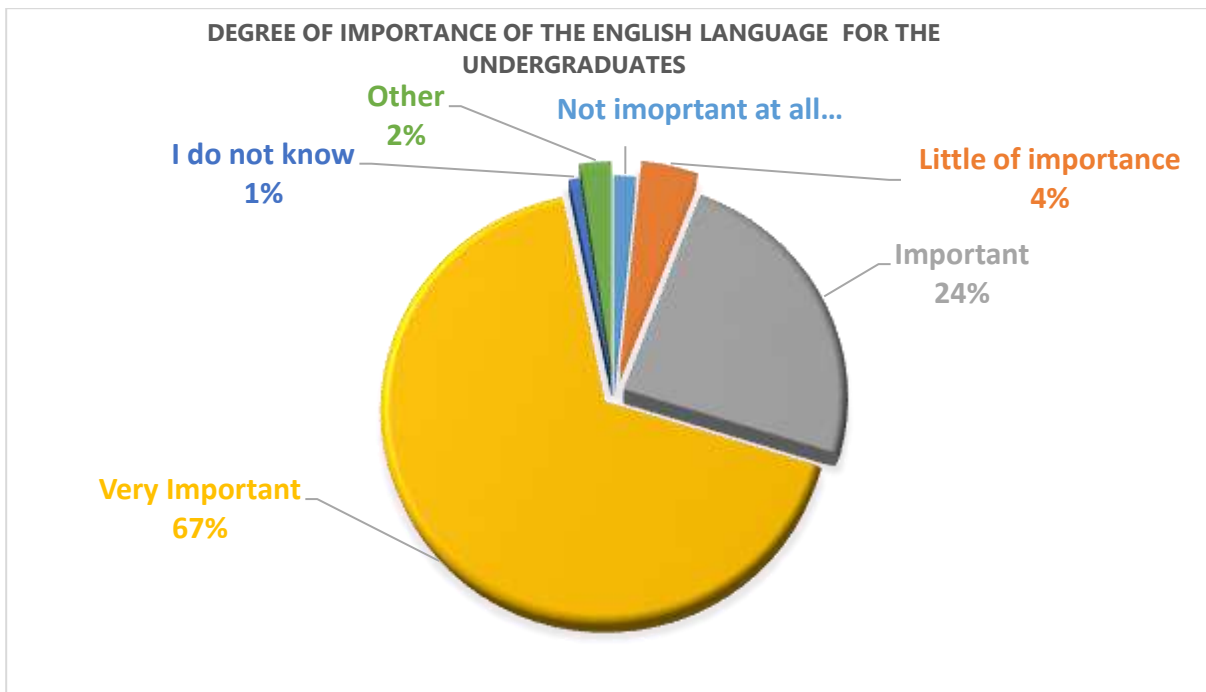**Figure 8:** The master students' English level
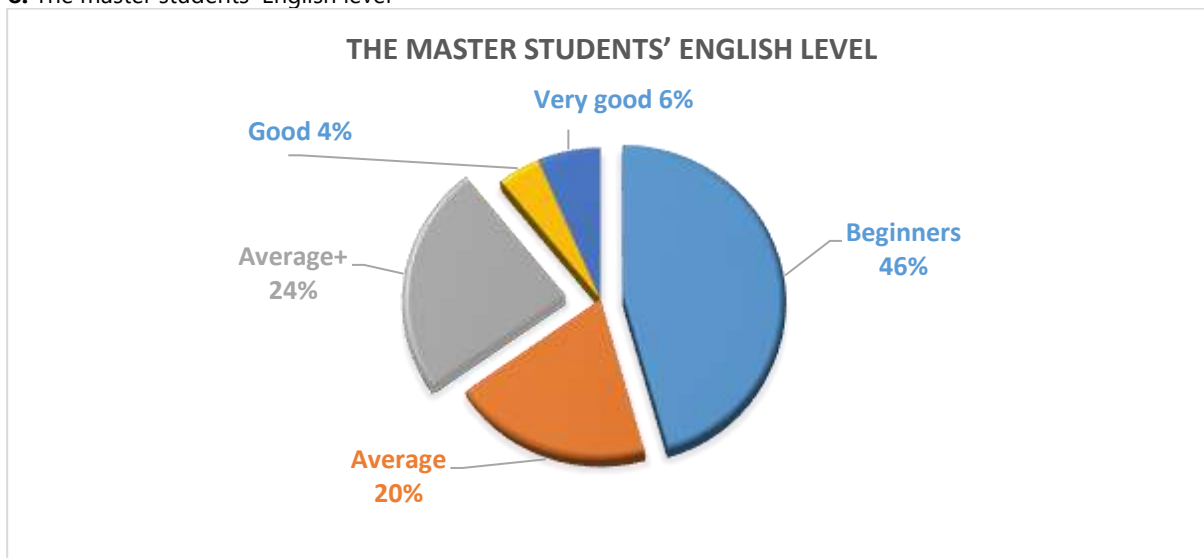
This, in fact, leads us to decipher the degree of the importance of the English language for all the students in both groups under study as it is explained in details in figures 9 and 10. Hence, figure number 9 shows that 67% of the undergraduate students reveal that the fact of learning English is very important for them, whether in their studies, work, or in their daily life. The same thing can be said about the master students where most of them confess that the learning of English is of great importance for them, with a representation of 71%.

