



TEACHER ABSENTEEISM AND ITS IMPACT ON EFL ACQUISITION IN THE ALGERIAN LMD SYSTEM

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Abstract

Teacher absenteeism significantly impacts student achievement in the EFL acquisition process, as it is a strong predictor of exam scores and has a direct negative impact on learning. Previous studies have shown that teacher absenteeism leads to low exam scores, disrupting the learning process and thwarting psychological enthusiasm. This paper aims to understand the impact of teacher absenteeism on student achievement in EFL classes in the Algerian LMD system through questionnaires submitted to both teachers and students. The results show that teacher absenteeism significantly disrupts the EFL acquisition process, resulting in lower scores and poor performance compared to regular achievements of students. Students are highly disillusioned, and rigorous measures should be taken against this prevalence to improve student outcomes.

Keywords: Teacher Absenteeism, EFL Acquisition, impact, LMD system, Algeria

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Introduction

Teacher absenteeism (TA) is a significant issue in school management, as it reduces productivity and task achievement. Research shows that teacher absence disrupts student learning and negatively impacts performance. The more days a teacher is absent, the lower their students score on standardized exams. Teachers possess the necessary skills and knowledge to edify young students, and their role in developing interest in subjects or languages is crucial. Teachers should become learners by thinking about the situation, understanding it from different perspectives, and making it relevant in everyday circumstances.

Teacher absenteeism is one of the most serious forms of corruption in education. While there are many valid reasons for a teacher to be away from the classroom, some absences are clearly illegitimate, such as when teachers 'moonlight, working elsewhere when they should be teaching. Regardless of the reason, the system is failing the students when there are high levels of teacher absences. Even non-corrupt absences take a toll on student learning (Patrinos, 2013). The concern with teacher absence rests on three premises: (1) that a significant portion of teachers' absences are discretionary; (2) that teachers' absences have a significant impact on students learning in general and EFL acquisition in particular; and (3) that feasible policy changes could reduce rates of absence among teachers.

This paper presents the results of an empirical investigation of the first two of these premises and discusses the third. This study posits a significant positive relationship between teachers' absence from the classroom and their students' performance on formal English language assessments. Teacher absenteeism is a growing issue in Algerian universities, as it hinders quality education. Teachers are expected to arrive early and remain until their scheduled work time ends. Head professors are also required to monitor teacher attendance, grant official absences, censure, and report those who take absences without permission. Teachers can be considered absent if they fail to meet their set workload hours.

Significance of the Study

This issue arose during the performance of my duties as Head of the Department of Literature and English Language. In the performance of my duties, I have consistently observed what I consider to be higher teacher

absenteeism rates among teachers. Then, while I received an increasing number of complaints from students about low performance scores and high disillusionment, the phenomenon had already become contagious. I therefore became concerned about this issue and the possible effect high absenteeism rates may have on student achievements generally. So, I had the opportunity to examine the scores of the concerned students and observe different classes and their teachers' absences.

There are several reasons why this research is important and potentially beneficial. First, research has already shown that teacher absenteeism can have a negative effect on learning. This study drew a common-sense conclusion, supported by statistical evidence, showing that students whose teachers take more days off of work score lower on achievement exams. Of particular concern in this study is the finding that EFL students were the hardest hit, and the results showed that the process of EFL learning is seriously disrupted by teacher absenteeism and that students are highly disillusioned. The present study is, thus, significant because it aims to provide evidence on the positive relationship between teacher absenteeism and students' performance and scores and its relationship to language acquisition.

Contribution

This paper adds to the small literature examining the causal effects of teacher absences on students' achievement and performance, especially in EFL acquisition. My position as the Head of the Department of Literature and English Language, with a majority of female teachers and a higher rate of absences among them, made it very difficult to manage the academic year calendar as required. Interruptions in the academic calendar have enormously affected students' learning. Thus, understanding the reasons behind frequent absenteeism may lead to an improvement in students' performance as well as facilitate and strengthen the management of the learning process through better planning, monitoring, and evaluation by the department and by promoting active involvement of teachers in the management of lectures to provide high quality education.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this research is to explore and answer the question, "does teacher absenteeism affect student performance in EFL acquisition? And

How?" It was thus hypothesized that higher teacher absenteeism leads to lower student performance in EFL classes. Teacher absenteeism is measured simply by counting the number of a teacher's absences during Semester 2, 2022, including sick leave, bereavement leave, and personal leave. Student performance was measured by students' scores on the standardized Exam, which is the formal evaluation exam used in the LMD system. Thus, this paper aims to:

1. Investigate the impact of teacher absenteeism on the performance of students in the EFL learning process.
2. Identify areas of weakness that may be contributing to a decrease in the performance of students at universities.

