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Self- Concept Impact on Learners' Level of Academic Achievement

Case study: First Year English students at Biskra University.

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to my precious parents, my sisters, my brothers, my little nephews and to my closest friends.

Acknowledgments

First and foremost I thank God, the Almighty who strengthened me and provided me with help and courage to fulfill this work.

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Abstract

This research investigates the impact of self-concept on learners' level of academic achievement; this research is aimed to make students aware of the importance of having a positive self-concept in enhancing their level of achievement in learning English as a Foreign Language and the role of educators in helping them. Our work is based on the research question: Can learners have a better achievement if they have a strong belief in themselves and abilities by hypothesizing that the more students have a positive self-concept the more risk they take to enhance their level of achievement. However, the literature review showed the importance of the affective factors basically the self-concept in promoting students' learning. The theoretical part contains one chapter that is divided into two sections: section one deals with self-concept and motivation; the second one deal with learning, achievement and the importance of risk-taking in success. The practical part is carried out in the English Language Department at Mohamed Kheider University with first-year students; to conduct it, we adopted a descriptive method to describe our two variables and how they are related using a questionnaire for both students and teachers. Moreover, the obtained results strongly confirm our hypothesis and strengthen the students' need to a positive self-concept in order to achieve high scores. This work emphasises the importance of raising the awareness toward this issue to help students to progress, increase their achievement and keep their motivation high without disregarding the idea that each learner has his own abilities and way of learning.

ملخص

يدرس هذا البحث تأثير مفهوم الذات على الأداء المدرسي للطلاب الجامعي و الذي يهدف الى توعية الطلبة إلى أهمية امتلاك نظرة إيجابية نحو ذواتهم بغية تحسين مستواهم الدراسي عامة ، و تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية خاصة. إضافة الى الدور الفعال الذي يقوم به الأساتذة لتعزيز مفهوم الذات الحقيقي و إكسابهم تلك النظرة الايجابية . و تبعا لذلك يطرح هذا البحث التساؤل التالي: هل يمكن للطلاب الحصول على أفضل النتائج إذا ما إمتلك نظرة إيجابية لذاته وقدراته؟ وللإجابة عليه تم طرح الفرضية التالية : كلما إمتلك الطالب نظرة إيجابية نحو ذاته و نفسه كلما زادت نسبة أخذه للتحديات, الأمر الذي من شأنه أن يعزز مستواه الدراسي. وبعد دراسة نتائج الأبحاث و الاطلاع على المراجع عززت هذه الأخيرة أهمية العوامل النفسية التي تساهم في تطوير التعليم و التعلم لدى الفرد ، خاصة فيما يتعلق في مفهوم الذات . هذا البحث مكون من فصلين ، الفصل الأول ينقسم إلى قسمين : القسم الأول يتناول مفهوم الذات و أهمية التحفيز ومختلف العوامل الداخلية والخارجية التي تؤثر في تطوير الذات. أما القسم الثاني يتناول مختلف نظريات التعليم و التحصيل الدراسي و أهمية اتخاذ المخاطر و التحديات في النجاح. الفصل الثاني : يتناول الجانب التطبيقي الذي نُفذ في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية في جامعة محمد خيضر بسكرة مع طلبة و أساتذة السنة الأولى . و للحصول على النتائج اعتمدنا المنهج الوصفي لتحليل الاستبيان المقدم لكل من الأساتذة و الطلبة . النتائج المحصل عليها أكدت الفرضية المطروحة سابقا وعززت حاجة الطلبة إلى امتلاك نظرة إيجابية لأنفسهم من أجل الحصول على أفضل النتائج. حيث تندرج أهداف هذا العمل في الحرص وبشدة على أهمية رفع الثقة بالنفس وتحفيز الطلبة على التقدم و إبقاء نظرة إيجابية دائما مع الأخذ بعين الاعتبار أن كل طالب لديه قدرات و طرق تعلم مختلفة عن الآخر.

List of Abbreviations

AF.F: Affective Factors

B.C: Before Christ

EFL: English as foreign language

EM: Emotional

FL: Foreign Language

FLL: Foreign Language Learning

SL: Second Language

SLA: Second Language Acquisition

SSL: Second language learning

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General Introduction

The growing number of English Language Learners in our universities poses increasing challenges and opportunities to educators and policy makers. They should invest both money and efforts to develop various learning processes for enhancing academic skills. However, academic failure can be a result of many external and internal factors that shape academic achievement and the most influential internal factor is self-concept. Prior to 1950, few psychologists and educators tried to study the self-concept and its related construct like self-esteem, self-confidence, motivation, and many others to show how they are correlated to academic achievement.

Background of the Study

In the current years, many researchers have focused on the importance of self-concept. One's self-concept is the overall beliefs a person has about him/herself which comprise many elements such as academic achievement and another related one. The psychologist Carl Rogers (1959) is the first one who dealt with the self-concept, according to him "everyone strives to become more like an ideal self". Many researchers claimed that learners whose mothers and teachers had high expectations for their academic achievement and support them achieve better than those who receive low expectations. Another psychologist argues that the way learners view themselves has a great effect on their school behaviour. Many researchers have reported a positive correlation between student academic self-concept and performance in the language learning class (Liu, 2008). In psychology, it is broadly known that self-concept plays a major role in all learning situations especially the academic setting (e.g., Denissen et al. 2007; Hattie 1992; Marsh and Yeung 1997 qtd. in Mercer Sarah 2). Academic self-concept has been shown to be an important affective variable that has a

reciprocal relation to academic performance in a large number of studies (Guay, Marsh, & Boivin, 2003; Marsh, Hau, & Kong, 2002).

Statement of the Problem

Today's self-concept as one of the influential factor, which affects student's academic achievement has received increasing attention. It has been declared that having a high self-concept can lead to high academic achievement. Many types of research into the field of psychology applied to the field of education to cope with learning difficulties conclude that those who have higher academic achievement tend to feel more confident in contrast to those who lack confidence in themselves achieve less. Since under-achievement has always existed, we should explore the reasons that lead some learners to achieve better in some modules and less in the other. Various studies have examined the influence of success and failure on an individual's self-concept and the way students overcome language problems. Since they often form their self-concept based on past experiences of success or failure. The problem under this investigation is to investigate the impact of self-concept on learners' level of academic achievement.

Research Question

The main question that is addressed in this research is as follow:

Can learners have a better achievement if they have a strong belief in themselves and abilities?

Hypothesis

In an attempt to answer the research question, the result will confirm the following hypothesis:

H: If learners have a high level of self-concept, then they would be able to take risks to increase their level of achievement.

Independent Variable: self-concept.

Dependent Variable: level of achievement.

Objectives of the Study

We set our primary research aims as follows:

1- Shed light on the importance of students' self- concept in enhancing their level of academic achievement and learning English as a foreign language.

2- Increase students' confidence in their selves and raise their awareness about their abilities and how the high level of self-concept helps them to succeed in the foreign language classrooms.

3- To show the importance of teacher in helping students to have a positive view of their abilities in order to have a better achievement.

Definition of Terms

Self: is an individual character or behavior. It is who we are.

Self- Concept: the beliefs that one's hold to be true about oneself.

Self- Esteem: an evaluative feeling a person has about him/herself.

Self-Efficacy: the ability to perform a particular task in a particular domain and particular situation.

Academic Achievement: the evaluation of students' performance in a particular subject.

Research Tool and Method

We deemed it appropriate to adopt the descriptive method for this kind of research because we set a questionnaire for both teachers and learners about self-concept. We gathered learner's and teachers opinions and attitude toward this topic.

The sampling is formed of 138 first year students and 11 teachers from Mohamed Kheider University. Moreover, the selection of students and teachers were randomly.

Structure of the Study

This study consists of two chapters, one theoretical chapter, and the practical one.

Chapter one consists of two sections. Section one covers the history of the self-concept and its related constructs. It defines motivation and its different types that have an effect on learners' self-concept and their learning. It covers also the main factors that affect students self-concept. Section two presents a review of literature about the learning process, learning theories, English as a foreign language, academic motivation, and risk-taking behaviour. Finally, chapter two discusses the research methodology, the sample selection, data collection tool that has been collected through a questionnaire administrated for first year students and teachers, and the interpretation of the findings.

Chapter One: Self-Concept and Effective Learning

1.1. Introduction

Over the past few decades, the study of self-concept has attracted many researchers for its importance in the understanding of the learner psychology. For that reason, it is important to shed light on the major philosophers and psychologists who have developed studies about the self-concept and self-related constructs that have been studied in relation to motivation and the way it affects learners' level of academic achievement. The first chapter will be devoted into two sections. Section one in this chapter starts with a brief history of the self-concept, how it has been studied, and its related constructs that they often used interchangeably. Motivation and its relation to the self-concept and the factors that affect its development will be covered in this section too. The second section presents the theoretical framework of the learning process in the academic setting; it also deals with different theories of foreign language learning in general and English as a foreign language particularly and the different methods and approaches used in teaching English as a foreign language. Academic achievement is discussed, in addition to Risk taking behaviour that is an important aspect of academic achievement.

1. 2. Critical Review of the Literature

Studies about the self-concept have its origins with Philosophers such as Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle who present it differently. Socrates views the self as the soul. However, Plato subdivides the soul into the rational and the irrational principle as immaterial and spiritual. Aristotle disagrees with Plato's rationalism arguing that the soul cannot be separated from the mental representation; according to him, the mind is higher than the soul (Hattie 11).

The self-concept has been covered in many fields including psychoanalytic, ego psychology, and sociology. Going back to the earliest writings of Mead (1934), Cooley (1902), and James (1890), where each views the self-concept differently. James differentiates between the “self as a knower”, the “I-self”, and the “self as a known”, the “Me-self”, which refers to the self-concept. He referred to the “I” as pure ego. The “me”, is those part in which the “I” is aware of which consists of physical, social, and spiritual selves which work together to reach self-preservation and self-enhancement. In contrast to James, Charles Horton Cooley regarded self as mediation between ones and the others. Cooley was the first who introduce the notion of the “looking-glass self” to demonstrate that individuals develop a positive view of themselves from the view the others have about them (Hattie17- 18).

Comparing Mead with Cooley, Mead emphasizes the role of social interaction claiming that a personal judgment about oneself is shaped through the interaction with others (Hattie 18) similarly to Lev Vygotsky. Mead defines the self, “which can be an object to itself, is essentially a social structure, and it arises in social experience”. Individuals can only have knowledge about themselves through the eyes of others and from their individual experiences within the society (Oppenheimer 2).

The most influential and significant work in self-concept theory was the work of Carl Rogers who originate the basis of this theory. He considered the self as the core of individuals’ personality and regulation. According to him, the self-represent a social product pointing out the importance of having a positive view of the individual him/ herself and the others (Purkey, “an overview” 2).

As a result of The lack of any scientific inquiry, the behaviourist view of self was neglected which lead to the humanistic approach where Abraham Maslow argued that each person strives to obtain self-actualization, which refers to “the motivation to develop one's full potential as a human being and to reach self-fulfillment, inner peace, and contentment”

(Pajares and Schunk, "Self and Self Belief" 12- 13) thus, the drives that provide ones with stable psychological state.

throughout the 1980s, psychologists shifted their attention to "cognitive processes and information processing", where technology development and advances affect human functioning that focuses on cognitive tasks including how the information is transferred from the input to the output, their thought and other tasks (Pajares and Shunck, "Self and Self Belief" 16).

Albert Bandura was the first psychologist who fills the gap of the earliest research, that individuals create and develop self-perceptions of capability that influence the goal they want to achieve and the extent to which they could manipulate what surrounds them. In Bandura's point of view, individuals' behaviours are established through their beliefs about their competencies which he called self-efficacy beliefs. Consequently, self-perceptions determine what individuals do with the knowledge and skills they have about themselves (Pajares and Shunck, "Self and Self Belief" 17-18).

Since most studies about examining the self-concept did not focus more on its relation with Foreign languages (English particularly), it was necessary to go further based on the previous studies in the field of psychology to explore the importance of self-concept in enhancing learners academic achievement in the university; since in Algeria the average of students directly limit their choice of the branch in the university.

1. 3. Definitions of General Self-Concept

Many studies have focused on the impact of internal factors such as self-concept on learners' motivation and their academic achievement; these researchers show a significant impact of academic self-concept on learners' achievement that educational system should

foster. For this reason, many researchers into the field of psychology contribute to clarify the self-concept and its related construct.

Mercer points out “a person’s self-concept consists of the beliefs one has about oneself, one’s self-perception, or, as Hamlyn expresses it, “the picture of oneself”. It is not what really a person is but what he/she thinks about himself / herself (14).

Purkey in his book *Invitational Learning for Counseling and Development* said: It is helpful to pause here and define self-concept as a learned, organized, and active system of subjective beliefs that an individual holds to be true regarding his or her own personal existence. It serves to guide behavior and enables each individual to assume particular roles in life. Rather than initiating activity, self-concept serves as a perceptual filter and guides the direction of behavior. For example, self-concept does not cause a client to become dysfunctional. A better explanation is that the person has learned to see oneself as unable, worthless, and irresponsible and behaves accordingly. When individuals have doubts about their identity as able, valuable, and responsible persons, they are likely to engage in various self-defeating behaviors (15).

As a consequence, the actions individuals make are determined by the way they perceive themselves either positively or negatively which leads them to react accordingly by developing different strategies. Purkey also points out that self-concept could be changed, learned and controlled.

Another area of research investigates learner’s beliefs, as representative of the term self-concept. According to Wenden learners’ beliefs system guide their behaviours and experiences, In addition, White explains that this system helps them to engage in different situations, determine what is required from them and reacting accordingly (qtd. in Mercer 25). Her view supports Purkey definition of self-concept as learned and emphasizes the role of significant others in shaping one's experiences. Additionally, Marsh and others researchers

consider that a positive self-concept is an essence of learning in an academic setting (Marsh et al. 535). Accordingly, self-concept is very influential on learners' achievement.

Self-concept broadly means the different thoughts, emotions, and attitudes people have about themselves. Our self-perception is associated with a different aspect of living conditions and external factors which may include verbal judgment from peer/parents/teachers and receive encouragement from them. (qtd. in Zahra et al. 73).

Franken reports that many researchers found that the self-concept is the core of all motivated behaviour. Self-concept is changeable as much as we act and compare our self with others. These results demonstrate that individuals can develop their self-concept since they interact and learn a new behaviour from this interaction (qtd. in Bin Yahia 2).

1. 4. Academic Self-Concept

Academic self-concept refers to the students' assessment of their academic abilities. Because it is functional, it has a great impact on their performance in the academic settings. Many researchers believe that it directly affect the way they learn, think, hence their achievement (qtd. in Villegas, Tomasini and Lagunes 118). Consequently, the way individuals assess themselves in the academic domain help them to engage in different tasks.

The academic self-concept is defined by many researchers as an individual owns evaluation in particular domain likewise; Trautwein, Lüdtke, Marsh, Köller, and Baumert defined academic self-concept "a person's self-evaluation regarding a specific academic domain or ability" (qtd. in H. Liu 208). Similarly, it is how an individual assesses his/her ability in the particular field.

Importantly, academic self-concept can be better enhanced if students were more socialized and receive feedback from significant others (i.e. parents, teachers, or peers) and,

therefore, is dynamic since students made a progress from one level to another (qtd. in Rosen et al. 118). Thus, one's beliefs reflect one's judgement, such as in English, "I'm the best one."

Researchers like Wondimu and Bruinsma define Academic self- concept as "an overall self-perception of individuals in the academic context"; Thus, it is the general way an individual perceive him/herself in the academic context .They give examples to explain how it works by students use of statements like "my marks satisfy me", "I do not fear exams" (Wondimu and Bruinsma 555). This definition highlights the importance of the positive self-concept of learners in the academic setting since it leads to success.

1. 5. Self-Related Constructs

The self-concept construct has been used interchangeably with many constructs and many researchers in the field of psychology used it as a synonym to Self-Esteem, and Self-Efficacy which led to some misunderstanding. This part aims at differentiating between these constructs and how they are related to self-concept.

1. 5.1. Self- Esteem

Self- esteem broadly defined as an evaluative term, the way individuals see themselves, which refers to the way they judge themselves either good or bad and it could be low or high.

The general regard that ones have about him/her as valuable or not valuable, refer to the self-esteem that evaluates one's self-concept. Coppersmith defines self-esteem as "critical judgements about one's self that demonstrates a feeling of acceptance which arises from his/her own beliefs about his/her abilities as an influential and successful". (qtd. in Heatherton and Wyland 220).

Self-esteem can be both positive and negative regards for oneself, the beliefs a person hold about his skills, abilities, relationships, performance and his/her success and failure.

Pajares and Schunk claimed that Watson James was the pioneer who introduced the term of self-esteem; he described it as a “self-feeling” which is the result of our strong beliefs about what we are and what we can do. James provides a mathematical formula for self-esteem suggesting that individuals' attitude relies upon the accomplishment of their desires and hopes (Self and Self Belief 6).

$$\text{Self esteem} = \frac{\text{Success}}{\text{Pretensions}}$$

The terms self-concept and self-esteem are used as synonyms but researchers like Heatherton and Wyland argue that they are different. Suggesting that self-concept is the overall cognitive beliefs about one’s self, including personal, behavioural and factual information. In contrast, self-esteem is an evaluative attitude that rises from personal experiences. However, self-concept and self-esteem are related since individual beliefs control their evaluations and judgments about themselves. To sum, the first is descriptive and the latter is evaluative (Heatherton and Wyland 220).