However, another important option is the one in which the students in both groups were asked to state other degrees of importance in terms of teaching and learning the English language. Hence, 2% of the undergraduate students added that it is vital for them and 6% of the master students expressed their desire to study English due to the fact that it turns out to be a requirement

on the level of their scientific research and university studies requirements. It is a fact that cannot be denied anymore and that should be taken into account in every reform that concerns Moroccan universities.

Figure 9: The degree of importance of the English language among the undergraduate students

Figure 10: The degree of importance of the English language among the master students
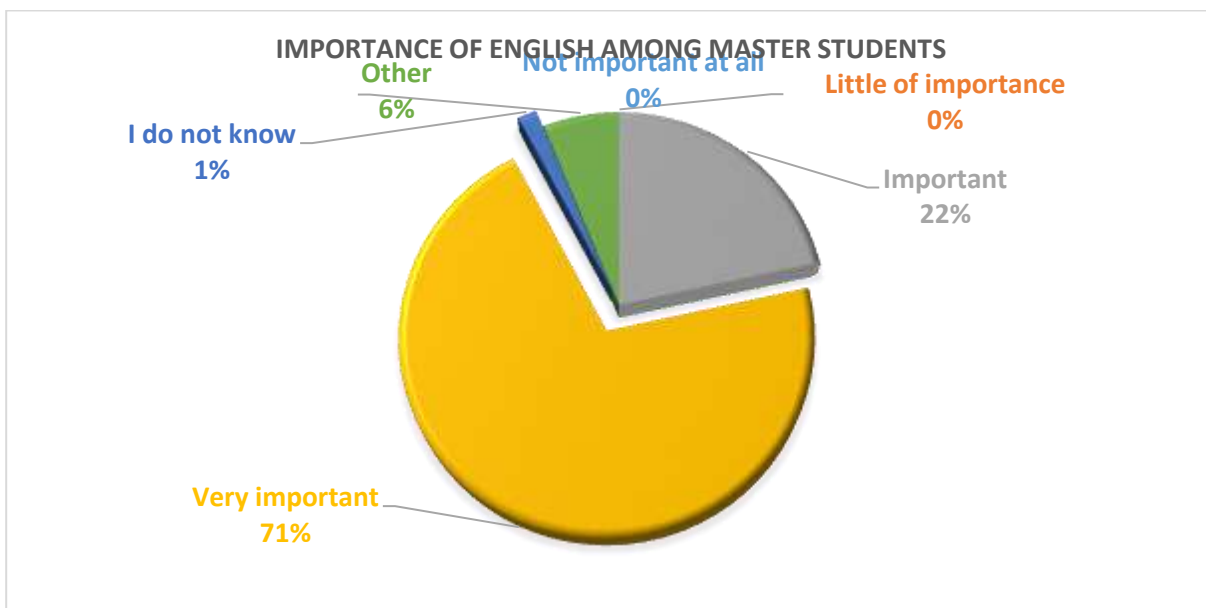
As a matter of fact, the most crucial question that is raised through this research is related to the students' preference for learning the English language (Figures 11 and 12). This question revolves around the idea of whether these students prefer to learn basic English in a short span of time or learn English proficiently but in a long time. According to the different statistics stated in Figures 11 and 12, 75% of the undergraduate students prefer to learn English proficiently for a long time. Thus, 89% of the students in the master program also prefer to learn English proficiently in a long time. The students in both groups prefer then to sacrifice time for the sake of proficiency. The percentage in relation to both groups reveals the extent to which these students are eager to learn English proficiently although it is going to take them a lot of time and energy. Some of these students added that, in case there is a learning opportunity, they prefer to learn English proficiently, but in a short time frame. Hence, this fact represents an important request that should be taken into consideration in the learning process by teachers, practitioners, theorists, and policy makers in