Limitations

Estimating the amount of the impact is challenging because of multiple reasons. The most important thing is that the relationship is measured over different timelines. Absenteeism is a daily measure, and achievements or scores are a longer-term measure. Studies like this are rare because it is extraordinarily difficult to detect the effect of teacher absenteeism on student performance since there are so many other factors that can impact student learning. The student's individual attendance will have an impact on what they learn; the teacher's skills will have an effect, as will the student's motivation and interest among others.

Because studies of teacher absenteeism have produced conflicting results, one should not conclude from this last statement that teacher absenteeism has no impact on student learning. The analyses focus on pass rates on standardized exams; they thus do not permit one to conclude anything about how teacher usage of leave days affect students whose academic performance is well above the minimum pass level on the exams, and they do not allow them to measure how it affects aspects of learning not measured by these exams.

Methodology

The study was conducted at the Department of Literature and English Language at 8 May 1945 Guelma University. The performance of 200 students from first- and second-year English language classes was correlated to the absences of 65 teachers (90% females) assigned to teach

different subjects to those students in EFL. About 58% of teachers are early career employees aged between 30 and 45, while 4 (6%) of them only are old experienced professors. All students' scores and teachers' absences data were for the second semester of the 2021–2022 academic year where frequent absences occurred given that 5 out of 11 teachers for a single Group of L1 went on 'maternity leave' simultaneouslyⁱ and were replaced with less qualified substitutes.

Instruments

The nature of the data collected for this study is in the form of primary research methods to study teacher absenteeism at the Department of Literature and English Language. As this was an exploratory study, it was restricted to a targeted sample of students within the department who have been notoriously affected by frequent teacher absences as opposed to their peers with fewer teacher absences from the same level namely L1 and L2.ⁱⁱ

To investigate the impact of absenteeism on students' scores on English language acquisition at 8 May 1945 Guelma University, two questionnaires were developed. A jury of EFL specialists from the Department evaluated the questionnaires and provided comments and suggestions. All suggestions were considered in the final form. The major steps involved were the submission of two separate questionnaires to the teachers and students of the first-year (L1) and second-year (L2) groups respectively. A separate study was conducted on the basis of comparing and analysing students' scores of the previous students of the first semester (when in normal circumstances) with those of the second semester characterized by high teacher absenteeism.

The Teachers' questionnaire is divided into three sections: The first section contains demographic information about the participants and includes 6 items. While the second section focuses on the nature and frequency of teachers' absenteeism that contains 6 items. The final and most important section focuses on the influence of teacher absenteeism (TA) on learners' outcomes and has 7 items; while the students' questionnaire is divided into two sections only. The first section contains general information about the participants and the second section focuses on the students' views about teachers' absenteeism and students' performance.

The questionnaires were distributed to the students in classrooms with the help of their teachers to answer any questions that the students may have regarding the questionnaire. After the students had completed the questionnaires, they were all collected to be analysed. While the teachers received their questionnaire by email or on Google forms and provided feedback in the same way.

Literature Review

Education must have been one of the topics most analysed in the past century. It has been studied from all different perspectives. For the purpose of this research, I reviewed the literature regarding teacher absenteeism. On the importance of teachers in general, Hanushek (2014) observed that over the last two decades, different research studies on student achievement have pinpointed the central role of teachers. There are other factors - families, peers, neighbourhoods - that are obviously elements in a student's learning, but it is the school and especially the teachers who are given the public responsibility for the education of our youth. Similarly, Miller (2012) has affirmed that teachers are the most important school-based determinant of students' academic success among all the other factors that influence education. Teachers who are frequently absent are incapable of delivering quality instruction. Some studies have indicated that teacher absenteeism has no negative effect on student achievement. However, there have been several analyses that show a strong correlation between teacher absenteeism and student learning.

The Nature of Teacher Absences

Teacher absenteeism is a chronic problem plaguing MENA school systems. According to investigation reports in schools, principals reported teacher absenteeism to be a "serious problem" (Expectations and Aspirations, 2019). Why are teachers absent? Prominent stated reasons include teacher participation in educational workshops, in-service training sometimes lasting for several weeks, personal problems, and casual leave (EARC, 2003). Pregnancy and housework may affect female teachers as well (Fairhurst et al., 1999; Dia, 2003). Teacher absenteeism is common due to strikes, authorized absences, early dismissals, and late arrivals. Teachers may be chit-chatting, leaving early, or allowing excessive breaks. Lesson time is consumed by attendance, handouts, tasks, and blackboard copying.