Self-esteem consists of two different aspects: competence and worth. The competence aspect refers to the measurement of one’s abilities. The worth aspect refers to individuals attitude towards the idea that they have a value (Joshi and Srivastava 33). For instance: the belief that I am a good in something makes me feel good about my capacities and myself which mean; having a positive evaluation to one’s self leads to a high self-esteem. One should think that academic fields are the most important settings where individuals should value themselves as capable or not.

1. 5.2. Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy is a concept originated from Bandura's theory which sets that individuals' achievement based on the mutual interaction between an individual behaviour, personal factors or self, and environment factors.

Self-efficacy is the set of beliefs individuals have about their abilities that control their behaviour; in other words, it is the extent to which an individual is able to accomplish a specific task in a specific domain. Bandura was the first who introduced the term, where he defines it : “the conviction that one can successfully execute the behavior required to produce the outcomes” (193).Consequently, it refers to the belief about one’s ability to achieve the goals he/she sets.

According to Bandura's social cognitive theory, self-efficacy beliefs have a control on the tasks that individuals need to accomplish; however, they select only the task they can do and avoid others where they feel that it requires more effort than they possess. Efficacy beliefs show how harder learners try to do their best on a task, the degree of their determination and to the extent to which they will be patient when facing difficulties (Pajares and Shunck, “Self Belief and School Success” 245).

Furthermore, individuals with a high sense of self-efficacy have many opportunities to achieve better. Confident students can take risks and engage in different tasks, they are conscious of getting deep in different activities, have challenging goals, they are prepared to face failure and make progress after any experience of failure. Learners with high self-efficacy are calm when to experience difficult activities, while those with low self-efficacy, feel anxious toward these activities (Pajares and Schunk, “Self and Self Belief” 19). In Pajares and Schunk words, “confidence in one's academic capability is a critical component of school success” (4).Briefly, a positive self-concept is the key to a high achievement.

In order to give further clarification, self-efficacy and self-concept may differ in the degree of their specification. Self-efficacy related to very specific tasks in the particular field, essentially cognitive and linked to the individual's expectation of being able to succeed in the particular task in a particular field (Bandura 1997). It is defined by Pajares and Miller as “a context-specific assessment to competence to perform a specific task, a judgment of one’s capabilities to execute specific behaviours in specific situations” (qtd. in Mercer 15). As Sarah Mercer simplify it: “self-concept is broader than self-efficacy”.

1. 6. Motivation and Self-concept

Second language learning can be influenced by many factors. Some scholars argue that the most significant factor is learners’ motivation and desire to learn a new language. Dorneyi, claimed that the term motivation is used by language teachers to describe the success and failure of the students (Dorneyi, Motivational Strategies 5). Loewen and Reinders, define motivation as a “psychological construct that refers to what stimulates an individual to participate in a specific activity” (119). Motivation is what drives a person to engage in a particular task. Williams and Burden argue that motivation is a mental activity that gives rise to a certain feeling which leads individuals to exercise a specific amount of effort to reach certain goals (qtd. in AL-GHAMDI 2- 3). Thus, motivation controls humans’ behaviour to obtain their desire.

Dorneyi (“Motivational Strategies” 6-7), simplify the term motivation by raising some questions like why some students made progress? The answer was because they are motivated. According to Dorneyi motivation include the selection of particular behaviour; the physical and mental effort exercised and how students will be patient to accomplish it.

Gardner defines L2 motivation as “the effort exercised by a learner to learn the language as long as he/she has a desire to do so and the feeling of satisfaction resulting from

finishing the activity”; according to him motivation include three elements, “motivational intensity, desire to learn the language, and an attitude towards the act of learning the language” (qtd. in Dorneyi , “Motivation in second and FL”122). Consequently, as indicated by Gardner's hypothesis, the motivational process involves the commitment to the task, the need to accomplish it and the feel of enjoyment after finishing it. Moreover, many contributors show that girls are more willing to learn the F.L than boys claiming that they have “integrative reasons” (to be more precise, they are more concerned with foreigner speakers and their lifestyle). However, boys are learning an F.L because they have “instrumental reasons” for instance they study a F.L to fill their free time.(qtd. in Lopez Rua 104).

1. 6.1. Types of Motivation

Since learners learn to have high scores and improve their performance, they need to persist against some bad experience; they need some sort of motives. Those motives may differ by the reasons that lead an individual to perform an action.

1. 6.1.1. Intrinsic Motivation

Intrinsic Motivation is an inner feeling, resulting from a satisfaction about selecting an appropriate activity that stimulates a learner to learn more (Hall 136). This kind of motivation comes from the preference of the subject itself.

Intrinsic motivation refers to the accomplishment of a task for a personal enjoyment. The nature of the task, sometimes, present a challenging situation for a learner to engage in it or not; therefore, the learner takes a part in this kind of activity without any attempt to gain something concrete from it (Deci and Ryan 56).

1. 6.1.2. Extrinsic Motivation

Extrinsic motivation comes from external impulses to gain a reward or avoid punishment (Hall 136). Extrinsic motivation is a construct that refers to the accomplishment of an activity for expected outcomes (Deci and Ryan 60). This means that learners will be motivated to do a task only if there were external forces or impulses that lead them to finish it, like praise.

Individuals take part in different activities to achieve concrete rewards rather than for the importance of the task itself. Hence, exerting behaviour for a need rather than for the task own sake (qtd. in Reinholt 2).

Salvin (336) emphasized the importance of intrinsic motivation in the classroom suggesting that teachers should rise students interesting in their lectures by presenting them in a more creative and attractive way to increase students' curiosity and motives to go further on the subject. On the other hand, Hall focuses on the importance of provoking L2 learners in both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Hall has suggested that learners are intrinsically motivated by the pleasant nature of the task to reach the desirable aims (for example, succeed in the exam) (qtd. in AL-GHAMDI 8).

1. 7. Factors Effecting the Development of Self-Concept

As mentioned before it is necessary for learners to have a positive self-concept. But, it is important to understand that this positive view can be affected by many external and internal factors. From reviewing the literature, the most influential external factors are: social comparison and Feedback from significant others (parents, teachers, peers); and the most influential internal factor is: anxiety.

1. 7.1. Social Comparison

Possessing a positive self-concept is essential for better achievement. Learners can develop their self-concept by comparing themselves with others; they usually compare themselves with peers either inside the classroom or outside it. Festinger's social comparison theory hypothesize that individuals have the drive to assess their thinking and their competencies in order to become more aware of what they can do and what they can't do to function effectively with an attention to the objects and other individuals (qtd. in Wood 231). Thus, learners may compare themselves with other individuals to enhance their positive view of self-concept by careful selection of whom to compare with.

Mercer argues that social comparison can be a part of human lives during experiencing another schooling context that may evoke a lot of pressure and critical period for the self-concept. Since learner's context differs, "learners' referent" (to whom to compare with) differs too (qtd. in Mercer 131). The individuals may imitate others and sees them as models that reflect their goals and motivation which in turn depends on the extent to which the other person represent standards or similar points to make a judgment with (Mercer 130).

Byrne points out that social comparison has a great impact on individual's development of self-concept. The knowledge about one's self is established through using colleagues and classmates as a referencing group. Many researchers have found that the more students are surrounded by a high ability group the more their academic achievement enhanced and as they describe it "assimilation effect occurs" (qtd. in H. Lui 209).

1. 7.2. Feedback from Significant Others

Hattie and Timperley defined Feedback as "information provided by an agent (e.g., teacher, peer, book, parent, self, experience) regarding aspects of one's performance or understanding"; consequently, it is the result of performance. These agents are called

significant others. A teacher can correct the students to progress, a peer may help him/her to use different learning style and parents encourage and support him/ her (81).

Personal feedback, by evaluating students using a verbal expression like a good job, Keep on . To perceive such feedback, students should engage in specific tasks in order to show their need to accomplish their desire and to enhance their self-efficacy. Hattie and Timperley argue that feedback can lead to a satisfied result on learning only if students made an advance concerning their effort, engagement, or feelings of efficacy in relation to the strategies used as an attempt to understand the tasks (Hattie and Timperley 96). Thus, feedback is important because it affects a learner's behaviour and advances them to adopt different learning strategies to understand a task. All in all, it makes learners' active rather than a passive one.

The judgment made by other individuals about one's action and behaviour in the specific situation influence individuals development of self-concept as stated by Mercer. This "mirrored" image from others can be in the form of verbal reward, marks, or significant others feedback (Mercer 85). Accordingly, others views and interpretation of learners behaviour play an important role in developing their self-concept, either explicitly or implicitly.

The feedback received has two types: first: ability feedback refers to praising students about their intelligence like saying you are brilliant. Second: effort feedback refers to praising students for the effort they made. However, studies showed that students appear to prefer effort feedback "you're working hard" (Burnett and Mandel 146). On the other hand, Schunk emphasizes the importance of ability feedback in predicting learners' success for example saying you are excellent will enhance self-efficacy and achievement (qtd. in Reynolds and Miller 71). Hence, linking students ability with their performance motivates them more than linking effort with the prior success that leads children to work harder to succeed by conditioned it with ability feedback to raise their motivation.

1. 7.3. Anxiety

The desire of being multilingual is the goal of each learner; however, there might be many affective factors that may hinder his/her progress in learning the target language like anxiety.

The existence of anxiety in second/foreign language classrooms has been proved in many empirical studies. Performing in public places in the target language can lead to anxiety even if the learners are good at the language. Anxious students may use different avoidance strategies in order to avoid oral classes (qtd. in M. Liu 13).

Gardner and MacIntyre defined language anxiety as “the feeling of tension and apprehension specifically associated with second language contexts, including speaking, listening, and learning” (qtd. in HUMPHRIES 66). Thus, anxiety is a stressful feeling that a learner finds him/herself inside when he/she is obliged to write, read and speaks in the target language.

Researchers have shown that there are two kinds of anxiety: trait anxiety, which refers to “the individual readiness to experience a stressful and uneasiness situation”, and state anxiety, which is defined as the “feeling of uneasiness when receiving a threat” for example reading a text in front of the whole class. For that reason, foreign language anxiety is classified under the state anxiety (qtd. in Oda 6).

Learners’ anxiety rises when students feel that they are under pressure leading to an effect on their use of language and increase their feeling of fear. As a result, it appears that anxiety affects both speaking and listening, as claimed by Horwitz that it will be difficult for learners to identify sounds and structures and understand them (8).

2.2. Learning and Academic Achievement

2.2.1. Definitions of Learning

When asking someone about the reason for entering the school, they answer: “to learn.” The acquisition-learning hypothesis suggested by Krashen is perhaps the basic of all the hypotheses to refer to: Language learning hypotheses is: “the conscious knowledge of the target language, mastering its rules, and having the ability to communicate using it”. Thus, learning any language implies knowing its rules, how to use them correctly in order to communicate effectively with the target language (Krashen 10).

Learning is a natural desire for each human being. According to Driscoll, learning is “a continuous change in performance or performance potential resulting from experience and being in contact with other individuals” (1). Accordingly, learning is a long life activity that takes place in a formal setting which requires an experience and interaction with the environment.

Illeris defines learning as “any procedures that in living organisms made a constant change which is not only because of a biological development or maturation” (3). He claims that learning is “permanent” in the sense that it may be forgotten by the language learner or he/she may build on it for new knowledge.

2.2.2. Foreign Language Learning

Foreign language studies have its origin with the Greeks, who used to teach their language to foreigners in the second century B.C. The need for foreign language teaching has increased by the development of the world, individuals mainly learn foreign languages for different reasons and not all of them can succeed since each individual differs from the others. However, it is important to know that many researchers focus on studies about second

language acquisition in contrast to foreign language acquisition. For that reason, Freed lists three major factors that reside behind its being neglected:

1. Foreign languages were concerned with teaching literature as an ultimate goal of the foreign language department.
2. The lack of well foreign language scholars
3. The absence of a basic field to be associated with (3-4).

The word foreign language is associated with “the teaching or learning of a non-native language in foreign countries besides their native language” (qtd. in Freed 4).

However, the second language refers to the non- native language use in a specific community where it is used. Thus, the study of foreign language learning cannot be separated from second language research. FL research belongs to the field of education that covers teaching method, curriculum, materials, and testing. In contrast, SL research is a branch of linguistics as well as a psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic orientation that tackles different topics related to the development of inter-languages, the effects of instruction, transitional stages, and sequences in the acquisition of a second language, as well as the role of primary languages and of transfer. Consequently, SL research appears to be “learners centered” while FL research is “classroom centered”. SL and FL are different areas of study but both are concerned with the acquisition of a non- native language (Freed 4-5).

Ellis wrote: “Second language acquisition is not intended to contrast with foreign language acquisition. SLA is used as a general term that embraces both untutored (“naturalistic”) acquisition and tutored (“classroom”) acquisition...”(qtd. in Freed 6).

2.2.3. Theories of Learning

Learning was considered as a psychological subject which was the most classical discipline of psychology. However, there is no single theory that provides us with the exact

definition of learning or how it is processed; for that reason there exist different views of learning which include behaviourist psychology, cognitive psychology and social psychology (Illeris 6).

2.2.3.1. Behaviourist Psychology

Language is a fundamental part of total human behaviour (Brown 26). Behaviourist theory focuses on the observable behaviours and neglects any mental activity, according to them learning is the acquisition of new behaviour.

Behavioural learning theorists argue that all behaviour is learned and that learning occurs when behaviour changes. The way a learner acts or responds may be rewarded or punished, which means reinforced or hindered. A major principle in the behaviourist view is Thorndike's Law of Effect that refers to "any behaviours followed by pleasant consequences would be repeated" and according to Thorndike's Law of Exercise, "the more the behaviour is repeated it will be reinforced". But, any behaviour followed by unpleasant consequences would be stopped (Westwood 17). Thus, each action has a reaction and if a positive behaviour takes place it will be rewarded. This way of learning is called "conditioning" in which there are two types of conditioning: Classical conditioning and Operant conditioning.

2.2.3.1.1 .Classical conditioning

This stems from the famous work of Ivan Pavlov (a Russian psychologist), who conditioned dogs to salivate when hearing the sound of the bell. It refers to "the reinforcement of a natural reflex or some other behaviour which result in the form of a response to a particular stimulus" (Pritchard 6). Learning is a process that evokes an association between a natural stimulus and stimulus that requires a response, in

learning situation this can be associated with learners good or bad experiences they have about school and their feeling about particular subject; when learners perceive a negative comment from their teacher or peers (stimulus) they will learn to fear and hate a particular subject or area in their school.

2.2.3.1.2. Operant conditioning

It is the more flexible and powerful type of the behaviourist theory. Learning process where the response is increased or decreased as a result of reinforcement or punishment. The most known psychologist in this field is Skinner through his work on animals (Skinner's box), where he studied the behaviour of rats and pigeons by rewarding them with food when they press the lever of the box; through repetition, they learnt that they can have the food if they press the lever. For example: rewarding a learner for his/her appropriate use of language leads to his/her language development (Pritchard 7). The underlying idea of operant conditioning is the consequences of individuals actions shape voluntary behaviour.

2.2.3.2. Cognitive Psychology

In contrast to behavioural psychologists, cognitive psychologists considered learning as an internal mental phenomenon. Cognitive psychologists believe that learning occurs as an internal process, a change in individuals' thinking, perception and identity. Learning a new word requires an understanding of what concept it represents. The most influential psychologist in the field of child development and learning is Jean Piaget, who believed that language is just one part of the human mental process. Cognitive development means experiencing new things with the environment and builds knowledge from it; by being in touch directly with different objects we can understand the environment surrounding us; similarly to language learning, through exposure to different linguistic forms we can

understand their usage and build our own language system (qtd. in Trawinski 15).

Piaget proposed a theory of developmental stages which consists of four stages; each stage is age related and differs in the way of thinking.

2.2.3.2.1. Sensorimotor stage: from birth to one-year-old, children correlate their “sensory experiences (like seeing) with their motor actions” (by touching and reaching). Thus, children rely on their senses to understand the world around them.

2.2.3.2.2. Preoperational Stage: it lasts from 2 to 7 years of age; it is divided into two sub-stages. The **Symbolic stage** is a period of which children could represent abstract things mentally; it is characterized by children’s egocentric view that refers to viewing the world from their own point of view without considering others’ views. In **the intuitive stage**, children want to know the answer to every question they have since they are unaware how they know things they know.

2.2.3.2.3. Concrete Operational Stage: it lasts from 7 to 11 years of age. In this stage, children get rid of their egocentrism. It involves using operations and logical reasoning instead of intuitive thinking but still have difficulties with abstract problems.

2.2.3.2.4. Formal Operational Stage: It roughly begins at the age of 11 and ends at 15 years old. In this final stage of development, children move from reasoning using concrete objects to more abstract, idealistic, and logical ways (Pritchard18).

2.2.3.3. Socio-Psychology Theory

Since the increasing challenge to the need for different strategies and metacognitive skills for students, Vygotsky claims that the “the core of cognitive education resides in giving learners new psychological tools which shape either general or more domain-specific cognitive functions” (Kouzilin et al. 16). Thus, cultural context shapes children’s cognitive development. Vygotsky emphasized the

roles of social interaction rejecting the idea that language is an additional element of cognitive development, proposing a model of language development composed of:

2.2.3.3.1. Zone of Proximal Development: It refers to the gap between what children could do independently and the guidance and supervision they need from an adult or a teacher to successfully accomplish a task (Santrock 50).

2.2.3.3.2. Mediation: As Trawinski describes it, “[Mediation] is The role played by significant people, who the learner admire, select and modify the learning material for the learner helping him/ her to move to the next zone of proximal development” (17). Thus, it refers to what a parent , teacher , peer do to help students to move to the next zone of proximal development.