the field of education by finding an adequate teaching and learning strategy that combines both the reduction of time and efforts and guarantees smooth access to proficiency in terms of learning.

On the other hand, we can raise relevant questions whose answers might pave the way towards the development of an adequate teaching methodology. Among these questions, we can state the following ones:
(1) Is there a possible way of learning the English language proficiently, but in a short period of time in such a way as to satisfy the learners' linguistic needs?
(2) To what extent can it be realizable in the light of the existing teaching methodologies and approaches in the process of teaching and learning?
(3) What should be required in any teaching methodology or model in order to achieve this goal? Is it in terms of its comprehensiveness, plainness in terms of the delivered instructions, or both of them?

Figure 11: The undergraduate students' preference for learning English
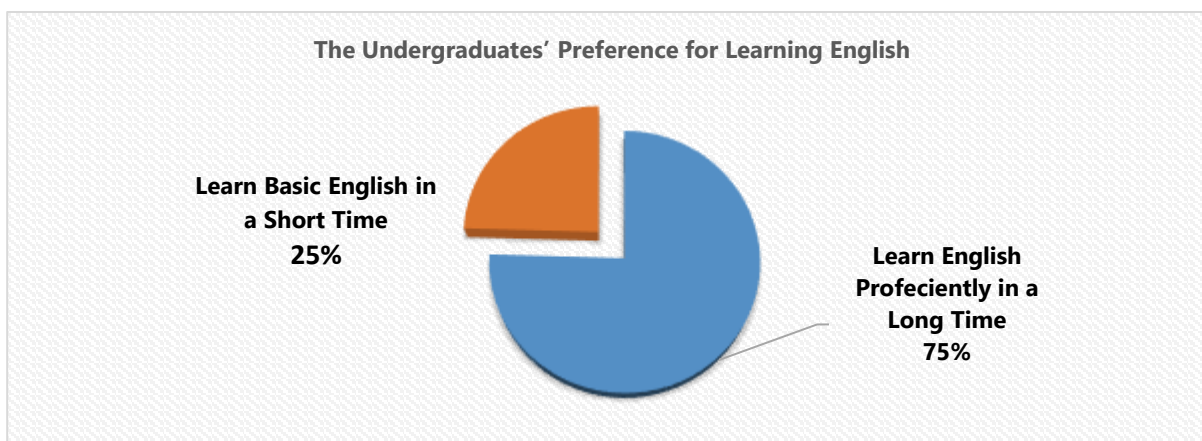
**Figure 12:** The master students' preference for learning English
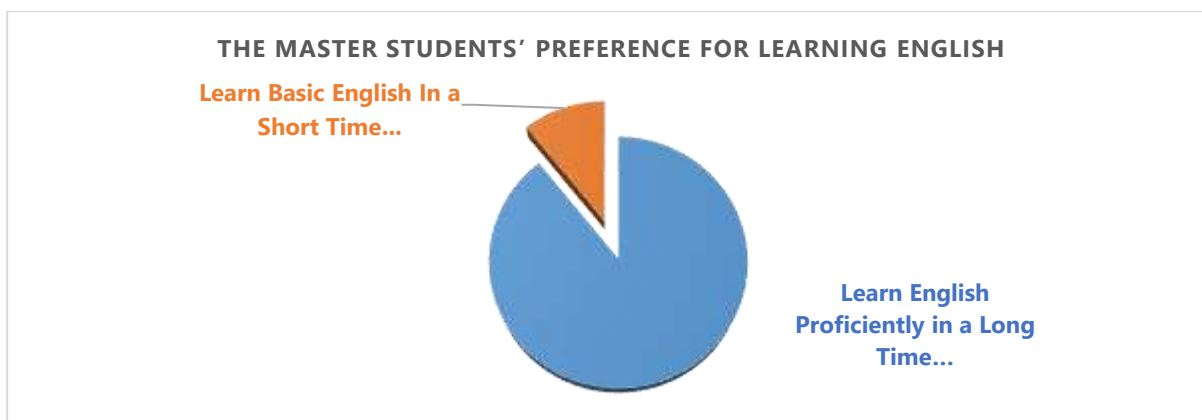
On the basis of the above mentioned statistics, the objective of this research is the development of a comprehensive approach with some practices that would satisfy the English language learners' needs and enable them to attain linguistic efficiency by taking into account time constraints, as an efficiency consideration, and resources without sacrificing proficiency, as an effectiveness consideration. In fact, by "effectiveness", we mean in terms of adequate learning that these learners learn in such a way as to reflect reality, and by "efficiency", we mean in the sense of optimizing time, resources, and energy.