Concern with teacher absence rests on three premises: (1) that a significant portion of teachers' absences is discretionary, (2) that teachers' absences have a nontrivial impact on productivity, and (3) that feasible policy changes could reduce rates of absence among teachers. Dorward states that teacher absenteeism has a direct impact on student achievement disrupting the learning environment of the classroom (Dorward, et Al., 2000). The shortage of substitute teachers is a significant issue, with an average of nearly 30% of needed qualified substitute teachers.

Woods and Montagno (1997) found that teacher attendance rates have a negative effect on student achievement, with students in grade three in Indiana and Wyoming experiencing lower individual standardized exam scores, lower student ranks in class, and overall school scores. The Steers and Rhodes (1978) model, which considers demographic variables, job satisfaction, motivation to be absent, and ability to attend work, emphasizes that attendance is highly influenced by the practices of the organization, an absence of school culture, and employee attitudes, values, and goals.

Teacher absenteeism negatively impacts English language students' performance, reducing instructional intensity and hindering future performance. Unqualified substitutes can reduce focus and energy, hindering students' future performance. The issue also includes financial costs, difficulty in finding qualified substitute teachers, and the impact on students' professional development. The lack of professional instruction hinders students' future performance.

Moreover, teacher absences may affect student achievement through the "discontinuities of instruction" (Rundall, 1986, p. 240), the disruption of the regular routines and procedures of the classroom. Students and teachers in language classes rely on consistency and order to facilitate learning. For most of these students, school is the only place where they experience any form of normalcy. Teacher absenteeism threatens the regularity of the classroom that students are accustomed to when their teacher is present.

How Might Teacher Absences Affect Student Achievement?

Policy research and discussions have reached a broad consensus, at least among more industrialized countries, that teachers are the single most important in-school factor for student learning (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Hattie, 2003; OECD, 2005). The literature on the impact of employees'

absences has been more frequently conducted in areas other than education. Allen (1983) and Nicholson and co-authors (2006) hypothesized that absences had larger negative effects on productivity. Thus, this pattern of findings suggests that the negative impact of the absence of teachers from universities may be substantial in terms of students' achievements.

There are several mechanisms through which teacher absences may reduce student achievement. First, instructional intensity may be radically reduced when a regularly assigned teacher is absent (Capitan et al., 1980; Gagne, 1977; Varlas, 2001). A second mechanism through which teacher absences may affect student achievement is through the creation of discontinuities in instruction and the disruption of the regular routines and procedures of the classroom (Rundall, 1986; Turbeville, 1987). Students may struggle with relationships with multiple mobile substitutes, which may hinder the implementation of long-term instructional strategies. Additionally, substitutes may lack detailed knowledge of students' skill levels, making it difficult to provide differentiated instruction and fair evaluation.

Teacher absences can also negatively impact student achievement in less direct ways, such as inhibiting faculty efforts to implement consistent instructional practices across classrooms and grades. The scarce planning time for collaboration between teachers and colleagues can undermine the purpose of these collaborations. Teachers' absences not only affect their direct students but also those taught by their colleagues.

Prior Studies Relating Teacher Absences to Student Achievement

Research on the link between attendance and foreign language achievement is rare (Fay, Aguirre & Gash 2013), but studies have found positive effects. Not surprisingly, researches that focused on this link have yielded positive links and effects. A number of studies have found a negative relationship between teacher absences and student achievement.² These studies, however, do not provide convincing evidence of a causal relationship between teacher absences and student success because they do not address

² See for example Bayard, 2003; Beavers, 1981; Boswell, 1993; Cantrell, 2003; Lewis, 1981; Madden & et al., 1991; Manatt, 1987; Pitkoff, 1989; Smith, 1984; Summers & Raivetz, 1982; Womble, 2001; Woods, 1990. There are some exceptions to this rule. (Ehrenberg et al., 1991; Kirk, 1998; Occhino, 1987) are examples of studies that did not find a link between teacher absences and student success.

the potential association between measures of teacher absences and unobserved levels of instructor ability and effort (Miller, Murnane, and Willett, 2007).

Thus, the research challenge is to develop a strategy that permits unbiased estimation of the causal impact of teacher absence on student achievement. Nevertheless, Duflo and Hanna's (2006) experimental study, provides strong evidence of a causal relationship between teacher absence and student achievement. The study's findings may be specific to EFL contexts, as teacher absenteeism's impact on student performance can vary depending on frequency, duration, substitute availability, and instructional support. The task is more compelling in this context.