Social interaction has a great influence on student learning. It is through social interaction that students learn from each other, as well as from adults. Fogarty said, “Vygotsky’s theory suggests that learning requires first a person-person interaction, then independently through an internalization process leading to complete comprehension”.

Vygotsky suggests three different types of speech: social, private, and internal.

- **Social speech:** is the instructions an older person give to a child.
- **Private speech:** helps children to analyze, understand and apply the instruction given by adults in a particular situation; for an example, self-control is a form of private speech since students are controlling their behaviours as if an adult controlled their behaviours.
- **Internal or inner speech** is the silent speech that a child keeps for him/herself as he/she speaks with him/herself. It is the thought that they have in mind about the consequences of doing something (qtd. in Blake and Pope 61).

2.2.5. English as a Foreign Language

In the 15 century, English was taught as a second or foreign language. In the 16th century, English became an interesting language because of the expansion of England, which has been taught by non-native speakers who were “immigrant or refugees” from European countries. The British council has reported that there were 750 million speakers of English as a foreign language taught by teachers who learned English as a second or foreign language in their countries (Braine xi-xii).

Nowadays, English is taught as a foreign language in many countries separately from learner’s social and national life, where young learners learn it for academic purposes. Adults, on the other hand, learn it for specific purposes where the use of language is limited by social, cultural, historical factors. Crystal claims that English is a global language, and he sets two reasons for that: geographical-historical and socio-cultural reasons (29). He states that English became part of the educational system in many countries (110).

The widespread of English is the result of many factors such as colonial and economic one. Colonialism was a major factor in the spread of English; colonizers were not concerned only about the spread of their religion and beliefs but they also brought with them their language, and for that English became the language of power. The other factor that leads to the spread of English is the commerce that is supported by The United States as the world economic power (Harmer 14).

Teaching English as a foreign language became an important concern leading to the establishment of different educational approaches and methods. Each of the grammar translation, the audio-lingual methods, and the direct method has its principles. The foreign language was taught through translation from the target language to the mother tongue with an emphasis on memorization of vocabulary and

grammar rules; however, this approach was criticized by neglecting how language is used (Rodgers and Jack 5). In contrast, the direct method attempts to make learning another language similar to the process of first language learning and replace translation by demonstration and actions (9). On the other hand, the audio-lingual approach emphasizes teaching listening and speaking by using repeated drills, memorization of dialogues and grammar teaching are essentially inductive rather than deductive. However, these approaches failed to create competent fluent speakers and with the fact that learners need more than memorization of grammar rules; they need to be able to use language appropriately in different situations (51, 60). This gave birth to the term communicative competence coined by Dell Hymes which aims to differentiate between the knowledge about language forms and the way that enables individuals to use language appropriately in different contexts.

Communicative competence comprises four different components:

- **Grammatical competence:** the knowledge of language rules (mastering vocabulary, words structures, spelling and pronunciation).
- **Discourse competence:** the logical connection of our thought when communicating according to a particular context.
- **Sociolinguistic competence:** the ability to use language appropriately with respect to the social context of the communication.
- **Strategic competence:** the use of “verbal” and “non-verbal” strategies to avoid breakdown of communication through the use of gesture postural orientation and the voice tone (Brown 218,220).

2.2.6. Academic achievement

Having a good educational system is the desire of everyone, which requires students' efforts to have a high level of achievement each of them with their own capacity. Since

learners spend most time of their lives in schools they have to make efforts, increase their curiosity, be interested in learning and develop their self-confidence to be active members in the society (Deci and Ryan 61).

Achievement is defined as “measurable behaviour in a standardized series of tests” (qtd. in Yusuf 6). Thus, academic achievement is the assessment of the extent to which students have performed the goals; achievement test refers to standards of student’s proficiency in schools.

Learners need motives to have a better achievement. The achievement motivation view developed in the 1950s and early 1960s by Atkinson and McClelland claiming that “achievement is the result of an emotional conflict between striving for success and avoiding failure” (qtd. in Covington 173). Thus, the desire for successes encourages students to achieve better, and the fear of failure may lead students to avoid some tasks. It appears that these two factors determine the quality of achievement and the behaviour exerted by the learner.

The efforts that drive students toward actions are the motives or goals they seek out to accomplish; the question why students select some activities and avoid others raises the need of an achievement theory. Moreover, teachers also have a great impact on learners’ motivation when they reinforce some of their goals and neglect the others (174).

The basic assumption of achievement goal theory is that it is based on personal goals; achievement goals differentially affect school achievement along the variety in the quality of cognitive self-regulation processes. Cognitive self-regulation refers to “students active engagement in their personal learning through the analysis of home works, being ready and preparing for this requirement to check if they made a progress to finish it” (Covington 174).

Academic goals are the academic motives that control students' behaviour in the classroom. As a result, the goals that students set help them to achieve different aims in the academic setting. A distinction made between learning goals and performance goals which are related to the achievement goal distinction:

- **Learning, mastery, task or task-involved goals:** “These are referred to variously as task goals”. This type of goals directs students to choose an appropriate learning approach to finish an activity with “a high level of efficacy, task value, interest, positive attitude, positive effort, and other goals”.
- **Performance goals or ability focused goals:** They orient students to focus on their ability and focus on their peers' achievement, to perform a task better than them. Researchers consider these goals as “less adaptive” because of the kind of motivation linked to it , the attitude that arise and the weak performance (qtd. in Arias 38).

Vermunt claims that the activities that students use show the quality of the learners' achievement, for that reason, teachers should motivate students to use high-quality activities. Recent research on achievement and learning activities focused on “cognitive processing strategies”, “metacognition” (the learner's beliefs about learning and the regulation of their learning processes) and motivation. He suggests three types of learning activities:

1. **Cognitive processing activities:** The activities that make students think which results in building new information and good comprehension.
2. **Affective learning activities:** these activities cope with the feeling that takes place during learning which leads to a psychological state that may influence the learning progress positively or negatively like “motivating oneself” .
3. **Metacognitive regulation activities:** These are used to regulate and assess the cognitive and affective learning activities to achieve the desirable results like

diagnosing the reason for difficulties and change the learning progression when it is required (Vermunt 25-26).

2.2.7. Risk Taking Behaviour and Achievement Motivation

A major aspect that has its origins in motivation is Risk Taking which leads to a successful achievement of a particular goal (Trimpop 129).

Trimpop defines risk taking as “controlled behaviour an individual is aware or not aware about in which they are not sure about its consequences, its advantages, and disadvantages for the physical, economic or psycho-social well-being of individuals themselves or other individuals” (9). Thus, he emphasizes the awareness or non-awareness of the behaviour, the results of it and the individual experience of it.

Atkinson in his theory of “Achievement Motivation” claims that achievement directs risk-seeking; individuals look for tasks with fewer difficulties as an opportunity to show their competences. Risk avoiding, fear of failure direct individuals to choose tasks that are not difficult to guarantee their success or difficult ones as a reason for their underachievement (qtd. in Trimpop 131).

According to Trimpop, teachers should move from “boring tasks” like exams marks and the tasks that require learning by heart toward a challenging one to stimulate their creativity; he claims that in order to stimulate learner’s behaviours teachers should list a set of task that they do for its own benefit. Consequently, the motivation to take risks is the result not only of the advantages or disadvantages of the task but other internal factors like self-esteem, attitude, and expectation. Thus, the image those learners have about the risks of engaging in tasks whenever their

difficulty depends on the degree of their self-esteem that motivates them to take risks (132).

Clifford, after reviewing the literature about “academic risk taking”, reports that individuals generally pursue to “the challenging and risky situation”. Learners appear to develop a more risk avoidance behaviour from the idea that any creative, abnormal behaviour or answer is punished or not rewarded. His work demonstrates that adults generally and learners, particularly, can be motivated to have a good learning and comprehension of the subjects’ material by replacing regular task to risking one. Clifford justifies the reason for its success: “increased self-efficacy, optimizing cognitive development, more complex strategy orientation and thus learning from failures, increased need satisfaction as risk taking is a universal tendency, increased and accurately measured competency through feedback, self-motivation, and flow-experience”(qtd. in Trimpop 137).

2.2.8. Summary

In section one , we shed light on the theoretical foundation of the self-concept construct and differentiate it with the two major constructs that have been used interchangeably for many years and caused confusion in the literature. Then, we introduce Motivation and it's two types that are an important effective factor in learners’ progress. Last but not least, we discussed the two major external factors and the internal factor that serve the development of learners’ self-concept. Section two, presents a theoretical basis for the research work. Starting from the learning process and its different theories, and academic achievement where learners choose different kinds of tasks toward the different goals that learners have, which is achieved through risk taking behaviour. The next chapter will deal with the methodology of the study, as well as the population and the sample of study, the research procedure, the instruments, data collection tools, data analysis.

Chapter Two: Field work

2.1. Introduction

This chapter is an attempt to describe, analyze and interpret the collected data including the procedure, research question, hypothesis, aim of the research and the participants. This research aims at collecting students' viewpoints about the importance of having a positive self-concept to enhance their level of academic achievement, shed light on their abilities to succeed in learning, and view teacher's point of view about this issue. This research is based on the hypothesis that "If learners have a high level of self-concept, then they would be able to take risks to increase their level of achievement". Its aim at answering our main research question: Can learners have a better achievement if they have a strong belief in themselves and abilities?

2.2. Research design and procedure

This research is descriptive one for that we use a questionnaire as a research tool that was distributed to both teachers and the EFL students. The students participate in the study willingly; before the distribution of the questionnaire, a pilot study has been carried out to determine the required time to answer the questionnaire and whether or not there are any necessary changes.

This questionnaire was administrated to the students of nine classes, by selecting from each group 20 students randomly, but not all of them have answered. This is mainly because it has been distribute a week before the resist exams; the students were given too many questionnaires by master students that they want them to answer and many students were shy to answer our questionnaire and said that they have a poor English. However, concerning those who answered, each student answered the questionnaire in their classes, the duration between the distributions of the questionnaire, the instructions and filling it was about a half an hour. The aim of the questionnaire have been explained as well as the importance of their answers in our research. The students were asked to raise their hands if they need any further explanation. After collecting the data , we use EXCEL to facilitate the counting of statistics. We also administrated the questionnaire for 11 teachers of the first year students who answered all the questions and handed it back after 2 or 5 days.

In the same respect, the students questionnaire was composed of 27 items which have a relation to the self-concept, self-belief and their influence on the learning process. Our main concern was to have students' attitude and opinions about this issue. For this reason, we devoted the questionnaire into three sections.

Section one deals with students general information which consists of two questions which seek information about their gender and the choice of this branch.

Section two, however, composed of fourteen questions (from 3 to 16) that are concerned with students' evaluation of their self-concept and how they assess themselves and their attitudes. The questions from 3 to 9 request dichotomous answers while the questions from 10 to 16 are ordinals.

Finally, section three consists of ten questions from 17 to 26 dealing with the assessment of academic self-concept in general and in a foreign language in particular which

contains three open-ended question which is question 18, 25 and 26 while the rest are ordinals.

2.3. Population and sample

The population that is the target of this research is first-year English students at Biskra University and the teachers of oral and written expression at the same university. Because of the huge number of first-year students, we have chosen a representative sampling composed of 138 students (male and female) randomly and 11 teachers randomly as well.

This population has been selected because of two reasons: first, this is their first year during which they specialized in the language. Second, to find out whether the students will succeed in learning English as a separate branch if they have a positive self-concept about themselves; in addition, obtaining teachers point of view and attitude toward the importance of self-concept in students achievement.

2.4. Research Instrument

The instrument used to measure the variables of the hypothesis is a semi-structured questionnaire. We start with the closed-ended question where students were provided with a pre-determined answer to select from, by ticking one of them while the closed-ended questions were few in which we left a blank space in order to have students and teachers opinion to the issue. Since we adopted the descriptive method, we select it as a research tool that is administrated for first-year students and teachers at Mohamed Kheider University.

2.5. Analysis of Students' Questionnaire

2.5.1. Section One: Background Information

Question 01: Sex Distribution

The aim of this question is to know the gender of students. They provide us with the following answers:

Gender	Number	Percentage
Male	10	7%
Female	128	93%
Total	38	100%

Fig. 01: Sex Distribution

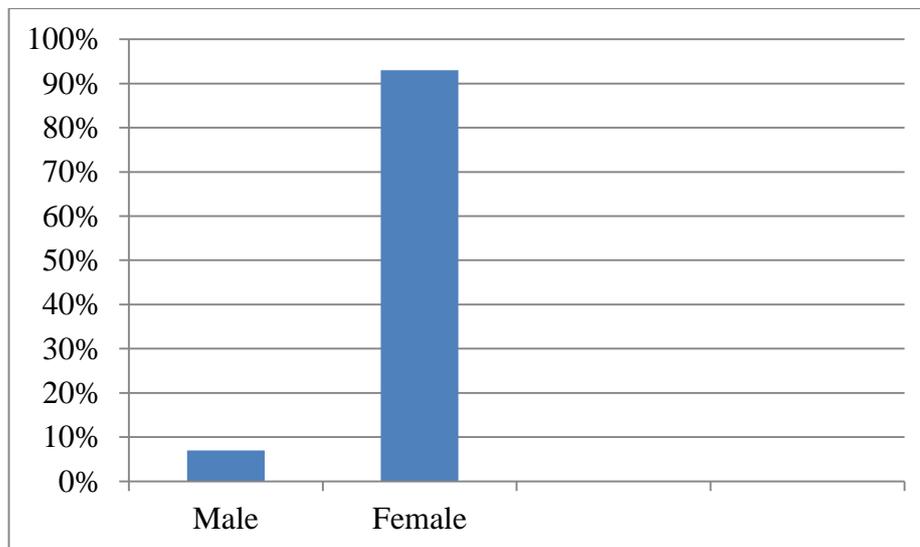


Fig. 01: Sex Distribution

Figure number one shows that the majority of the students are females who represent 92.8% while males represent 7.2 of the whole sample. These results demonstrate that Females are more motivated to learn English as Foreign language than males.

Question 02: Did you choose English because you like it?

This question aims at investigating how many students choose to study English since our educational system limits their choice by the averages they got in the Bacculaureate exams.

Options	Number	Percentage
You like it	116	84%
It's the choice of your parents	11	8%
None of them	11	8%
Total	138	100%

Fig. 02: Branch Selection

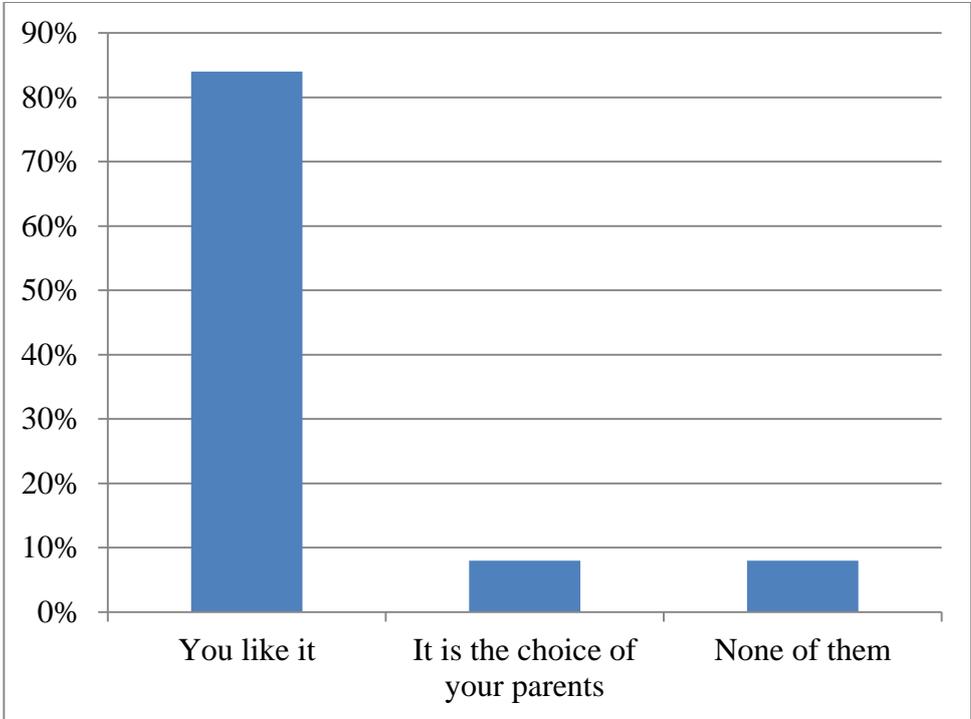


Fig. 02: Branch Selection

Figure 2 shows that 84 % of the students chose English because they like it, 8% of them chose it because it is the choice of their parents; however, the same percentage given to the third choice which is none of them. As appeared from the data above, it is clear that a high number of students chose English because they like it not because they were chosen.

2.5.2. Section Two: Self-Concept and Effective Learning

Question 03: Do you see yourself as good?

This question has been asked in order to find out whether the students display positive or negative attitudes towards themselves, which is how to evaluate themselves, as those who have a positive view of themselves have a positive attitude and vice versa; for that, they had to answer by “Yes” or “No”.