The primary hypothesis of this research in this sense is that modern content & language teaching methodologies such as the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) model (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2017), if well mastered, well used and well adapted to the teaching local context would eventually help a teacher reconcile efficiency with effectiveness. Why the SIOP model

specifically? In fact, I started by evaluating the SIOP's capacity to reconcile efficiency with effectiveness because it claims to be a research-based protocol of content-language learning, & because it claims universality & comprehensiveness. Hence, a close examination of what the SIOP could achieve in this regard was not entirely satisfying for the two following reasons: (1) no explicit learning evaluation metrics are used in this approach, and (2) no explicit learning model is clearly mentioned (Boughoulid, 2022b). As a matter of fact, two solutions were added in such a way as to enrich a research-based model: (1) a comprehensive model of learning is suggested, and (2) discursive learning evaluation metrics were used. My assumptions in this case are based on two important issues. The first one is related to the teaching-learning process, which is discursive. The second one is related to the learning process that requires the exposure to a rich linguistic input in its graphic and non-graphic form, building grammatical competency in its graphic and non-graphic form, and engaging the learner in a communicative context input in its graphic and non-graphic form. In terms of evaluation, the focus was on four evaluative dimensions, Quantity, Quality, Manner, and Relation (Grice, 1975).

Figure 13: The master students' grades in the pre-placement test

THE MASTER STUDENTS' GRADES IN THE PRE-PLACEMENT TEST

Students with the average 43%

Students without the average 57%
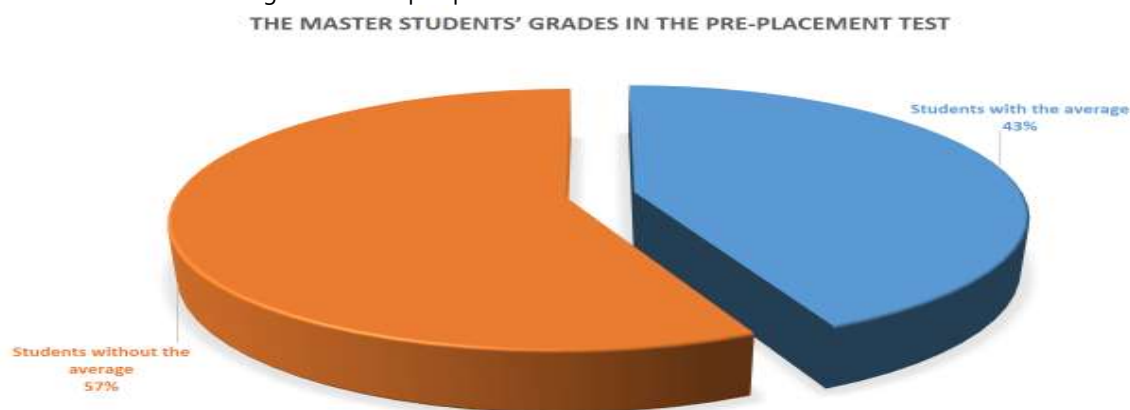
Figure 14: The master students' grades in the post-placement test