Conceptual Framework and Hypothesis

This paper analyses the impact that teacher absenteeism has on student achievement by running a questionnaire to 65 teachers and 200 targeted students (sampled as the most effected by teacher absences) from L1 and L2 grade levels (LMD) undergraduate students of the department of letters and English language at 8 May 1945 Guelma university. The key independent variable "teacher absenteeism" is measured on the basis of the number of absences that full-time teachers have been absent from classroom for more than 4 sessions a month. This research work is a cautious attempt to investigate the effects and impact of teachers' absenteeism on students' performance in the EFL class.

This study focuses mainly on the following core questions:

- How does teacher absenteeism influence learners' outcomes?
- How do students and teachers view teacher absenteeism in relation to students' achievement?
- Is there a positive/negative correlation between teacher absenteeism and students' scores and performance?

2.1. EFL Acquisition in the Algerian LMD System

The Algerian LMD system focuses on English as a Foreign Language (EFL) acquisition through the Department of English Language and Literature. The curriculum includes core EFL courses covering fundamental aspects of language acquisition, such as phonetics, syntax, reading comprehension, academic writing, speaking and listening skills, and literature and culture

studies. The department also emphasizes studying English literature, focusing on various literary works from different periods and genres to enhance students' language skills, critical thinking abilities, and cultural understanding.

The teaching methodology adopts a communicative approach, prioritizing active communication and interaction in the target language. The study of English language and literature is integrated to provide a holistic understanding of the English language, allowing students to explore linguistic aspects while analysing literary texts. Language laboratories and multimedia resources are available to enhance EFL acquisition, and assessment and evaluation include written exams, essays, presentations, research projects, and literary analysis.

Faculty members within the Department of English Language and Literature typically possess advanced degrees and qualifications in English language teaching, literature, or related fields. Ongoing professional development programs may be provided to keep instructors updated with the last methodologies and approaches in EFL teaching. The specific curriculum, teaching approaches, and assessment methods within the Algerian LMD system may vary across universities. However, the Algerian LMD system aims to provide students with a comprehensive understanding of the English language, literature, and cultural aspects to develop their EFL proficiency and academic abilities.

2.2. Characteristics of a 21st Century EFL Classroom

The 21st century classroom is a productive environment where students develop workplace skills, with teachers acting as facilitators. The focus is on higher-order thinking, communication, and collaboration skills, while utilizing technology effectively. This innovative EFL classroom is characterized by technological integration, learner-centred instruction, and a focus on 21st-century skills. Key characteristics include technology integration, student-centred learning, authentic contexts, multimodal learning, global perspectives, project-based and collaborative learning, continuous assessment, lifelong learning, flexibility, adaptability, and a culture of self-directed learning. Teachers serve as facilitators of student learning and creators of productive environments for students to develop the skills they need in the workplace. The collaborative project-based

curriculum develops higher-order thinking, communication, and technology knowledge. The interdisciplinary nature of the 21st-century classroom sets it apart from the 20th-century classroom, where lectures were the norm, and collaboration is the thread for all student learning.

Changes in Teacher Behaviour

The 21st-century classroom is student-centred, not teacher-centred. Teachers no longer function as lecturers but as facilitators of learning. The students are learning by doing, and the teacher acts as a coach, helping students as they work on projects. Students learn to use the inquiry method and to collaborate with others—a microcosm of the real world they will experience once they leave the classroom. In this new classroom, flexible student groupings based on individual needs are the norm.

Characteristics of a 21st Century Classroom Teacher

In the 21st century classroom, teachers are no longer solely relying on whole-group instruction as the primary instructional method. Instead, they assess student needs and learning styles, using various methods to meet the needs of all students. Performance-based assessments are now used to evaluate students' learning, replacing exams as the sole means of assessing achievement. Instead, teachers use student projects, presentations, and other performance-based assessments to determine individual needs and achievement. The goal of the 21st Century classroom is to prepare students to become productive members of the workplace. Teachers' roles and responsibilities have also changed, as they now co-teach, team-teach, and collaborate with other department members. Other stakeholders, such as administrators, board members, parents, and students, also share responsibility for educating students. Teachers must be present regularly to be effective in their job.

2.3. Definition of Effective EFL Teacher

An effective EFL teacher is a motivated and inspiring instructor who can effectively deal with foreign language learners. Ericksen's book emphasizes the importance of an inspiring instructor, active scholar, respected professional, and accessibility to students and colleagues. To create a comfortable and engaging classroom environment, teachers should use structuring comments instead of criticism, deliver engaging work, provide

opportunities for learners to grasp, assist with challenges, and encourage personal relationships.