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	107	78%
No	31	22%
Total	138	100%

Fig. 03: Students' self-evaluation

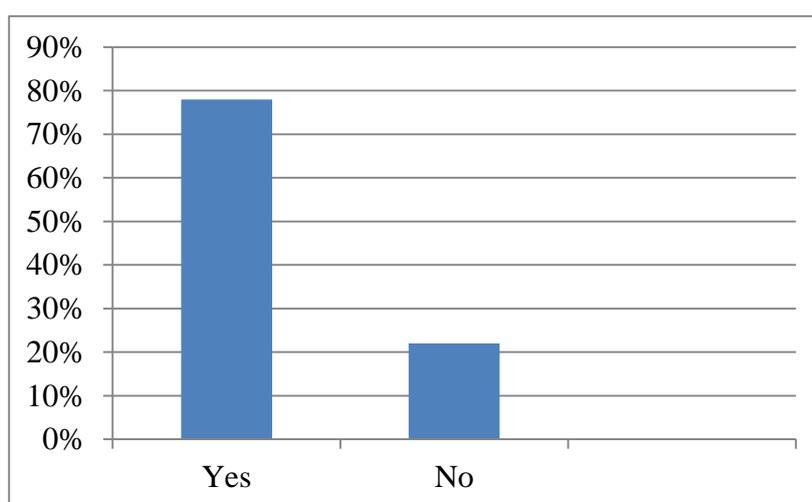


Fig. 03: Students' self-evaluation

As we can see from figure 3 above a high majority that represents 78% of the informants sees themselves as good, which indicates that they have a positive attitude toward themselves. However, 22% of the informants do not see themselves as good. That is, they have a negative view of themselves.

Question04: Is the way you believe about yourself, the way you behave?

This question aimed to know whether students acts are related to their own self-believe or not.

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	113	82%
No	25	18%
Total	138	100%

Fig. 04: The relation between students self-believe and their behaviour

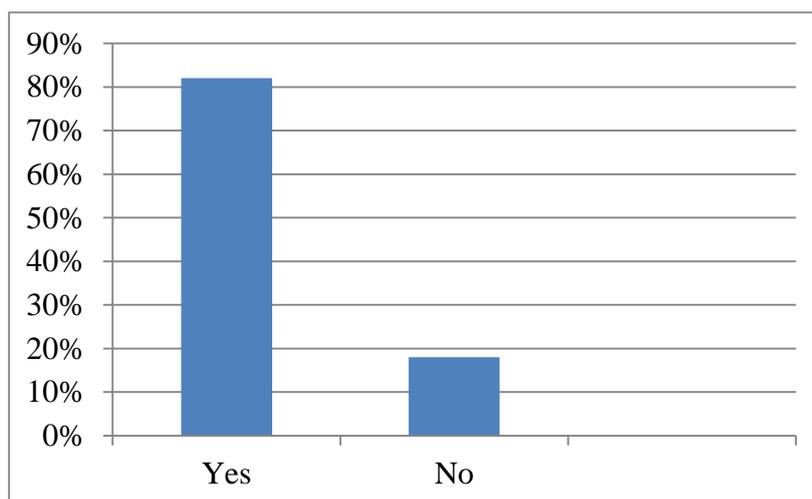


Fig. 04: The relation between students self-believe and their behaviour

As represented in Figure 04, 82% of the students, i.e. the majority of them, answered “yes” which mean that the way they believe about themselves the way they behave while only 18% of them answered “no”. Thus students self-believe control their behaviour.

Question05: Are you satisfied with yourself?

This question evaluates student's self-satisfaction, i.e. an evaluation of their self-concept, aiming at viewing their own self-evaluation of their self-esteem.

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	72	52%
No	66	48%
Total	138	100%

Fig. 05: Learners' self-satisfaction evaluation

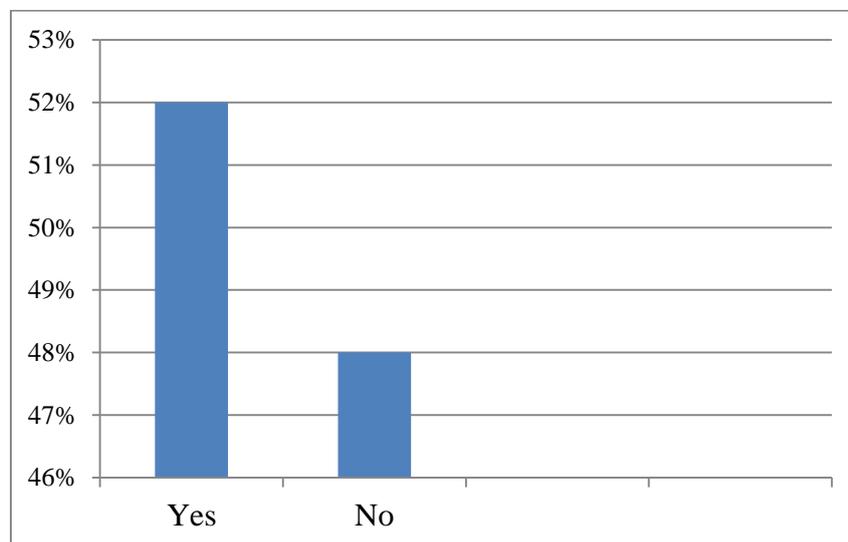


Fig. 05: Learners' self-satisfaction evaluation

As it is shown in Figure 05, 52% of the students appeared to be satisfied with themselves by answering yes. 48% of the students are not satisfied with themselves. The statistics presented in this figure shows the fact that the majority of the students have a high self-esteem and self-satisfaction about themselves.

Question 06: Do you evaluate yourself while learning?

This question was asked to determine if students consider self-evaluation during learning as a key factor to succeed, i.e. to progress from one level to another.

Options	Number	Percentage
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Yes	111	81%
No	27	19 %
Total	138	100%

Fig. 06: Students' self-evaluation during learning

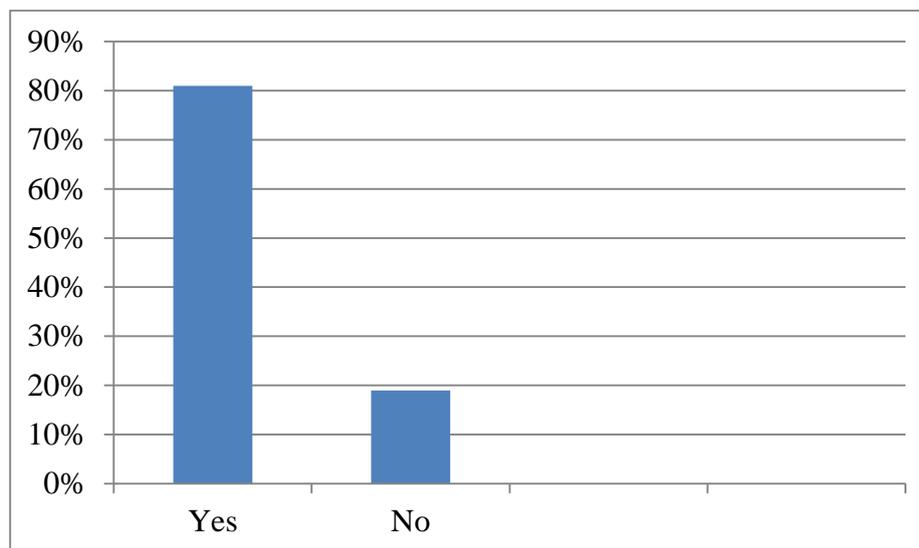


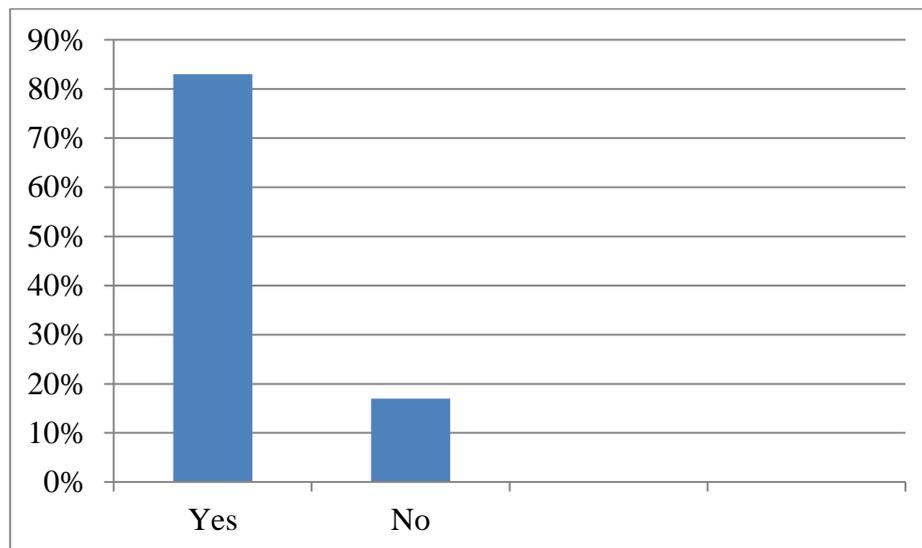
Fig. 06: Students' self-evaluation during learning

The results show that 80.4% of the students do evaluate themselves while learning to succeed and only a fewer number of the students which constitutes of 19.6% do not evaluate their selves while learning. Thus, self-evaluation during learning is very important factor of success for many students.

Question 07: Are the ways you evaluate yourself in class help you to succeed?

Question 7 was asked to find out if students believe that self-evaluation (self –esteem) during learning leads to success by answering “yes” or “no”.

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	115	83%
No	23	17%
Total	138	100%

Fig. 07:Self-evaluation and success**Fig. 07:Self-evaluation and success**

Although Figure 06 shows that only 52% of the students evaluate themselves while learning, fig 7 shows that 83% of students believe that self-evaluation helps them to succeed and only 17% of them consider it unnecessary for success. Consequently, self-evaluation is a key for making a progress and refines students' level.

Question 08: Do you often avoid situations when you think it is uncomfortable?

This question was asked to have an idea about students' self-concept in an uncomfortable situations and whether they face it or avoid it in order to find out the extent to which they have a positive self-concept.

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	108	78%
No	30	22%
Total	138	100%

Fig. 08: Students' avoidance of uncomfortable situations

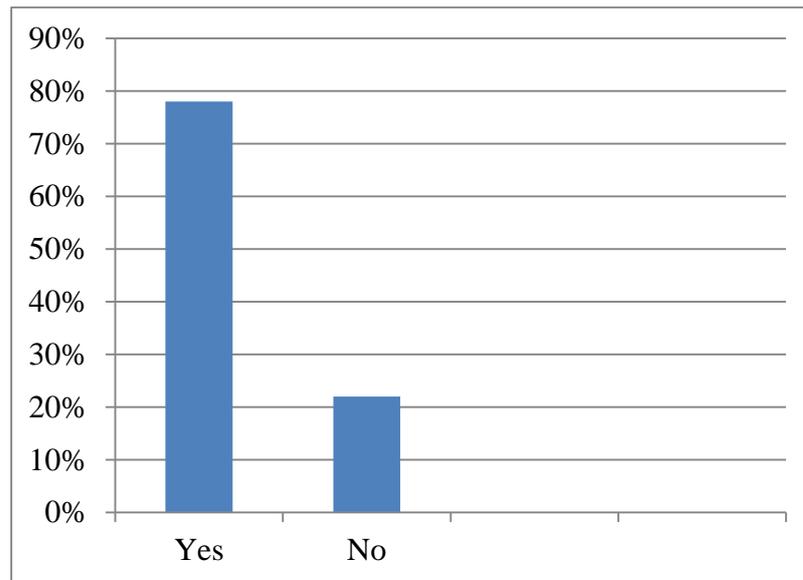


Fig. 08: Students' avoidance of uncomfortable situations

It clearly appears from the results in figure 08 that 78% of the students avoid this situation, i.e students have not the courage to be a part in uncomfortable situations which appear to be sensitive to them. While only 22% do not avoid them, this percentage represents students who have a positive self-concept.

Question 09: Is it easy for you to stick to your aims and accomplish your goals?

The reason for asking this question is to see whether the students have a positive attitude toward their ability to accomplish their goals or they have a negative feeling about their inability to achieve their goals.

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	75	54%
No	63	46%
Total	138	100%

Fig. 09: Students' attitude toward their goals

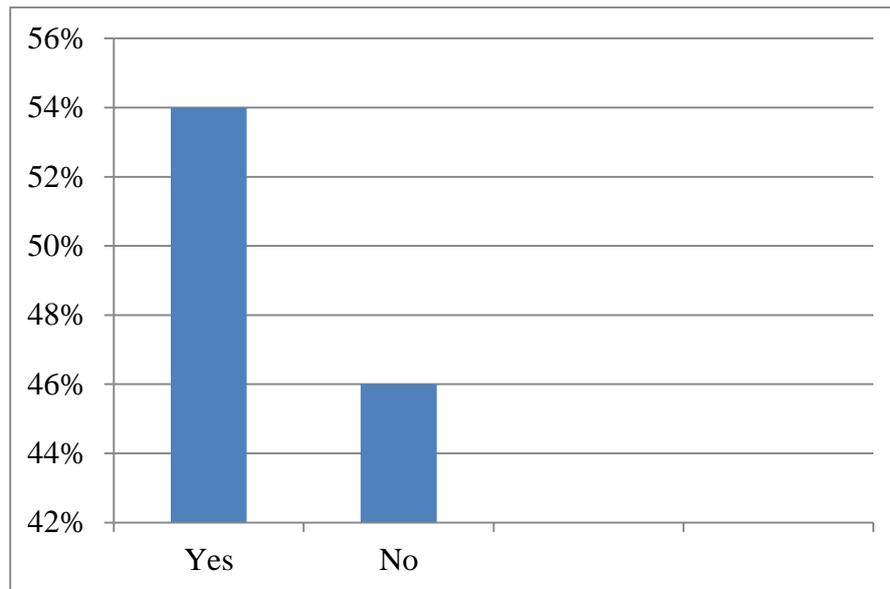


Fig. 09: Students' attitude toward their goals

As figure 09 shows that 54% answered that that it is easy for them to stick to their aims, in which they possess a positive view about what they can do and achieve. The remaining 46% of the students answered “no”, in the sense that they have a negative self-concept and they do not stick to their goals.

Question10: Would you rather go along with the same activity if you fail in it for the first time?

Question10 is intended to find out if students believe that failing in a task doesn't mean that they are a failure and how many students could go with the same activity that they already fail in it for the first time; it also intends to evaluate their self-efficacy.

Options	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Number	28	70	21	14	5	138
Percentage	20%	51%	15%	10%	4%	100%

Fig. 10: Students' determination when failing in a task

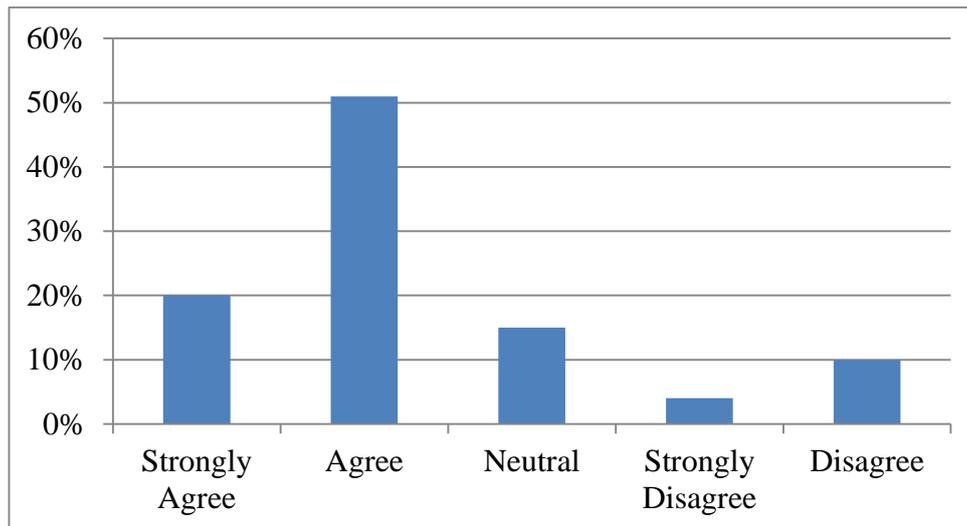


Fig. 10: Students' determination when failing in a task

The highest percentage presented in the figure 51% refers to that the majority of students agree with the belief that they would go with the same activity if they fail in it for the first time; the lowest percentage 04% goes with the statement of their strong disagreement with the statement. However, 20% of them strongly agrees, 15% of the students answered by neither agree nor disagree while 10% of them strongly disagree. This means that students are motivated to face their failing to improve their level; hence, they possess a high self-efficacy.

Question 11: Does the difficult tasks makes you all the more determined?

This question assesses students' self-efficacy and their academic self-concept in order to see how much efforts people try to do their best in a task and the extent to which they will be patient when facing difficulties.