THE MASTER STUDENTS' GRADES IN THE POST-PLACEMENT TEST

Students without the average 40%

Students with the average 60%
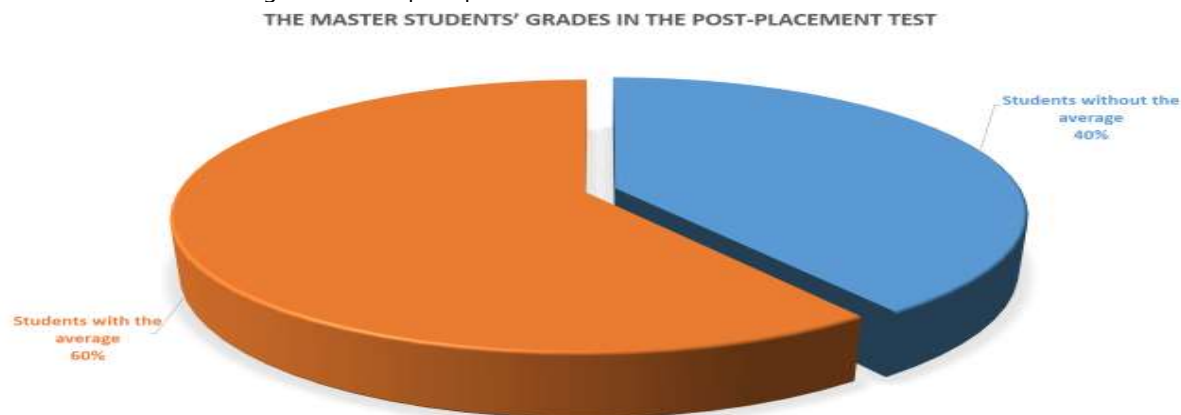
On the basis of the pre- and post-placement tests undertook by the master students, figures 13 and 14 show the impact of the implementation of the Comprehensive Instructional Model of Language Learning (CIMLL) as an outstanding teaching model that takes into consideration the learners' linguistic needs in terms of time optimization and proficiency. The results show that out of the 65 students who participated in the pre-placement test, only 28 of them were able to get an average or more (Av+) with a representation of 43%, whereas 37 (Av⁻) of them did not succeed in it, which represents 57%. After eight weeks of study with an average of two hours per week and the implementation of the CIMLL, the same number of students took a post-placement test in such a way as to judge the degree of progress they were able to achieve in the process of learning. Hence, 39 (Av+) of them were able to get the average score with a representation of 60%, whereas 26 (Av⁻) of them were not able to get the average, which represents 40%. In fact, most of them succeeded in developing the grades they obtained in the first placement test even though their level of English was low.

5. Conclusion

Through the analysis of the results obtained in this study, it has been found that no accelerating learning will take place and no accelerating programs will be considered as successful in terms of learning English unless they adopt suitable models of teaching and learning that take into account the learners' linguistic needs in a real context. Hence, the implementation of the CIMLL is a clear theoretical attempt as a teaching and learning model because of its comprehensive and instructional character. In fact, the so-called adequate teaching strategies or models that help in the acceleration of the learning among English language learners, especially among non-English department students, should integrate various learning factors. Thus, all these factors should be related to the comprehensiveness of the content on the basis of the deliverance of straightforward instructions through a combination of content that targets the learners' needs, the focus on language use, and the learning techniques.

However, because of its recursive character, it is necessary to support the learners' literacy skills in such a way as to help them develop their English language for academic and daily life purposes through efficient learning opportunities. Accelerated learning that is built on existing models and that is based on well-designed and implemented experiences increases the leaners' learning rate. Being aware of the learners' linguistic needs is decisive in ensuring the appropriateness of their language learning abilities, being aware of the depth of knowledge, and gain adequate ideas about the establishment of any existing accelerated learning theory or program. Such procedures provide well established learning and teaching opportunities for teachers to build their learning goals based on various sources of data in relation to their learners' different linguistic needs.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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