Teachers' beliefs about themselves, learning, and the educational relevance of learning are crucial for effective and good teachers. Williams and Burden emphasize the importance of constantly re-evaluating their beliefs about language, learning, and education. By understanding and articulating their own theoretical perspectives, teachers can become more effective in their teaching. Good teachers care more about their students' learning than their own teaching (1997, p. 6).

Good teaching necessitates teachers possessing good materials, methods, and knowledge, as well as addressing learners' differences. The class atmosphere is crucial, as the success of learners depends on the teachers. Teachers must understand their students' needs and abilities, using metaphors and teaching strategies to ensure students understand and benefit from their lessons. In conclusion, good teaching is essential for students to succeed in their studies.

The Roles of an EFL Teacher

Teachers are essential in the English classroom, overseeing activities and students at various stages. They can operate as controllers, organisers, evaluators, prompters, participants, resources, teachers, and observers, and they can change their behaviour to guarantee efficacy. Teachers offer new languages to their students and instruct them, with the most typical function being a properly organised classroom. Students are evaluated, feedback is given, and syllabuses, lessons, and projects are planned. Organisation is vital for planning and discipline, as well as serving as a resource by offering further knowledge or chatting with pupils.

Teachers play a crucial role in learning effectiveness by participating in students' development and allowing them to interact with others with higher comprehension. They also analyse teaching methods and observe classroom activities to develop effective teaching methods. Teachers must be aware that their behaviour significantly impacts students' personal development, and their roles can be active or passive. It is essential to recognize that roles vary in their influence on lessons and whether they are fulfilled actively or passively (Harmer 1991, p. 235).

Teachers are Needed in the Classroom

EFL teachers play a crucial role in students' achievement by providing guidance and mentoring, enhancing their knowledge, skills, personalities, confidence, and approach to life and learning. Their presence in the classroom is essential for effective instruction and ensuring students receive the necessary support and resources. However, teacher absences can significantly impact students' learning and performance, leading to lower exam scores and negatively impacted performance. EFL teachers can serve as teaching aids by using mime and gesture, acting as language models, and providing comprehensible input.

An effective EFL teacher is a good teacher for his learners when he knows how to deal with them and with the surrounding situations. It is more important for the EFL teacher to know the names of the learners to make them confident in themselves and feel comfortable, as the teacher cares about them and their learning (Harmer, 1998). This leads to significant language gains for students. EFL learners may not always understand what the teacher says, so the teacher provides comprehensible input to help them comprehend their explanations.

Data Collection and Results

As stated above, the study reported here examines the relationship between student scores and performance on standardized exams in the English Department and teacher absenteeism. This section is organized in terms of the research questions presented earlier. A profile of the teacher absenteeism data collected and is then presented and analysed.

The data for each grade level studied is presented and discussed. Is there a significant relationship between the extent, the reason for, or the pattern of L1 grade level classroom teachers being absent from the classroom and the scale scores on the 2021-2022 standard exam of the L1 and L2 students in their classrooms? Table 3 presents the Pearson Correlation analysis for both levels of students when all teachers associated with those students are considered. Note that there were 340 valid exam scores for L1 students and 180 valid exam scores for L2. Only the scores for concerned students were considered.

In line with the study objectives, the study sought to establish factors influencing students' scores and performance in English language at the

Department of Letters and English Language. The analysis delved into the influence of teacher's attitude towards teacher absenteeism on students' scores and performance in standard exams. The findings were presented starting with the response rate, then descriptive statistics presented as per every variable and finally the inferential statistics. This was done in tables and discussions thereof.

Response Rate

A total of 65 questionnaires were distributed to the English teachers. All of them were filled and returned representing a response rate of 100% among the teachers. Of the 210 questionnaires distributed to the students, 200 of them were filled and returned. This represented a response rate of 95% for students' questionnaires. Essentially, the response rate that every researcher would pursue would be 100%. However, due to sampling measurement and coverage flaws, this is not possible in practise. In the social sciences, a response rate of less than 51% is deemed unsatisfactory (Pinsonneault & Kraemer, 1993). According to Babbie (1990), a response rate of 60% is considered acceptable, while 70% is considered very good.