Options	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Number	33	73	14	15	3	138
Percentage	24%	53%	10%	11%	2%	100%

Fig. 11: Students' determination with difficult tasks

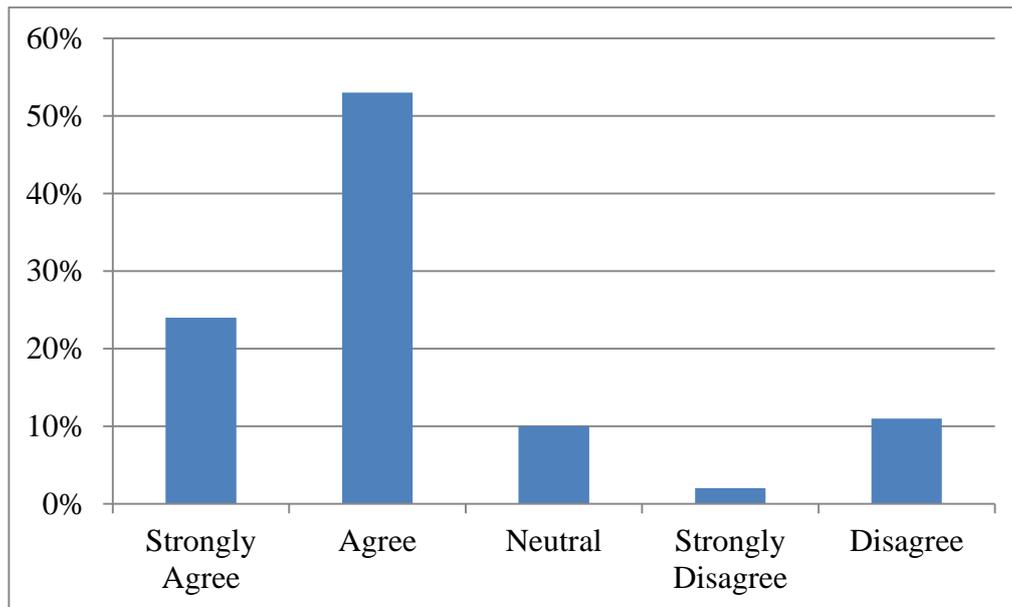


Fig. 11: Students' determination with difficult tasks

The figure 11 above shows that 24% strongly agreed. The students who agreed, represent 53% of the whole sampling, which is the highest score, 11% of the students disagreed with the statement, 10% of them neither agree nor disagree and only 2% of them strongly disagreed. The results indicate that the majority of the students have a high self-efficacy in which they will struggle to face their fear of failing in difficult tasks.

Question 12: Do difficult progress makes you often think that it does not worth the effort?

This question aims is to know if students are motivated and have a positive academic self-concept to make a progress even if the task is difficult.

Options	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Number	9	31	12	62	24	138
Percentage	7%	22%	9%	45%	17%	100%

Fig. 12: Students' thought about the effort they made when progress is difficult

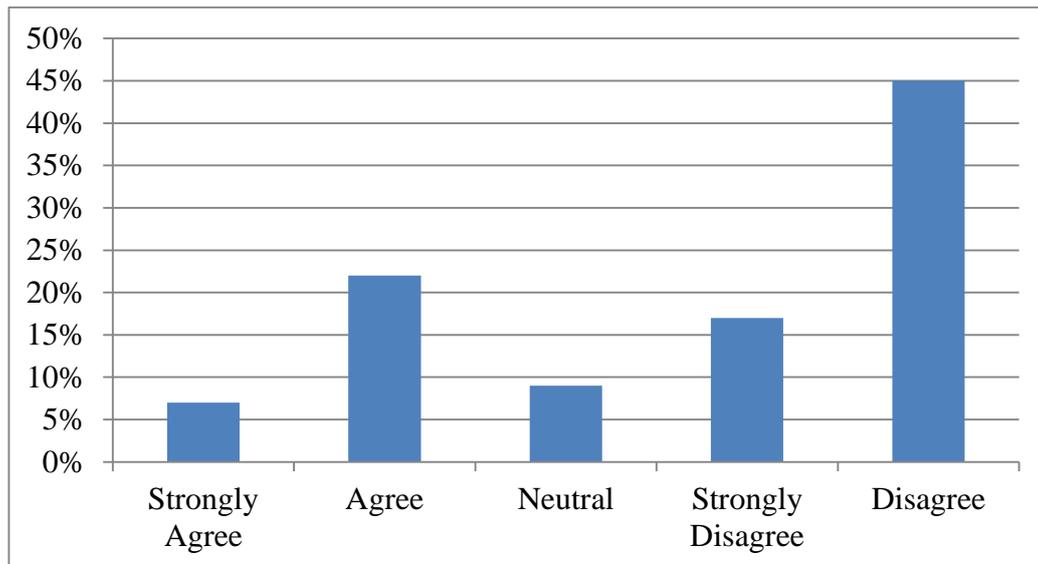


Fig. 12: Students' thought about the effort they made when progress is difficult

The results are shown in the figure show that 45% of the students disagreed with the statement “when progress is difficult, you often think that it does not worth the effort” as if it is worth their effort. However, 22% of them agreed and the remaining percentages are as follows: 17% strongly disagree, 9% of them neither agreed nor [disagreed and only 7% strongly agreed. According to students answers, they appear to be motivated to step forward from one level to another.

Question13: Do you feel anxious when you perform in oral classes?

Question 13 aims at discovering if students feel uneasy or tensional when they perform orally in English, which may affect their self-concept and prevent them from participation.

Options	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Number	24	62	13	20	19	138
Percentage	17%	45%	9%	15%	14%	100%

Fig. 13: Students' anxiety in oral performance

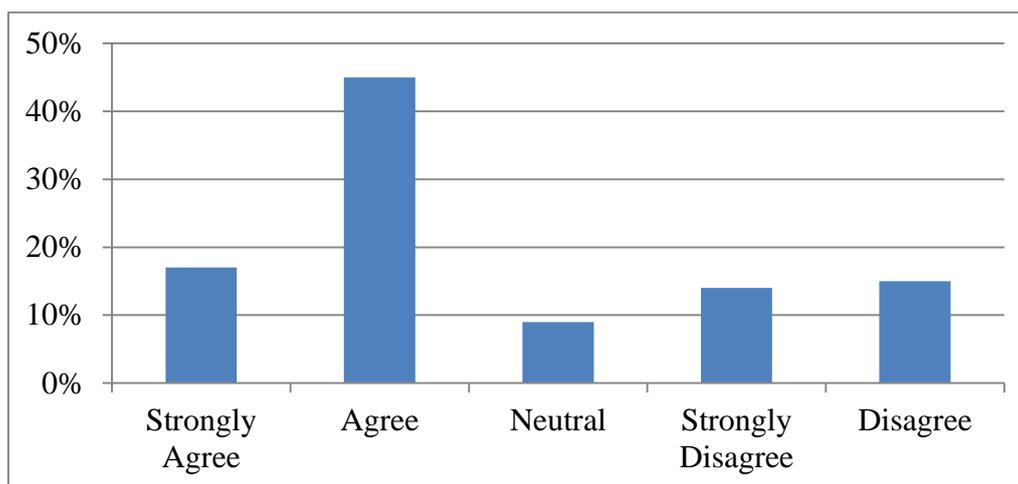


Fig. 13: Students' anxiety in oral performance

The data presented in this figure show that 14% of the students feel anxious when performing in oral classes by answering “agree”, 17% strongly agreed, and 15% disagree and the last 9% of them neither agree nor disagree. The figure illustrates that the majority of students fear oral performance and they are under pressure when they are asked to speak the F.L in front of the whole class.

Question14: Does the feedback you receive from others encourages you to succeed?

Question 14 interests in the importance of receiving feedback from parents, teachers, and peers in encouraging students to succeed and build a positive self-concept.

Options	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Number	49	82	5	2	/	138
Percentage	36%	59%	4%	1%	/	100%

Fig. 14: The importance of the feedback on students' success

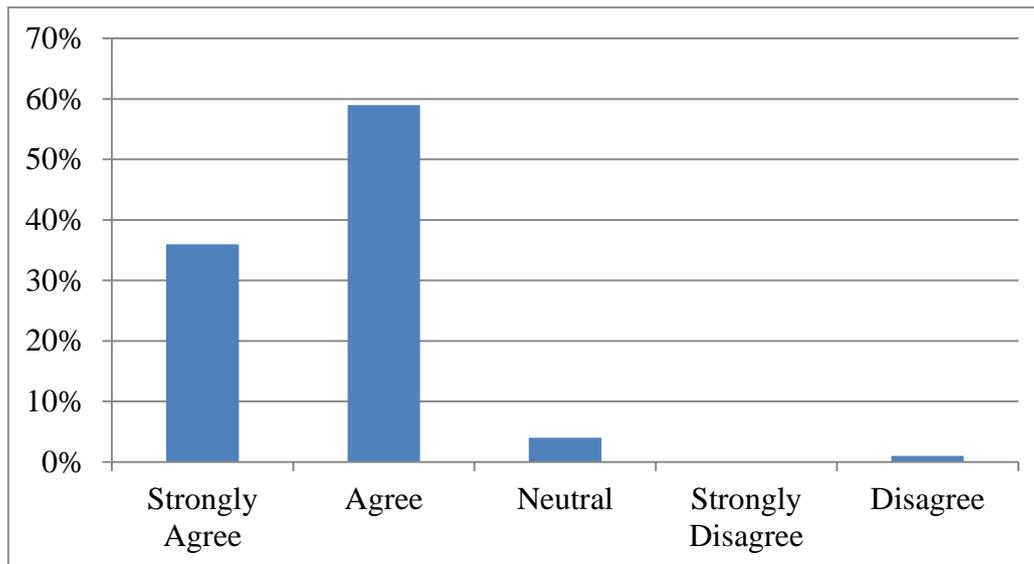


Fig. 14: The importance of the feedback on students' success

The data reports that 59 % of the students agreed on the idea that receiving feedback encourages them to succeed while 36% of them strongly agreed, 4% of the students neither agreed nor disagreed and only 01% of them disagreed. It is clear that receiving feedback has great influence on learners' achievement, since it encourages and motivates them to make more effort.

Question15: Do you like to be criticized by others?

The question aims at knowing how students perceive the environment around them to build their self-concept since it may influence it.

Options	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Number	36	29	19	32	22	138
Percentage	26%	21%	14%	23%	16%	100%

Fig. 15: Students' attitude toward criticism

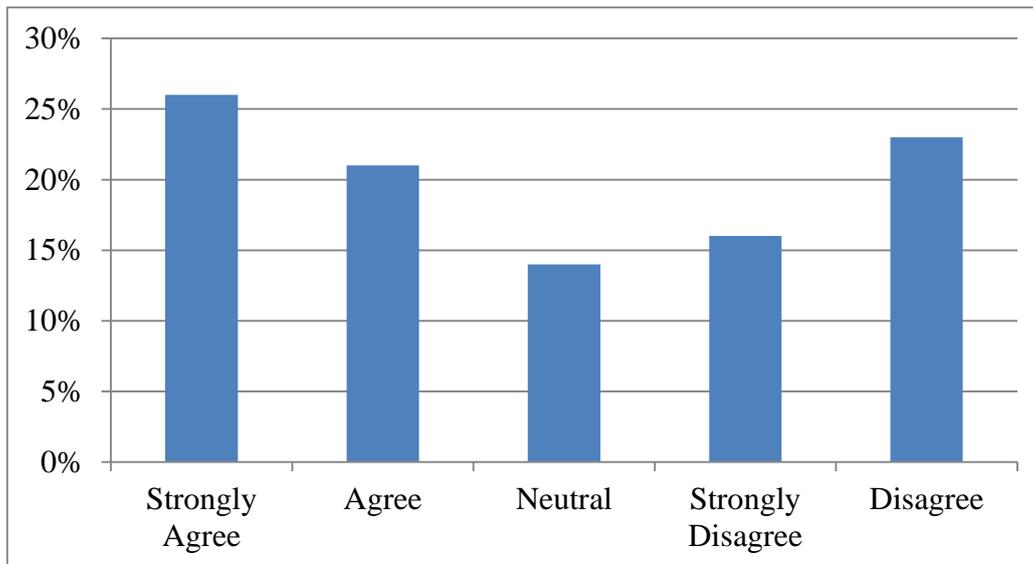


Fig. 15: Students' attitude toward criticism

The figure 15 shows that most of the students are strongly agree with a percentage of 26% of the whole sampling, 23% of them disagree with receiving criticism from others while 21% agreed, 16% strongly disagreed and 14% of the students are neither agreed nor disagreed. This means that many students consider criticism as an important factor that influences their self-concept.

Question16: Do you compare your grades with the grades of your peers?

This item asked for the respondents in order to see if students are concerned with those who have better marks than them in which it affects their motivation and self-concept.

Options	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Number	27	66	13	22	10	138
Percentage	20%	48%	9%	16%	7%	100%

Fig. 16: Students' comparison of their grades

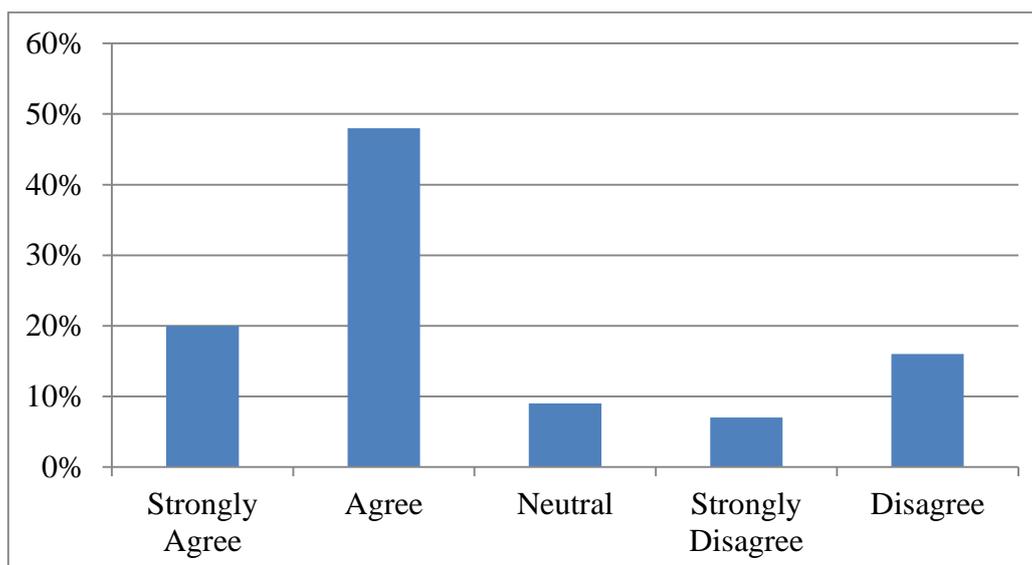


Fig. 16: Students' comparison of their grades

From figure 16, it is clear that the majority of the students, 48% of them agree about comparing their grade with their peers while 20% of them strongly agree, in the sense that 16% answered disagree, 9% answered neither agrees nor disagree, and 7% answered strongly disagree. It appears that comparing grades with peers help students to assess their level to be more aware of their weakness, which leads them to have a desire to be good language learner; therefore, building a positive self-concept.

2.5.3. Section Three: Learning

Question 17: Do you have a desire to be a good language learner?

Question 17 aims at evaluating students' perception of their ability to be good language learners and their hope to be a higher achiever.

Options	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Number	106	32	/	/	/	138
Percentage	77%	23%	/	/	/	100%

Fig. 17: Evaluation of students' desire of being good language learners

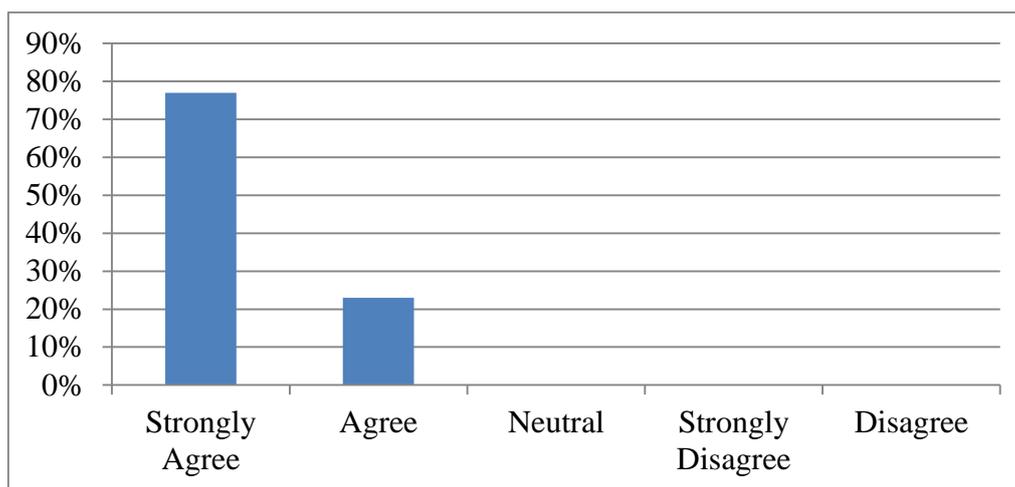


Fig. 17: Evaluation of students' desire of being good language learners

Through the results presented in figure 17, it is clear that 77% of the students agree with the desire of being a good language learner while 23% agree. Consequently, students have a positive attitude about their abilities to be good language learners.

Question18: Do you feel that language learning is different ? How?

This question is also linked to the self-concept students have about foreign language learning and is aimed to see how positively they perceive their level and how they have been changed .