Data Collection and Contextualization

The LMD system consists of a credit system, which represents the hourly volume of work required in a subject or subjects. This work is divided into face-to-face group work through lectures, tutorials, and practical work, and personal work through research, internships, reports, and dissertations. The final mark for a module/subject is determined by the sum of two marks: the mark for tutorials and/or practical work (50%) and the mark for the test (50%), with a subject acquired if the obtained mark is equal to or greater than 10/20. The year is assumed to be acquired if the two semesters making up the year are achieved affected by their respective coefficients; the year is acquired if the general average is equal to or greater than 10/20. After satisfying the required conditions, the student is entitled to move from the first to the second/following year of the same course (Articles 25,29 of Order 711).

The Ministry of Higher Education requires all schools and universities to administer standardized exams each year at specific grade levels. The English Department exams are required at all levels. They are designed to measure concepts, processes, and skills of the State curriculum as defined

in content standards issued by the Department. The exams are used to measure the extent to which students achieve those standards.

The Department reports on student performance through scale scores and proficiency level cut Scores. Performance of students in relation to proficiency level cut scores is reported in a form of performance level classification according to the Deliberations Committee appointed specifically to validate the results, and it consists of all teachers of the same grade level. There are four performance levels established through scale score cut off points (0-20):

Level I: Not Meeting Learning Standards (0-9.99)

Level II: Partially Meeting Learning Standards (10-11.99)

Level III: Meeting Learning Standards (11-13.99)

Level IV: Meeting Learning Standards with Distinction (14-20)

In order to clarify the relationship between students' achievement at University (as EFL learners) and the effect of teacher absenteeism, which prevails in our universities so far, and to observe the effect of this behaviour on their learning process, we elaborated the following study: average students' scores of first semester (when in normal circumstances) were compared to those of students' second semester scores characterized by high teacher absenteeism. The results revealed a high decrease in average students' scores ranging from 10% to 30% for L2 and L1 respectively.

Background Information on Teachers

The study sought to establish the background information about the teachers of English. Thus information regarding teachers experience, qualifications and the total number of students they teach per class was established. The findings are discussed in the following sub-sections.

Our analytic sample contains 65 permanent teachers, 38 of whom are in our sample for both L1 and L2. As indicated in Table (1), more than 90 percent of the teachers are female. Twenty-nine percent are early career and ten percent are full professors. On average, teachers possessed 13 years of teaching experience. Eight percent of teachers were in their first year of teaching, and seven percent were in their second year. On average, teachers in our sample were absent from their classrooms slightly more than four sessions each during the entire instructional year, prior to the

administration of the late spring achievement exam. However, the sample variation in the number of days of absence among teachers is large. Nineteen percent of the teachers had no absences during the school year, 24 percent were absent for more than 10 days, and six percent were absent for more than 20 days. Absences were most common on teaching days.

Teachers Work Experience

Given that all the teacher are qualified post-graduates, the only point of qualification preferential is their work experience. The number of years teachers had been in the profession was established based on their responses to the questionnaire and verified at the level of the Personnel Service (Human Resources Service). The findings from the analysis were as presented in table (1).

Table 1: Experience

Period	Number	Percentage
1-5	08	12.30%
5-10	30	46.15%
10-15	23	35.38 %
Over 15	04	06.15 %
Gender	58 (Females)	90%
	07 (Males)	10%
Total	65	100%

It was found from the table that 33.8% of the respondents had over 10 years of work experience. 53.8% of the respondents had worked for approximately 10 years while 07.6% had worked between one and five years. Therefore, it is clear that a majority of the teachers had amassed enough experience in their teaching career.

Results and Discussions

This paper adds to the small literature examining the causal effects of teacher absences on language acquisition. This discussion is framed by a review of the literature on teacher absenteeism, the situation in which the study was done, and the results, including data quality. The findings are evaluated and discussed in terms of professional practise, decision-making, theory, or academic understanding of the educational area. As the results

are compared to the work of others, references from the literature review are supplied.

Students' Questionnaire

The analysis of the students' questionnaire responses showed that, despite admitting that their teachers were extremely knowledgeable of the issue, most of respondents blamed teachers for their lower achievements while justifying their failure to do better by lack of continuity in instructions and lack of teacher acquaintance (for individual and continuous evaluation).³ A majority of students (59%) also blame the administration for not responding quickly to replace these absentees. It is worth mentioning that the regulations in fact do not allow for replacements in cases of short leaves, while it is also rare to find substitutes for such short periods of time.

The results of the questionnaire revealed the extent to which students are aware of their teachers' absence and activities. Table (2) shows how likely teachers are to be absent. "Teachers late/early arrival to class" time appears as the most likely event, while a majority of students (79%) admit that teachers are serious about the teaching process in relation to the delivery of teaching materials and content. When asked how likely this would occur, students' responses revealed that missing class is less likely than missing school altogether, meaning that when teachers arrive at work, they do not miss their lectures. Thus absences are most likely to occur when teachers are away or completely outside their institution. Teacher absence results in a reduction in time students have to interact with their teachers for learning purposes. They may have an impact on students' academic performance.

³ The continuous evaluation comprises different types of activities divided mainly between class activities and home assignments.

Table 2: Teacher absenteeism (as a multi-faceted phenomenon): How likely would it happen?

Absence of teaching pedagogy and content knowledge		Absence from classroom		Absence from teaching		Absence from school		Late arrival / Early departure	
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NOT AT ALL LIKELY ←————→ EXTREMELY LIKELY

When asked about how often teachers inform them of their absence on social media/private groups, the students also revealed the direct contact they have with their teachers and 160 respondents said they have often been informed by their teacher(s), while only 20 of them said they have never been informed by their teacher(s).

The Teachers' Questionnaires

The analysis of the collected data from the teachers' questionnaires' revealed a high awareness among respondents about the role of the teacher in language classes, but the majority of teachers are young females who are frequently on 'maternity leave' or on sickness leave. When asked about the frequency of their absences, the results on table (4) show that most absences are not deliberate but discreet, since the most frequent reasons for teachers' absenteeism in the English Department revolve around medical problems, personal/family matters, professional matters, etc. which are all guaranteed by the regulations.

Types of Teacher Absences

The absence data for the teachers listed included the type of absence, the date of the absence, the day of the week of the absence, and whether the absence was for a full or half day. Each type of absence was classified as personal or professional for the study. Teacher absenteeism is defined in the study as any type of teacher absence from the classroom. It includes both personal and professional absences. Personal absences are defined as a teacher initiated absence from the classroom. The teacher has made the decision to be absent for reasons such as personal illness, family illness, personal business, death in the family, or moving. Professional absences are

defined as a school, district, or other governmental entity initiated absence from the classroom. The teacher is required or encouraged to be absent for reasons such as meetings, scoring of student tests, professional development, or jury duty.

Table (4) lists all of the types of absences in the data provided by the teachers and classifies each as either personal or professional.

Table 4: Types of Teacher Absences

Types of Teacher Absences	
Personal	Professional
Family and Personal	Meeting
Death	Education Examination
Graduation	Conventions/Conferences
Maternity Leave	Professional Development
Illness	Union Business
Birth of a Child	Military Duty
Religious Holiday	Test Correction
Hardship	
Catastrophic Illness	

When asked about to what extent they agree with the statements on teacher absenteeism and lateness in class, the respondents find some statements almost ridiculous or obsolete as shown in Table (5).

Table 5: Statements on Teacher Absenteeism and its Impact on Students' Performance

Factors under consideration	1	2	3	4	5
Teachers come early to school				21(32.3%)	8(12.3%)
Teachers always come with lesson plans in class.			20(30.7%)	42(65%)	
Teachers supervise all class activities				38(59%)	10(15.3%)
There is regular attendance to class lessons by teachers				49(75.4%)	4(6.1%)
There is regular testing and examination of students			45(70%)	10(15.3%)	4(6.1%)

Students' performance is influenced by teachers' presence in class	50(77%)	10(15.3%)
Learning a foreign language outside the classroom is generally more effective than learning it in the classroom.	2(3%)	52(80%)
Foreign language learners can learn to use a foreign language proficiently by mere exposure to it (i.e., reading in or listening to the language).	33(50.7%)	19(30%)
Foreign language students should learn how to use various learning strategies (i.e., self-evaluation, repetition, imagery, etc.).	31(50%)	33(50.7%)

It is recognized from this table, that a majority of teachers comprising of 15.3% and 77%, respectively, "strongly agreed" and "agreed" that Students' performance is influenced by teachers' presence in class and that teacher presence is a key requirement in teaching English at the department. On the other hand, the teachers were in agreement 31(50%) and 33(50.7%) that teachers should teach students how to use various learning strategies (i.e., self-evaluation, repetition, imagery, etc.) to enhance their performance skills of English acquisition, while others 45(70%) agreed that there is regular testing and examination of students and that 38(59%) of teachers supervise all class activities.

Concerning the core focus of this paper, the respondents revealed the high stake of teacher absenteeism and its impact on students' achievements and scores. When asked about the impact of teacher absenteeism on EFL learners in particular. The respondents listed the most common effects as: lack of motivation, low English Language competency, lack of students' participation, bad information processing, low exam scores and failure to achieve the learning objectives.