Options	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Number	38	76	13	10	1	138
Percentage	28%	55%	9%	7%	1%	100%

Fig. 18: Students' self-evaluation as a language learner

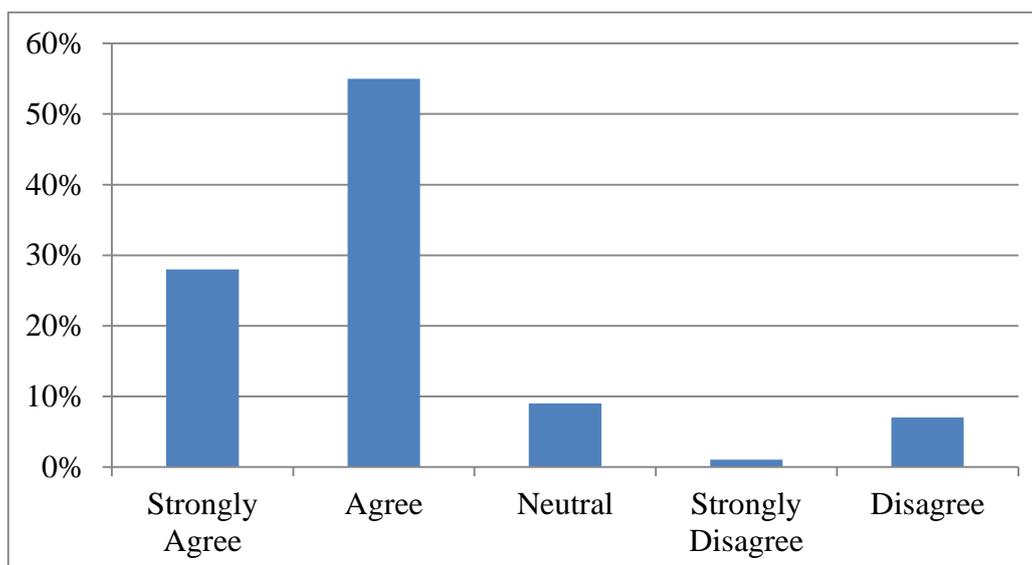


Fig. 18: Students' self-evaluation as a language learner

The results attained reveal that the majority agrees, in the sense that 55% answered agreed, 28% of them strongly agree, 09% of the students neither agree nor disagree, 07% disagree and only 01% strongly disagrees. Students explain that they develop their self-confidence, develop their way of thinking, they exert a lot of effort to improve their selves and their abilities to be good language learners and they are more motivated and willing to reach their goals. However, 28% of the students who answered “strongly agree” did not give any explanation. Thus, students think that they could be better language learners since they have a positive self-concept.

Question19: when you set a goal in your mind, you will fail or succeed?

The purpose of this statement is to assess how positive students perceive their selves and their ability to reach their aims; they had to answer by succeeding or fail.

Options	Number	Percentage
Succeed	125	91%
Fail	13	9%
Total	138	100%

Fig. 19: Students' success/ failure of their goals

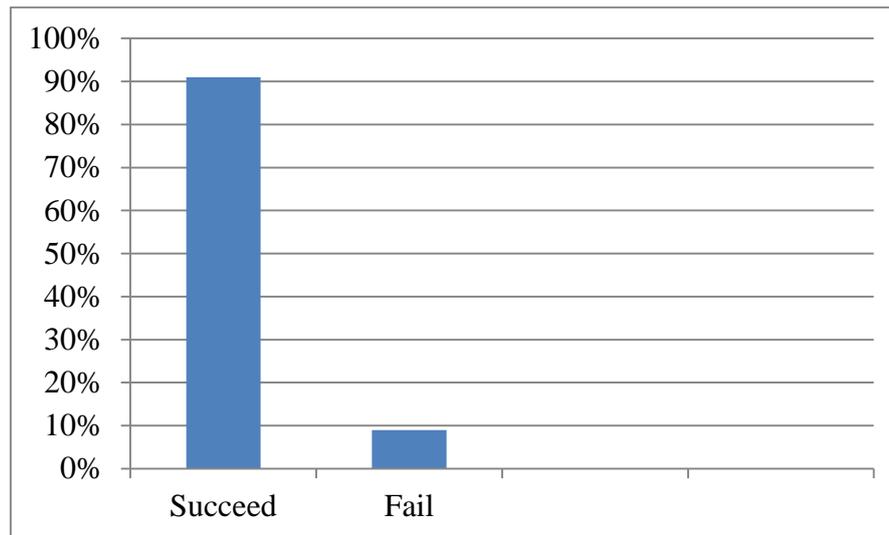


Fig. 19: Students' success/ failure of their goals

As presented in figure 19, 91% sees that they are capable of reaching their goals while only 09% of them answered “fail”. The data above indicate that the majority of the students have a positive attitude concerning their belief about their capacities and their desire to succeed, which represent their positive self-concept while a few of them appeared to have a negative self-concept.

Question 20: Do you think that you are smart but achieve nothing?

This question was asked to see if students can use their intelligence effectively or not.

Options	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Number	17	23	/	87	5	132
Percentage	12%	17%	/	63%	4%	96%

Fig. 20: Students' evaluation of their intelligence

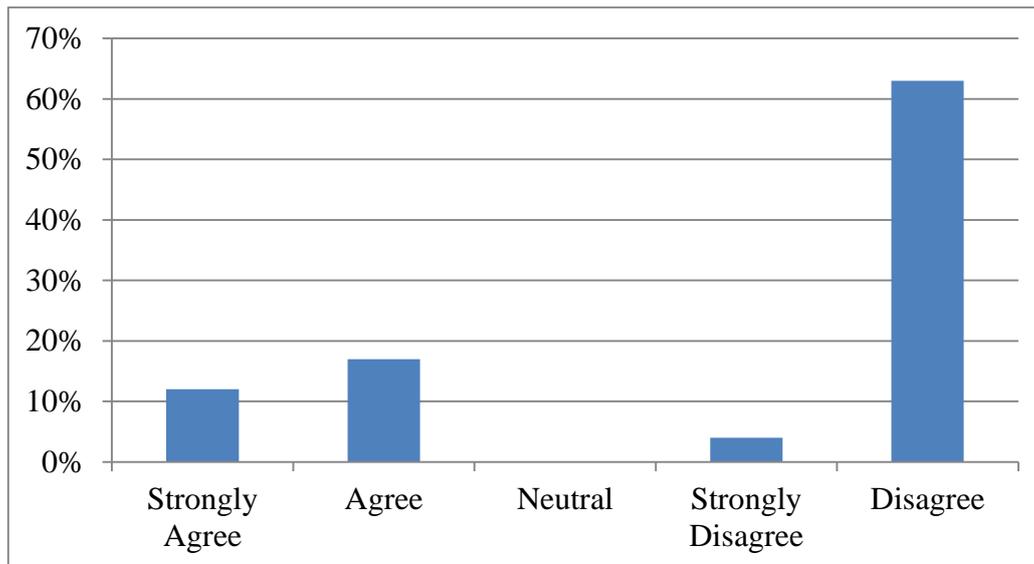


Fig. 20: Students' evaluation of their intelligence

The results show that 17% of the students think that they are smart but achieve nothing by answering agree, 63% answer disagree, while 12% answered strongly agree and 4% answer strongly disagree. Concerning the remaining percentage, 4% of students didn't answer this question. We found out that many students link their intelligence with their achievement.

Question 21: Do you take risks to engage in different tasks?

This question has been asked in order to assess students' academic self-concept and whether or not the students undergo a task with a positive attitude and take risks in different tasks.

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	100	72%
No	38	28%
Total	138	100%

Fig. 21: Students' risk taking in different tasks

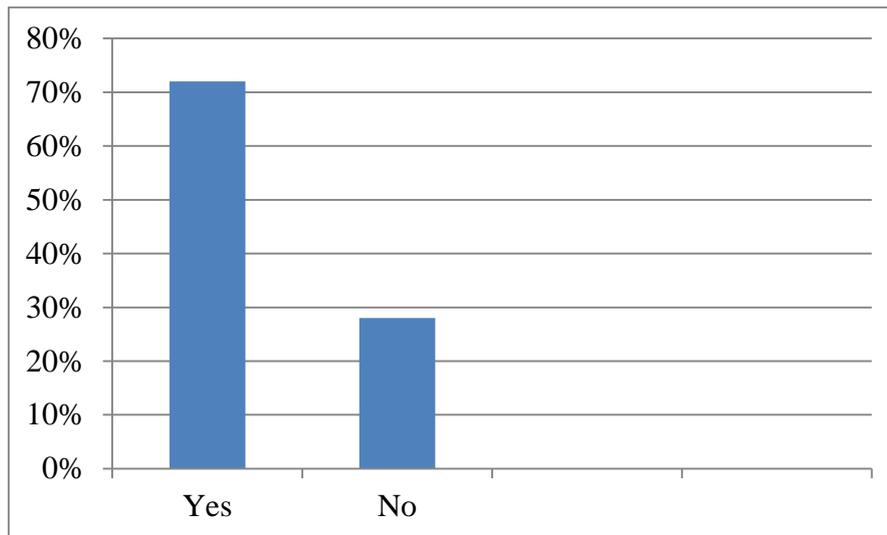


Fig. 21: Students' risk taking in different tasks

Through this figure, we can see that 72% of the students answer yes and only 28% answered no. Students are ready to experience difficult tasks and pursue to challenging and risky situation since the majority of them answered “yes”. Consequently, students who have a positive self-concept are likely to be more motivated to take a risk in different tasks.

Question 22: Are you willing to do your best to pass all the subjects?

Question 22 is intended to see if students have the desire to succeed and is aimed to assess their academic self-concept.

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	130	94%
No	8	6%
Total	138	100%

Fig. 22: Students' willing to succeed

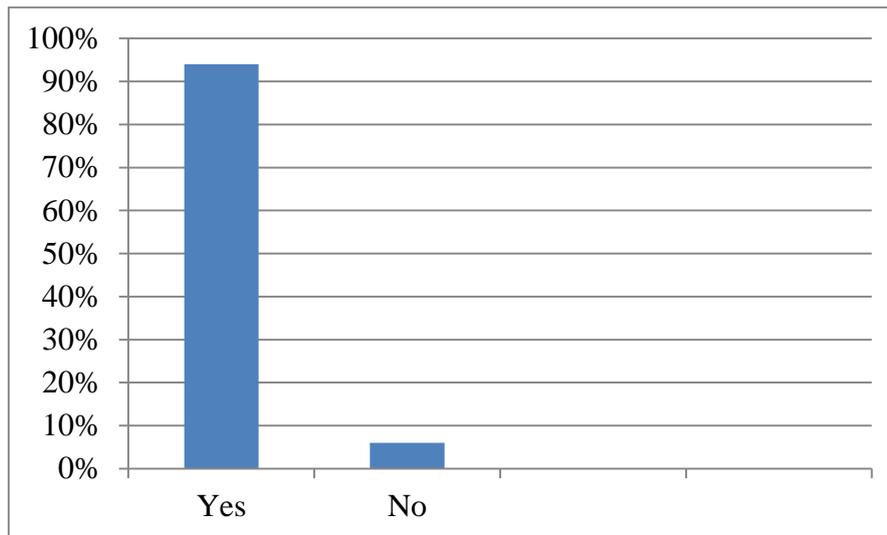


Fig. 22: Students' willingness to succeed

The obtained data display a high percentage of participants who are willing to succeed with 94%, then those who are not with 6%. The data reveals that students are willing to succeed and pass all the subjects with a positive belief about their capacities; therefore, they have a positive academic self-concept.

Question 23: would you like to be much better students than you are now?

The reason behind selecting this question is to uncover students' goal to have a high achievement.

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	138	100%
No	/	/
Total	138	100%

Fig. 23: Students willingness to enhance their level of learning

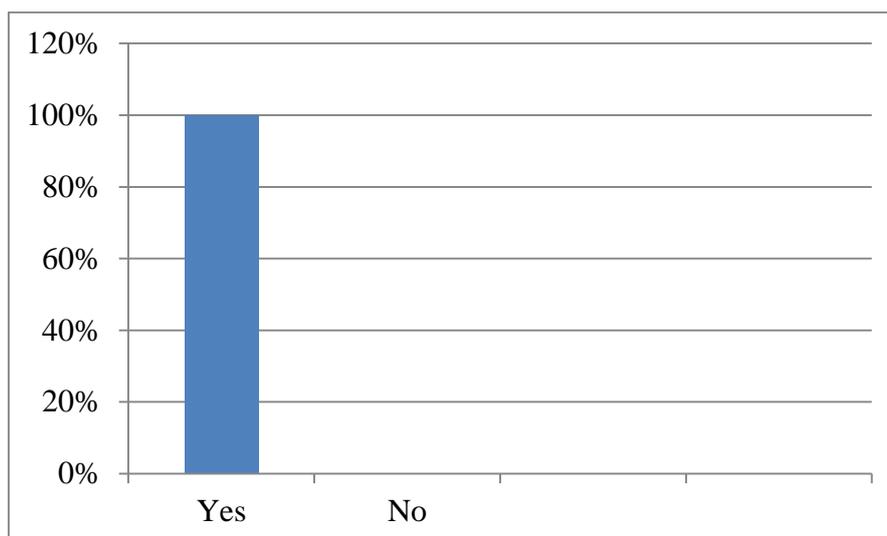


Fig. 23: Students willing to enhance their level of learning

All the students' answer "yes" showing their desire to improve their level with a percentage of 100%. As a result, the data presented in figure 22 and 23 confirm that students are willing to have a high achievement.

Question 24: Do you feel that the university is too difficult for you?

This question aims to unveil students' self-concept as a language learner and whether they consider university a difficult matter and it is also linked to students' self-concept about foreign language learning.

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	88	64%
No	50	36%
Total	138	100%

Fig. 24: Students' feeling about the university

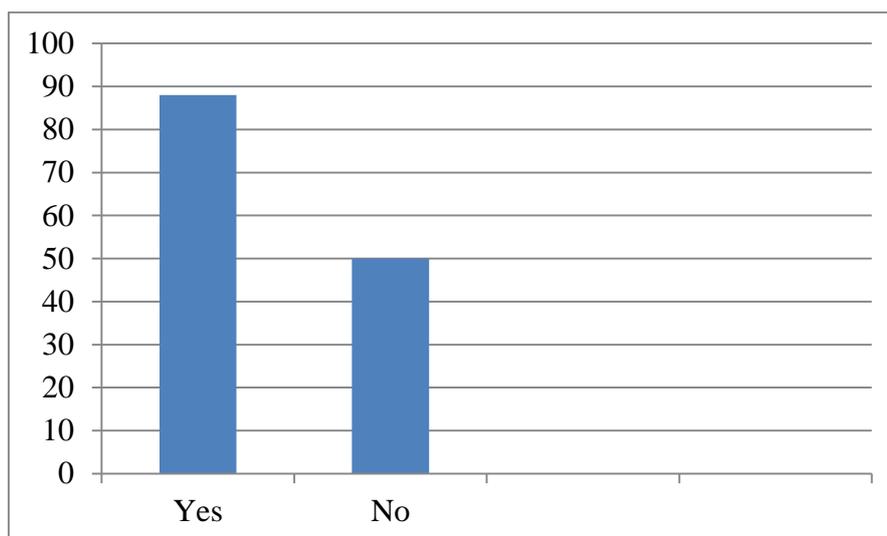


Fig. 24: Students' feeling about the university

The results obtained from the table shows that 64% of the students consider it difficult by answering yes while 36% answered “no”. Students appear to be afraid from the university because many students see it difficult to be a good language learner.

Question 25: Do you think that praising expressions such as “you are smart” and “you made effort” motivate you to succeed? Explain?

We set our primary aim in asking this question to know if praising expressions motivate students and help them to develop a positive self-concept to have a better achievement.

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	123	89%
No	15	11%
Total	138	100%

Fig. 25: Teacher praising expressions' effects on learners.

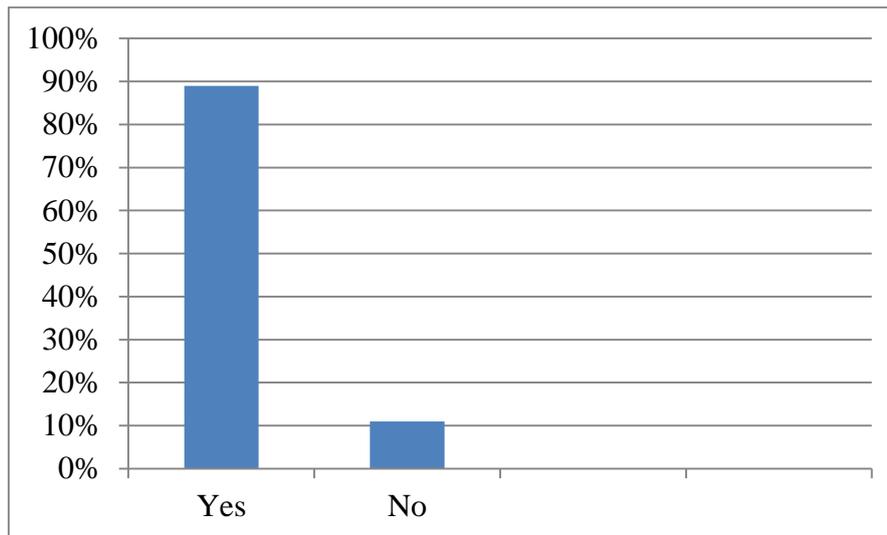


Fig. 25: Teacher praising expressions' effects on learners.

Through the results collected in the Figure, we notice that 89% answered “yes” and the amount of those who answered “no” is 11%. However, since it is open-ended questions we asked the students to justify, after analyzing the data, 14 students out of 123 answered “yes” with no explanation and 4 out of 15 whose answers “no” did not explain why. Whereas, those who answered “yes” justified their answers that praising them made them more confident about their selves and make them succeed; it supports and encourages them and keeps them motivated to do their best to achieve better; others argued that it push them and provide them with the strength to succeed since it helps them to be more confident and when they believe that they are good in something they can do it. Many students also answered that it gives them a positive energy to keep the good work in order to succeed and achieve their goals, and many students claimed that this words made them do efforts even if they sometimes see themselves as bad students, made them take risks only to succeed in their studies. In contrast, students who answered “no” explain that they are not in need of someone to tell them if they did something good or not because they already know what they did; others claim that it is only a superficial words not deep one. From their answers, motivation is the major factor that builds a positive self-concept that helps them to succeed.

Question26: Do you avoid or engage in challenging tasks? Explain?

By asking such question, we want to understand if students perceive themselves positively to take risks in a challenging task without avoiding them in order to succeed.

Options	Number	Percentage
Engage	120	87%
Avoid	18	13%
Total	138	100%

Fig. 26: Students' avoidance / engagement in challenging tasks

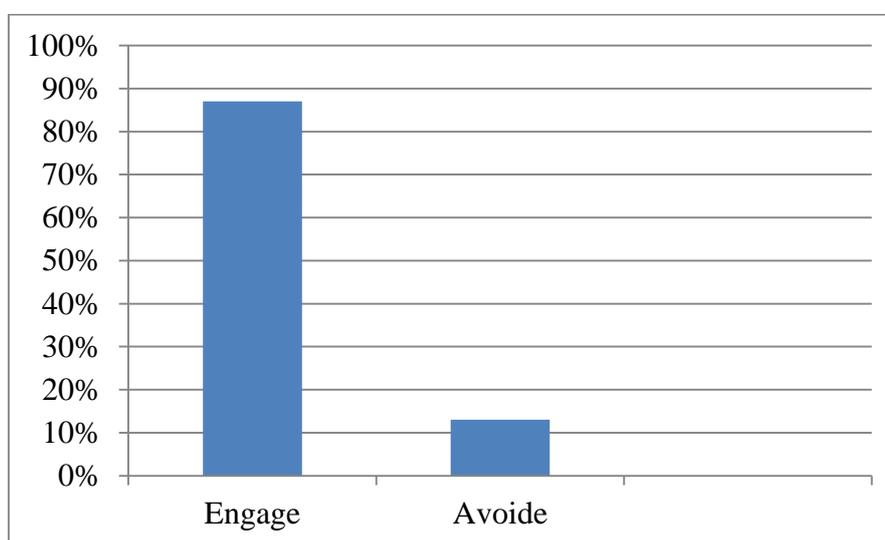


Fig. 26: Students' avoidance / engagement in challenging tasks

According to the data gathered in this table, 87% asserted that they engage in different tasks while only 13% avoid them. Students were asked to explain why they engage or avoid these tasks; we report that 37 out of 120 choose the answer “engage” without mentioning the reason. However, students who justified their answers claim that challenging tasks are important point to evaluate their levels, attitude and build their self-confidence to do more to achieve their goals; it raises their belief in what they can achieve, test their level to be a good language learners; it makes them feel good about themselves and it is the best way to success. One of the students wrote, “I was never afraid challenging task because when I believe in myself that I can do something I do it, and I always succeed, this is why I achieve good

marks.” On the other hand, students who said that they avoid these tasks explained that they were shy and afraid of being laughed at from other students, they also said that they would not think about those who are better than them and considering themselves as bad students, and they are not confident enough to be an apart of these tasks. As a result, challenging task helps students to evaluate themselves and to take the risk to have a high level of achievement.

2.6. Analysis of Teachers’ questionnaire

The questionnaire was distributed to 11 teachers in the English division who took it and brought it after two or 5 days. Teacher’s questionnaire is composed of two sections. The first section aimed at gathering general information about teachers experience, educational level and their teaching method. The second section focuses on teachers’ attitude toward the importance of self-concept in learning. The questionnaire was a semi-structured questionnaire that is a mixed between closed-ended questions and open-ended one which aim to have teacher point of view about the importance of self-concept in the process of learning.

2.6.1. Teachers Questionnaire

5.2.1.2. Section one: Background Information

Question 1: How long you have been teaching English?

This question is asked in order to see if they teach English for a long period of time. Their answers were from 10 to 32 as follows: 10 years , 7 years , 16 years , 12 years 32 years , 10 years , 15 years , 12 years , 17 years , 20 years , 15 years. As their answer shows their long experience with teaching, teachers know a lot about students’ behaviour and learning the process in general.

Question Two: What is your level of education: Doctorate, Magister or License?

Option	Number	Percentage
Doctorate	1	9%
Magister	10	91%
License	/	/
Total	11	100%

Fig. 27: Distribution of Teachers' Educational Level

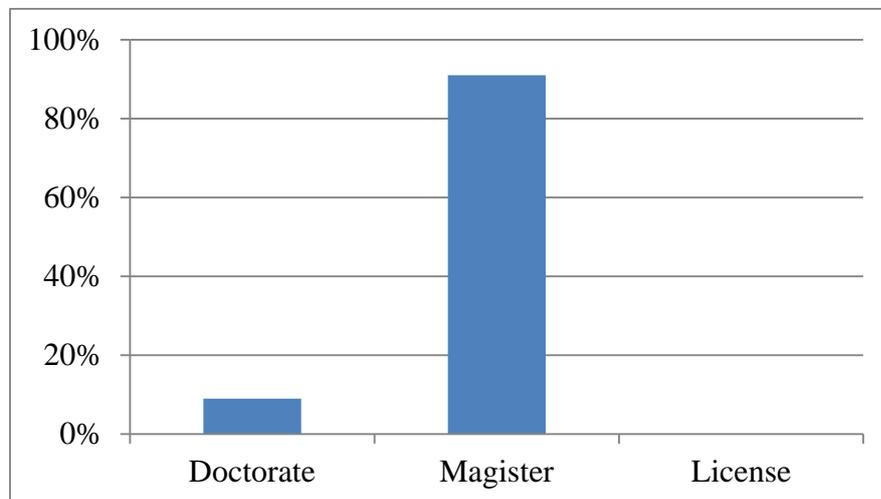


Fig. 27: Distribution of Teachers' Educational Level

Question3: Do you think that your method of teaching encourages learners to learn effectively?

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	11	100%
No	0	/
Total	11	100%

Fig. 28: teachers' teaching method

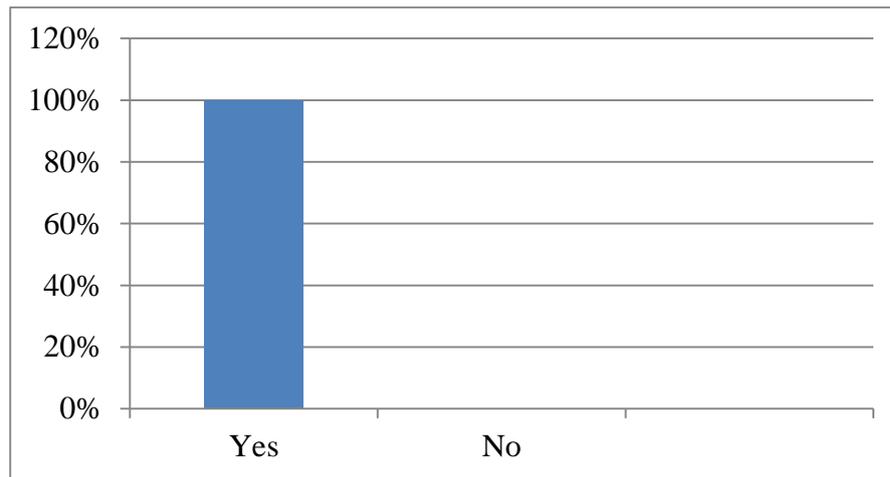


Fig. 28: teachers' teaching method

This question aims at figuring out which teaching method they use and believe it has a positive effect on students' achievement. The data illustrated in this figure assure that teachers are using the method that helps students to have a better learning. All of the teachers answered "yes" with a percentage of 100%. Teachers who answered "yes" were asked to say which method they use and most of them answer "communicative language teaching" and the "eclectic approach."

They answer saying that the method used by them depends on the students' level and the course itself; their method based on communicative language teaching. This method focuses on developing students' communicative skill, which creates a positive atmosphere inside the classroom to make students use the target language without anxiety or fear. Give students opportunities to ask questions, discuss different issues, give their opinion; hence, their criticism is constructive. This answer shows that teachers focus more on what lead to better learning.

**2.6.2. Section Two: Teachers Attitude toward the Importance of Self-concept
In Learning**

Question 4: Do you feel that learners' high feeling of self-concept affects their academic achievement?

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	9	82%
No	2	18%
Total	11	100%

Fig. 29: Teachers' opinion toward the importance of positive self-concept in students' achievement

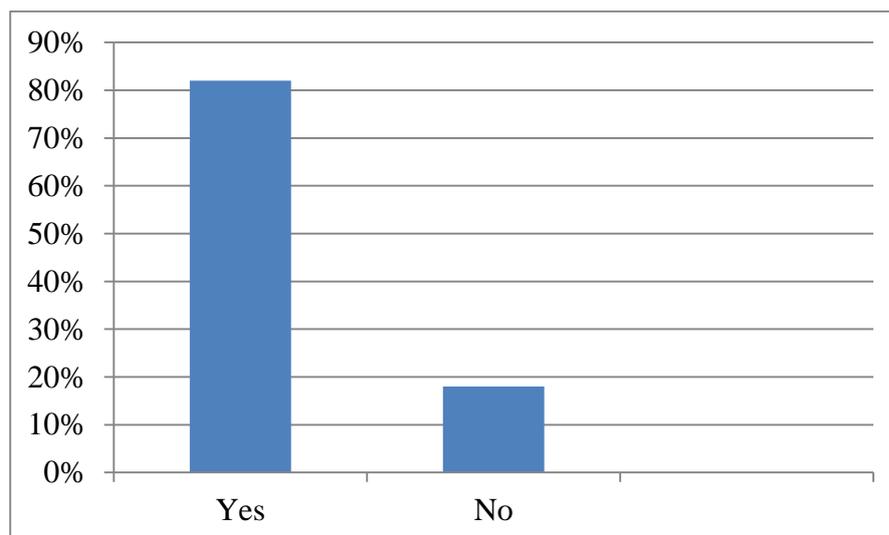


Fig. 29: Teachers' opinion toward the importance of positive self-concept in students' achievement

This question has been selected to see if teachers consider that high feeling of self-concept influences the students learning.

The obtained data shows that 82% of the teachers agreed while 18% disagreed. They were asked to explain their answers to see their views. Teachers who do believe in having a high level of self-concept affect students' achievement claim that if a student has a positive self-concept and self-esteem, his self-confidence will raise as well as his motivation to make

efforts and achieve well. Having a positive image/attitude of oneself reduces anxiety and fear and works as a booster to perform better. However, students with a negative self-concept enhance anxiety and de-motivation which leads to a low self-confidence, thus, bad achievement. The high level of self-concept makes the EFL student more confident and willing to participate, which facilitates teachers assessment of students feedback. Teachers, who answered “no”, said that students face difficulties when engaging in different language tasks. This means that positive self-concept is considered as a major and critical factor in students’ achievement.

Question5: Learners’ who have a high level of self-concept appear through:

Option	Number	Percentage
Their oral participation	/	/
The questions they ask and answer	/	/
The risk they take in different language problems	/	/
The marks they obtain in the exams	/	/
All of the Above	11	100%
Total	11	100%

Fig. 30: The appearance of students’ high self-concept

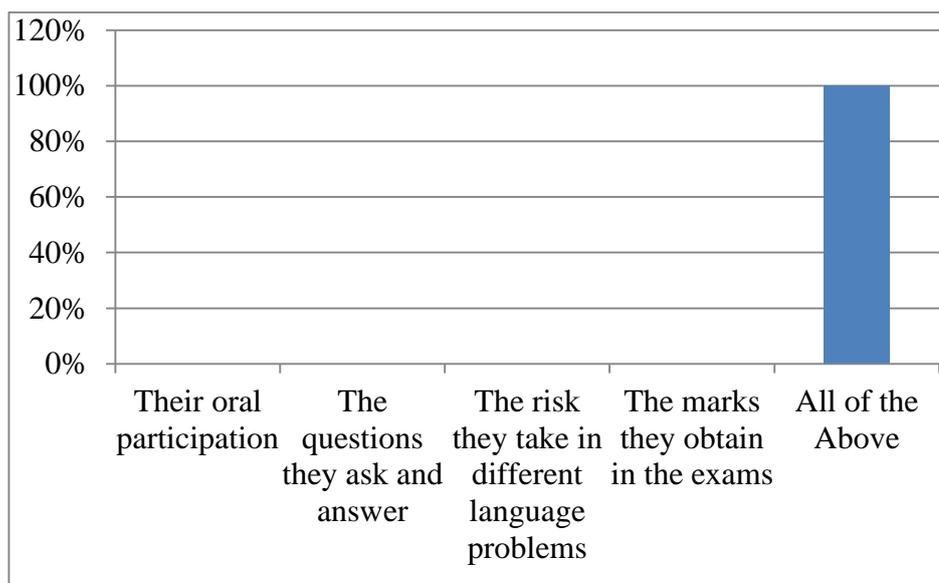


Fig. 30: The appearance of students' self-concept

This question was asked in order to know how teachers could spot students with high self-concept.

As the figure shows, all of the teachers said “all of the above.” This clarifies for us that the positive self-concept can be shown through different behaviour exerted by the students inside the classroom. Teachers were asked to add any other characteristics that show students' high self-concept, for that reason they suggest students confidence when answering, arguing, their behaviour as active students and their ability to express themselves freely.

Question6: While teaching, you focus on:

Option	Number	Percentage
Learners' EM and AF.F	/	/
Your teaching methodology	/	/
Learners' behaviour	/	/
The needed materials	/	/
All of the Above	11	100%
Total	11	100%

Fig. 31: Teachers' point of focus during teaching

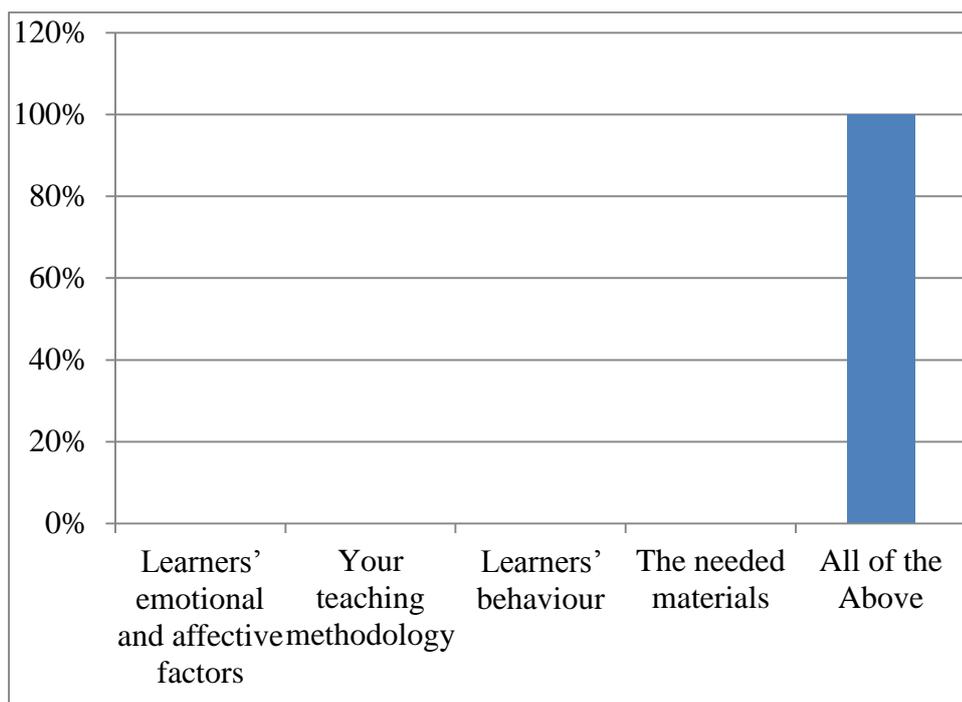


Fig. 31: Teachers' point of focus during teaching

The reason behind selecting this question was to know which points teachers focused more during teaching. The results show that all of the teachers focus on the all mentioned factors presented in figure 31 as an important one with a percentage of 100%.

Question7: Have you ever drawn your students' attention that having a high level of self-concept is significant for successful speaking?

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	11	100%
No	/	/
Total	11	100%

Fig. 32: Teachers' attraction of students' attention on the importance of having high self-concept

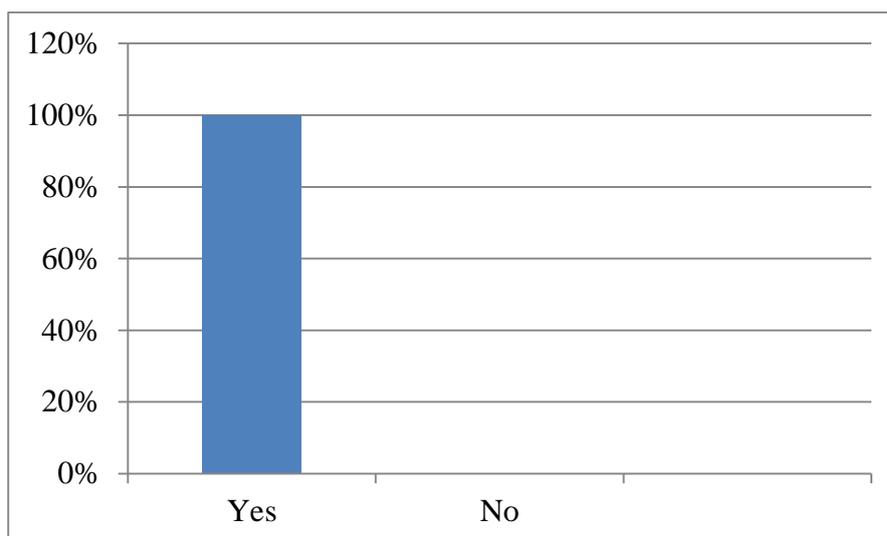


Fig. 32: Teachers' attraction of students' attention on the importance of having high self-concept

This question was asked to find out if teachers are focusing on students self-concept and if they attract students' attention to its importance in their speaking skill since many students do not communicate with the target language because they fear to make mistakes. All of the teachers answered "yes" as the figure indicates the total percentage goes to "yes" 100%. From this result, we can see that teachers agree on the importance of the high level of self-concept in enhancing students speaking skill, thus, their achievement.