The effects of teacher absenteeism on the teaching and learning process have been gauged from most important to least important in ordinal priority from 1 to 6. Based on the given order of the effects of Teacher

Absenteeism (TA) on the teaching and learning process, the prioritized list from most important to least important based on the most frequent answers is shown in table (6).

Table 6: Statements on the effects of teacher absenteeism

Statements (Most to least Important)	Total	Number	Percent
1. Poor students' performance	65	23	36%
2. Inability to cover the syllabus	65	14	22%
3. Reduced attendance and assimilation	65	12	18%
4. Poor student-centred methodologies	65	07	10%
5. Poor retention of Teaching and Learning Materials (TLMs)	65	06	09%
6. Poor continuous assessment of students	65	03	05%

The results revealed that a great number of teachers (36%) approve of the fact that absenteeism affects students' performance negatively at various degrees. It also affects the teaching and learning process through deficiency in syllabus coverage (22%). Others have admitted that absenteeism subverts students' abilities and skills.

Correlation between Teacher Absenteeism and Students' Scores

Table 3 examined the relationship between teacher absenteeism and Students' scores. As can be seen in this table, the coefficient correlation between teacher absenteeism and Students' scores was (.228), and the significance level (0.37). Therefore, there is a statistically a highly significant correlation ($P < 0.05$) between the two variables.

Table 7. Correlation between Teacher absenteeism and Students' scores

		Teacher absenteeism	Students' scores
Teacher absenteeism	Pearson Correlation ⁴	2	0.228
	Sig. (1-tailed)		0.31
	N	65	65

⁴ The Pearson correlation measures the strength of the linear relationship between two variables. It has a value between -1 to 1, with a value of -1 meaning a total negative linear correlation, 0 being no correlation, and + 1 meaning a total positive correlation. **Positive correlation** is measured on a 0.1 to 1.0 scale. **Weak positive correlation** would be in the range of 0.1 to 0.3, **moderate positive correlation** from 0.3 to 0.5, and **strong positive correlation** from 0.5 to 1.0.

Students' scores	Pearson	0.228	2
	Correlation		
	Sig. (1-tailed)	0.31	
	N	200	200

This indicates a statistically much significant correlation between teacher absenteeism and students' scores since the p value is (0.228), which is greater than the significant level ($P > 0.05$) which signifies a strong significant relationship between teacher absenteeism and students' scores. Therefore, the results related to the third section proved a strongly positive relationship between teacher absenteeism and students' scores.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Teacher absenteeism significantly impacts EFL classroom learning, causing gaps in students' progress and hindering language development. It leads to disruption of instruction, reduced learning opportunities, lack of feedback, and negative impact on motivation. Disruption prevents essential lessons, explanations, and practice opportunities, while absence limits access to communicative activities and targeted instruction. Lack of feedback and support also hinders students' progress and ability to address weaknesses. Frequent absenteeism can negatively impact student motivation and engagement, as consistent presence creates a positive learning environment, while absenteeism may result in reduced motivation and disengagement.

The results of the analysis support previous research findings that higher teacher absenteeism leads to lower student scores on standardized exams. Teacher absenteeism significantly impacts students' acquisition of English as a foreign language. It disrupts the continuity of instruction, reduces interaction and speaking opportunities, decreases motivation and engagement, disrupts the assessment process, and increases reliance on substitutes or less-qualified teachers. These absences can lead to variations in teaching quality, instructional approaches, and support, impacting students' language learning experiences.

To minimize teacher absenteeism, departments should prioritize improving attendance by maintaining a logbook, implementing substitute teacher management systems, and utilizing technology for instructional continuity. Blended learning approaches and alternative feedback methods, such as

self-assessment and peer assessment, can also be explored. Professional development opportunities should be prioritized for less prone teachers. Educational institutions can address teacher absenteeism by implementing student support systems, transparent communication, and strategies like tutoring programs, language support, and peer mentoring. Clear policies, professional development opportunities, substitute teacher management systems, technology, online resources, and collaboration among teachers can help promote language acquisition and overall learning outcomes.

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Endnotes

ⁱ A female employee in Algeria is entitled to 14 weeks' (98 days) fully paid maternity leave, plus a 4-week extension often (Social Insurance Act §29-1). Female workers may take part-time paid parental leave for up to 18 weeks, in this case they will receive 50% of maternity benefits and 50% of their wages (Labour Code, Act 20545 of October 6 of 2011), in force since October 17, 2011, that modifies legislation on Maternity Protection and adds Parental Postnatal Leave.

ⁱⁱ Statistics were cumulated at the level of The Human Resources Service of the faculty (FLL), with emphasis on the most frequent absentees.