Question8: Do you think that student's participation in the classroom is due to?

Option	Number	Percentage
The teacher's characters	/	/
The importance of the subject	4	36%
The student's character	4	36%
All of the above	3	28%
Total	11	100%

Fig. 33: factors that make students participate in the classroom

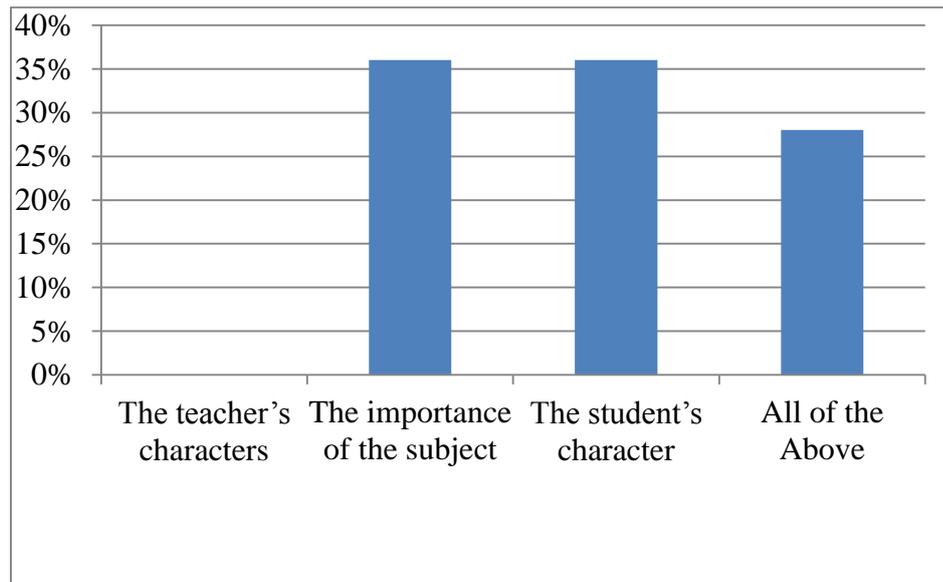


Fig. 33: factors that make students participate in the classroom

The question below aims at identifying teachers' opinion about what make students participate in the classroom.

Around 28% of the teachers select all the above-mentioned aspects, 36% consider the importance of the subject that make students participate, and the same percentage 36% of the teachers' view that student's character is the key for their participation. As a result, we can understand that the all mentioned characteristics affect each other and influence students' participation and interaction in the classroom since we obtained very close percentages.

Question 9: Which techniques and strategies do you use or suggest in order to protect your student's self-concept?

This question aims at having an idea about which techniques and strategies teachers consider as an appropriate one. They provide us with these points in which all of the teachers are agreed on:

- › Providing/creating a safe atmosphere
- › Base-instruction problem-solving skill and engage students in working on different problems (of different level of difficulty).

- › Make students feel responsible for their own learning.
- › The use of praise and rewards (students need to feel that their efforts are appreciated).
- › The use of group work.
- › Avoiding negative feedback.
- › Enhancing positive interaction.
- › Tolerate mistakes and differences.
- › The use of an effective assessment program.
- › Motivate them and appreciate their effort and encourage their self-engagement.
- › Teachers should focus on encouraging their students to take initiative in expressing themselves
- › Students tendencies, even they appear trivial, should not be ignored.

2.7. Research findings and Interpretations

This practical chapter reports the findings and the data obtained from both questionnaires. They aimed at checking whether students' positive self- concept has an influence on their level of achievement.

The answer given by the students reveal that most of the students understand the aim of our study since the results obtained from the data presented in all figures show the fact of

the importance of having a positive self-view to succeed, which is clearly stated by the learners themselves in figure 25.

From the analysis of students questionnaire, we can see that the majority of the students chose to study English compared to the little number of the students whose parents chose it, which is presented in figure 2; whereas, figures from 3 to 5 inform us that students behave as they believe about themselves, and most of them evaluate themselves as good and react as so.

The field work confirms that the three major factors (self-concept, self-esteem, self-efficacy) have a great impact on students' achievement and the majority of students show the importance of self-esteem in the process of learning as referred to in figure 6 and 7. However, it also shows that students who have a positive academic self-concept will raise their self-efficacy to a higher level and made them more determined to have a better achievement as it is indicated in figures 10, 11 and 12. Their answers and opinions show the significance of the relation between self-concept and academic achievement.

The findings obtained from students' questionnaire about the factors that affect the development of self-concept demonstrate that it has an effect as affirmed in figures 8, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17, specially anxiety where the most of students claimed that they feel anxious in oral classes; but it is important to consider that this is permanent and it depends on many factors. Since students in oral sessions are tied with a specific subject they have to prepare it in advance. For that reason they may have high scores in oral session even if they feel anxious in public speech. Furthermore, students show their desire to be good language learners, which stems from their positive self-concept and makes them take risks to have a better achievement as students argue in question 26 and that is clear in figures 20 to 26.

After the analysis of teachers' questionnaire, we can say that teachers have a positive view about the importance of self-concept in student's achievement because they draw

students attention to the importance of having high self-concept in learning that is presented in figure 32. In addition, teachers point out that the students with high self-concept can appear through their participation in the class, their curiosity, risk taking in different language problem, and the result they obtain in the exams as shown in figure 30. Teachers also appear to focus on students' affective factors that they think it has its role in students' achievement in the sense that having a high self-concept will raise their confidence and motivates them to make an effort to achieve better, which is indicated in figure 30. Thus, learners can have a better achievement if they have a strong belief in themselves and abilities.

Finally, the data obtained from both questionnaire clearly confirm our hypothesis and strengthened it and indeed "If learners have a high level of self-concept, then they would be able to take risks to increase their level of achievement." That is to say, a positive self-concept is what leads students to make risks for having better results.

2.8. Summary

Throughout this chapter, the methodology used in our research has been presented including a whole description of the procedure and research design as well as the population, sampling and the tool used and how it has been analyzed. The obtained results confirmed what we hypothesized early in the introductory chapter. For this reason, some recommendation is going to be proposed for educators and teachers that may help them in improving students self-concept and academic achievement.

General Conclusion

Overview of the Findings

In the context of the study, we aimed to investigate a major internal psychological factor that impact learner's academic achievement which is self-concept. Since academic settings are the most places where students build and promote their self-image, we attempt to shed light on the role of student's self-concept in shaping their academic achievement and raise parents' and teachers' awareness of their role in helping students to enhance their self-concept to achieve better.

We started our research with the theoretical basis of the self-concept by addressing the different self-related term and how they differ. Furthermore, we explored the different factors that have an impact on learner's self-concept and the different learning theories related to foreign language teaching in general and English as a foreign language in particular with an emphasis on academic achievement, risk taking behaviour and motivation. Afterwards, we reported the results obtained from the questionnaires that were administered to both teachers and students.

We planned two questionnaires; one has been administered to 138 students of the first year and the other has been set for 11 teachers in the English department that aim to show the relation between the two variables and the impact ones has on the other. The results obtained have permitted us to provide some observations in relation to the hypothesis and research questions mentioned in the introductory part of this research which shows a strong agreement with our hypothesis and the literature review.

The literature review and the obtained finding from the analysis show how complex is this psychological construct, that is learned and changed as long as learners develop and learn as claimed by Purkey. Moreover, it clarifies how could the internal and external factors

(feedback from significant others, social comparison, and anxiety) influence students self-belief system, hence, their achievement. Since it is important for students to set their goals in order to succeed, they sometimes think that they could not reach them by avoiding some tasks. While some students may avoid them, others will take a risk in order to achieve as indicated in the results.

Through this research and the results obtained , it shows that when students have a positive view of his/her own self/capabilities, he/she would be able to exert much effort in order to improve his/her learning and succeed in EFL domain. This research has also addressed teachers' role in helping students to improve themselves and how to recognize them inside the classroom and the strategies used by them to foster students' positive self-concept.

To conclude, students who perceive themselves positively are the ones who are able to take the risk and engage in different language problems to rich their goals and enhance their level of achievement to make progress.

Implementation

Improving Academic Self-Concept

The results obtained from the field work and the literature review can make us conclude that having a positive self-concept leads to a high level of academic achievement when students perform a risk-taking behaviour. Student's self-concept can be affected by many internal and external factors that students should be aware of in order to keep a positive self- concept. Because teachers are the ones who could assess their self-concept in the classroom, students' positive view can be protected using different strategies where teachers play a major role in its enhancement. These strategies could be summarized as follows:

Self-Regulation

Zimmerman et al definition of self-regulation “Academic self-regulation refers to self-generated thoughts, feelings, and actions intended to attain specific educational goals, such as analyzing a reading assignment, preparing to take a test, or writing a paper” (1). Thus, self –regulation is the overall belief that a learner generates for his/herself in order to start an academic task. Students with a high level of achievement put forward different specific learning goals for themselves more than low achievers do, they also apply different learning strategies and they have a positive self-efficacy about their ability to perform a particular task (2). In order to make learning more productive, students must make an effort to establish which strategies can help them succeed, hence improving their levels (10). However, teachers play a major role in building self-regulation in their students and what they should do to achieve it; self-regulatory cycle helps students to build a sense of control over the task they would perform, set a goal, and monitor the outcome. This cycle includes four steps: the first step includes student’s self-evaluation of their level that can be reflected through the feedback given by significant others. The second step involves establishing a plan for the task by a deep analysis of it, setting a goal for a good structure of the task and planning a learning strategy. The third step involves “implementing the learner’s strategy choice,” which is based on the previous strategy or the feedback received from others. The final step includes learners monitoring that takes place when students make an association between their attainment and the strategy used for better improvement. Consequently, it enhances students’ self-efficacy and directs their learning process (11).

Teachers Expectation

Students’ academic achievement can be affected by other factors besides their self-concept. Teachers can also influence student’s self-concept, hence, their achievement. This

idea has been discussed in many types of research on FFF and SLL which claims that teacher's expectation do affect students' achievement. Robert Rosenthal and Lenore Jacobson research on teachers' expectation gave raise to other studies on "self-fulfilling prophecy", which held the idea that teachers' expectation affects students' behaviour which in turn influences their achievement, i.e. the expectation becomes true. However, even though their research has been criticized it shed light on the importance of the affective factors to be focused on (qtd. in Tsiplakides and Keramida 22).

The idea behind self-fulfilling prophecy assumes that "individuals predictions of others behaviour might be achieved", which compromise different steps starting from teachers formulation of an expectation based on some learners' features. Second, teachers should react accordingly. Third, students understand what is expected from them and finally students achieve as their teachers expect from them (23).

Raffini claims "students rise or fall to the level of expectation of their teachers When teachers believe in students, students believe in themselves. When those you respect think you can, YOU think you can"; consequently, Students construct their self-believe from what teachers expect from them. If a teacher gives a positive impression for his/her students about their ability to progress students will be motivated and behave accordingly (qtd. in Lumsden 1).

Recommendations

Teachers have a major role in enhancing students' self-concept and positive self-image to make them more willing to succeed. For that reason, teachers should show students the appropriate way of setting different goals for themselves the different learning strategies to be used to make a progress. In the other hand, teachers should focus more on teaching students

the importance of planning and analyzing in the understanding the difficult tasks in order to make students get ride from their fear and confusion.

It is important for teachers to treat all the students equally in the classroom to make them feel that they belong to the group and give them the sense of safety in order to avoid their miss behaviour in the classroom. Teachers also can value students' effort through the evaluation and assessment of their progress by providing them with constructive feedback and encouragement. This would help students to cope with their anxiety and express their feeling and thought freely and makes them understand the importance of positive self-believe in the process of achievement.

Teachers should motivate their students, support their autonomy and provide them with a healthy environment. Creating challenging situations to make them engage in different problem-solving situations to challenge each other's through group working which could be helpful for students to build a high self-esteem(the more a group is appreciated, the high self-esteem is build). The use of positive comments can make students think positively about themselves, increase students feeling of their competencies and make them feel that they are a person of worth. However, the teacher should avoid using negative criticism all the time by focusing on students' strength rather than their weaknesses.

To conduct such research it is recommended for teachers to teach oral expression from first to third year in order to know how could students' self-concept be changed and learned. Since teachers will teach student they could observe their behaviour under different conditions and psychological states. This would help teachers to consolidate students' self-concept and it would help them to know how understand the need of their students because each students can suffer from many weaknesses (individual differences).

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APPENDIX I

Students Questionnaire

Dear Students,

This questionnaire serves as a data collection tool for a Master degree in Applied Linguistics .It aims at providing us with significant information about the role of having a positive self-concept / perception one has about his/herself in enhancing their level of academic achievement. This questionnaire aims at making learners aware of the importance of having a positive view of their selves in enhancing their level of academic achievement and learning English as a foreign language.

Your answers will be of a great help to our work and it'll be deeply appreciated.

I- General Information

1- Gender: Male Female

2- You study English because

- You like it
- It is the Choice of your parents
- None of them

II- SELF-CONCEPT AND EFFECTIVE LEARNING

3- You see yourself as “good”:

- Yes

- No

4- The way you believe about yourself the way you behave:

- Yes

- No

5- Are you satisfied about yourself: - Yes

- No

6- Do you evaluate yourself while learning: - Yes

- No

7- The way you evaluate yourself in classes helps you to succeed: - Yes

- No

8- You often avoid situation when you think it will be uncomfortable: - Yes

- No

9- It is easy for you to stick to your aims and accomplish your goals: - Yes

- No

10- You would rather go along with the same activity if you fail in it for the first time:

-Strongly agree -agree -neither agrees nor disagrees

- Disagree -strongly disagree

11- If a task is difficult, that just makes you all the more determined:
-Strongly agree -agree -neither agrees nor disagrees

- Disagree -strongly disagree

12- When progress is difficult, you often think that it does not worth the effort.

-Strongly agree -agree -neither agrees nor disagrees

- Disagree -strongly disagree

13- Do you feel anxious when you perform in oral classes?

-Strongly agree -agree -neither agrees nor disagrees

- Disagree -strongly disagree

14- The feedback you receive from others encourages you to succeed:

-Strongly agree -agree -neither agrees nor disagrees

- Disagree -strongly disagree

15- Do you like to be criticized by others?

-Strongly agree -agree -neither agrees nor disagrees

- Disagree -strongly disagree

16- Do you compare your grades with the grades of your peers?

-Strongly agree -agree -neither agrees nor disagrees

- Disagree -strongly disagree

II- LEARNING

17- Do you have a desire to be good language learners?

-Strongly agree -agree -neither agrees nor disagrees

- Disagree -strongly disagree

18- You feel that language learning is different? How?

-Strongly agree -agree -neither agrees nor disagrees

- Disagree -strongly disagree

.....

19- When you set a goal in your mind you will:

- succeed

- Fail

20- Do you think that you are smart, but achieve nothing:

-Strongly agree -agree -neither agrees nor disagrees

- Disagree -strongly disagree

21- Do you take risk to engage in different tasks:

- Yes

- No

22- You are willing to do your best to pass all the subjects:

- Yes

- No

23-you would like to be a much better student than you are now:

- Yes

- No

24-At times you feel university is too difficult for you:

- Yes

- No

25- Do you think that words praise “you are smart” “you made effort” motives you to succeed? Explain:

- Yes

- No

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

26- Do you avoid or engage in challenging tasks? Explain?

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

Thank you for your cooperation.

APPENDIX I**Teachers Questionnaire****Self-Concept and Academic Achievement**

Dear teachers,

You are kindly invited to fill in the following questionnaire as part of a Master research entitled: “SELF- CONCEPT IMPACT ON FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNERS’ LEVEL OF ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT”, case study: First Year English students at Biskra University. Your answers will provide us with significant information concerning your attitudes towards the importance of “Self –Concept”; the perception a learner has about him/herself in the process of learning and academic achievement.

May I thank you in advance for your collaboration and the time you provided to answer this questionnaire.

Section one: Background Information

1- How long have you been teaching English?

.....year (s).

2- Are you:

A- Doctorate. B- Magister/ Master. C- License.

3- Do you think that your method of teaching encourages learners' to learn effectively?

-Yes -No

If yes, which one? And how does it help you?

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

Section Two: Teachers Attitude toward the Importance of Self-concept in Learning.

4- Do you feel that learners' high feeling of self-concept affects their academic achievement?

-Yes - No

Please, explain why?

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

5- Learners' who have a high level of self-concept appear through:

- Their oral participation.
- The questions they ask and answer.
- The risk they take in different language problems.
- The marks they obtain in the exams.
- All of the above

If there are any others, please list them.

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6- While teaching, you focus on:

- Learners' emotional and affective factors.
- Your teaching methodology.
- Learners' behaviour.
- The needed materials.
- All of the above

7- Have you ever drawn your students' attention that having a high level of self-concept is significant for successful speaking?

- Yes - No

8- Do you think that student's participation in the classroom is due to?

- A- The teacher's characters.
- B- The importance of the subject.
- C- The student's character.
- D- All of the above.

9- Which techniques and strategies do you use or suggest in order to protect your student's self-concept?

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Thank you for your collaboration.

Benkorichi El.Chaima